

# **MARKSCHEME**

**MAY 2007**

**PHILOSOPHY**

**Higher Level and Standard Level**

**Paper 1**

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## SECTION A

### Core Theme: What is a ‘human’ being?

1. (a) **What philosophical issue could be identified from this extract?** [3 marks]

Possible issues that might be raised by this extract are:

- The individual searching for the Other
- Solipsism
- The need to define oneself in terms of the Other
- The ‘islands’ as a metaphor for metaphysical propositions or mental states
- Life related to death might arise in the ability of each to reach each other fully only after death
- The richness of the individual’s interiority *e.g.* spiritual, artistic
- Desire and dream.

- (b) **Compare and contrast *two* different philosophical views that explore the issue that you have identified.** [12 marks]

Possible contrasting positions might include:

- Functionalist versus the dualist
- Problem of solipsism and counter positions
- Argument from analogy and the weakness of this knowledge
- The mere physical isolation might be developed and the problem of a hermit only being pseudo isolated from society and may be seen as a parasite on society/the inability to be isolated completely – the need for basic needs
- Contrast the isolation of life as the island with the view that we only have a sense of ourselves as the individual by first being part of the community.

- (c) **“The essence of our relations with other people is conflict.” [15 marks] Critically discuss.**

Possible discussion might focus upon:

- The Marxist interpretation of society as inevitable conflict
- A contrast might be developed showing a harmony that many religions *e.g.* Christianity and Buddhism might claim to generate in society; consensus rather than conflict
- The idea that self interest leads to inevitable conflict with other individuals
- The idea that competition in education and sport may lead to conflict but is seen as bringing out the best in us might be developed and then shown to be in stark contrast with an eastern approach of collective/joint/team work bringing out the best
- The degree to which these conflicts are an inevitable aspect of the materialist capitalist approach to life. Do certain cultural norms develop conflict? Would a matriarchal society be more harmonious?
- It might be seen that the act of consensus and harmony is merely a guise for conflict (Sartre’s view of happy marriages or ‘hell is other people’).

2. (a) **What philosophical issue could be identified from this picture?** [3 marks]

Possible issues might include:

- Identity crisis or loss of identity – merely a number in a mass society
- Work and the alienation caused by the factory/mass production society – related Marxist ideas might be mentioned
- As the four figures look the same the issue of cloning might arise and the related moral issues and identity issues
- It might be seen as a prison (the wires overhead and the left figure seemingly still inside). Therefore the issue of freedom and issue of real freedom, mental and or physical, might arise.
- The hole to the right and the door to the left of the man could be seen as a breakout from a prison – an escape from the indoctrination and or a particular way of life
- The vacant look might suggest a sense of hopelessness – lack of direction
- The escape idea might be seen as rising out of Plato’s cave. Are these the prisoners coming to or leaving the cave?
- The blank expression might be seen as an image of Nietzsche’s ‘Herd man’/slave morality
- The line might be seen as the unemployed and the issue of the right to work might arise
- Power and power relations.

(b) **Compare and contrast *two* different philosophical views that explore the issue that you have identified.** [12 marks]

Possible contrasting positions might include:

- Existentialism and the search for Self
- Cloning and the right to life of the unborn with associated ethical issues from abortionists to pro-lifers
- The issue of freedom and associated responsibility
- Freedom and Determinism
- A Marxist approach to the working class and perhaps the notion of Huxley’s ‘Brave New World’ – a class ridden society, along with market forces conflict or consensus
- Identity and search for meaning
- The right to work and questions of the role of the State in providing work/the socialist work ethic versus the market
- If Nietzsche were to be developed, then the Christian religious humility versus the *Uebermensch* mentality of action and power

- (c) **To what extent are people unique individuals as well as representatives of the whole of humanity?** **[15 marks]**

Possible responses to this question might include an evaluation of the following positions:

- The uniqueness of man in God's image, yet the meaning of Adam being both the one individual and Man/humankind, therefore common characteristics responses and values, making all men the same
- Whether one man epitomises the ideals of the whole. Is it a Marxist notion that all are the same and there is no place for the individual and individualism?
- The need to value the uniqueness not the sameness – this could link to Rawls's treatment of all as individuals therefore treating each differently yet all being the same
- Is man in a *Janus* form and therefore one and the same at the same time? The individual appearance is different but the inner self is the same or maybe different too, but simply one representation of a species.
- The possible universal responsibility of individual moral actions.

## SECTION B

### Optional Theme 1: Political Philosophy

3. **Explain and discuss the following statement: “Individuals can be brought to justice only under the laws of their own country, not on the basis of an international law, even if they have committed serious misdeeds such as genocide or crimes of war.”**

The question is intended to provide an opportunity to analyze several political notions: crimes against humanity, sovereignty (and its limits), international law (and how to apply it), relationships between justice, law and human rights. There could be an evaluation of the need (and difficulties) of a universal moral standard of justice (*e.g.* human rights) that goes beyond the particular legal systems of each nation. The opposition between the traditional notion of sovereignty and the contemporary need of putting this strong notion aside in extreme cases could also be assessed *i.e.* in the case of crimes against humanity.

#### Key points

- The traditional (Westphalian) notion of sovereignty of a nation: it precludes the possibility of judging its citizens under laws other than the law of the sovereign nation. It has some important advantages (it impedes the interferences of one power into the internal affairs of another country, recognizing thus the autonomy of this country).
- Nevertheless, some recent experiences (*e.g.* genocide) have made it necessary to recognize an international standard of justice over each nation’s standards (especially in cases in which the legal system of a nation does not fulfil some minimum requirements of justice). It makes it necessary to re-think the relation between law and justice.
- The notion of ‘human rights’ is a part of an international standard, and a legal expression of the idea that there are some minimum requirements of justice for all human beings. Those national rulers who seriously damage these human rights can be accused of ‘crimes against humanity’.
- However, international law is also a positive legal system (a list of written laws), and thus this law might hypothetically differ in some cases from a proper notion of justice. International laws monitor the justice of national laws, but who monitors the justice of international law?

#### Discussion

- Is it advisable to increase the power of international laws in today’s world, or would it be better to increase the autonomy of each nation? Cosmopolitanism and nationalism could be discussed in this context.
- To what extent do political notions as ‘social contract’ apply to the case of an international law?
- Is the international law system akin to democracy, or could it be deemed as an oligarchic or totalitarian rule?
- Who must enforce the application of international law and human rights? A super-power? A coalition of nations? The UNO? Being realistic, who could in fact enforce this application nowadays?

**4. Assess the merits and drawbacks of the notion of “Social Contract”.**

A critical discussion of Social Contract concepts could be developed here. There is an opportunity to address and assess questions like the emergence of this notion in the history of political thought, and its relationship with liberal ideas about the state.

**Key points**

- The idea of a Social Contract is the view that a person’s political obligations are dependent upon a rational contract or agreement between them to form society. It presupposes that all human beings would have agreed in having some common political laws, as long as this minimum restriction of their individual freedom would give all of them greater profits (peace, protection of their properties *etc.*).
- As a liberal political notion, social contract purports to have some important advantages. It limits the freedom of the citizens in a minimal way, and only after their consent. It does not presuppose the existence of super-natural laws, and thus democratically gives all political powers to the citizens. It recognizes the priority of the individual over the community, but also sets the conditions for the development (through contracts) of the communal sphere.
- Critics of the idea of Social Contract have argued, however, that this political priority of the individual has very dangerous consequences for the society as it leads to egoistic individualism, and it is blind to the natural and social differences between the political actors.

**Discussion**

- Is the idea of Social Contract the only possible philosophical justification of democracy? Can a non-democratic system (*e.g.* an authoritarian regime) be justified from the point of view of Social Contract Theory (*e.g.* Hobbes)?
- Does the idea of Social Contract necessarily lead to egoism in the private sphere? Or does it only defend individualism in the public, political sphere (thus, leaving individuals a wide private space in which they can freely develop their altruistic wishes without any interference by the government)?
- Some differences between the Social Contract Theories of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Rawls (or other theorists) might be analyzed in this context.
- The criticisms that feminist and race-conscious thinkers have proposed. It is unreal to presuppose, for example, that a woman and a man, or a black and a white individual, can approach the social sphere from an equal condition in order to make a ‘contract’ in it. Other important political differences (economic class, language, culture) are also neglected by this notion.

## **Optional Theme 2: Knowledge**

### **5. Assess the extent to which it is legitimate to justify knowledge claims on the basis of sense experience or reason.**

This question offers the possibility to take a number of positions on a discussion about knowledge. The rationalist-empiricist discussion is one amongst many differing approaches.

#### **Key points**

- Rationalists claim, against empiricists, that some part of our most important knowledge cannot be derived from experience, whereas empiricists claim that most of the knowledge that we derive from reason alone (without corresponding experiences) is not justified at all.
- Empiricists usually concentrate on sense experience, the modes of consciousness that result from the stimulation of the senses. A common-sense form of empiricism takes perceptual beliefs about the physical environment (external beliefs) to be directly supported by experience – such beliefs as ‘a car is parked in front of the house’.
- It is obvious that not all knowledge stems directly from experience. Hence empiricism always assumes a stratified form, in which the lowest level issues directly from experience and higher levels are based on lower levels. It has most commonly been thought by empiricists that beliefs at the lowest level simply ‘read off’ what is presented in experience.
- Rationalism is the view that reason, as opposed to, for example, sense experience, divine revelation or reliance on institutional authority, plays a dominant role in our attempt to gain knowledge.
- Different forms of rationalism are distinguished by different conceptions of reason and its role as a source of knowledge, by different descriptions of the alternatives to which reason is opposed, and by different choices of the subject matter, for example, ethics, physics, mathematics, metaphysics, relative to which reason is viewed as the major source of knowledge.
- Feminist, non-Western, and non-conventional views on knowledge are also legitimate responses to this question.



### **Discussion**

- A thesis generally identified with rationalism is the claim that reason alone can provide us with at least some knowledge of the external world through our intuition of self-evident propositions and our subsequent deduction of additional information from those starting points. Can reason alone provide knowledge of the external world?
- Can experience justify universal or even general statements? *E.g.* the problem of induction.
- Why should we choose one of these two views? Is it not possible to combine them in a unified conception of knowledge? *E.g.* Kant
- Concerning metaphysics and issues such as the existence of God, human free-will and immortality, there are strong versions of rationalism which assert that the intellectual grasp of self-evident truths and the deduction of ones that are not self-evident is the major source of true beliefs.
- To gain knowledge about the external world we need to think about it and thus we need the appropriate concepts. How do we gain them? One of the central theses associated with rationalism is that at least some of our concepts are not gained from experience but are instead innate.
- An objection to the innate-idea thesis, exemplified by Hume, is to agree that the supposedly innate concept could not be gained by experience and to argue that we do not in fact have the concept as understood by the innate-idea theorists in the first place; a failure to find an experiential source for a supposed concept should not lead us to the innate idea thesis but to a critical examination of our concepts themselves.
- Some of the difficulties for the rationalist appeal to intuition and deduction arise out of the reasons for rejecting sense experience. If knowledge requires certainty, what makes our intuitions and subsequent demonstrations certain?

## 6. Can the sciences provide true knowledge?

The question proposes an opportunity to construct an argument relating science, knowledge and truth. Each of these concepts and their relations can be interpreted differently.

### Key points

- We can know a fact only if we have a true belief about it. However, since only some true beliefs are knowledge, the central question asked by epistemologists is ‘What converts mere true belief into knowledge?’. ‘True knowledge’ could mean: (a) propositions which are true, or (b) ‘real’ knowledge as opposed to illusion.
- There are many and often conflicting answers to this question. The primary traditional answer has been that our true beliefs must be based upon sufficiently good reasons in order to be certifiable as knowledge. Foundationalists have held that the structure of reasons is such that our reasons ultimately rest upon basic reasons that have no further reasons supporting them. Coherentists have argued that there are no foundational reasons. Rather, they argue that our beliefs are mutually supporting.
- Knowledge comes in many varieties. Nevertheless, it is knowledge of facts, so-called propositional knowledge as opposed to knowledge by acquaintance or the possession of skills that has been the central concern of epistemologists. The central question can be put this way: which beliefs of mine are to be counted as knowledge?
- The main features traditionally ascribed to ‘the scientific method’ - including a clear statement of a problem, careful comparison of theory with fact, open-mindedness, and (potential) public availability or replicability of evidence - are common to many cognitive endeavours.
- Scientists propose theories and assess those theories in the light of observational and experimental evidence; what distinguishes science is the careful and systematic way in which its claims are based on evidence.

### Discussion

- Which beliefs are knowledge? The first thing to note is that a belief must be true in order for it to count as knowledge. But that is obviously not enough. First, true beliefs can be based upon faulty reasoning. Second, true beliefs can be based on false beliefs.
- Does it matter for scientific purposes to have a theory of knowledge?
- It remains a subject of dispute among epistemologists whether the stock of purported foundational propositions can be made sufficiently rich and abundant without including too many that clearly require evidential support, or whether the patterns of inferences can be liberalized sufficiently without allowing patterns that are not sufficiently truth-conducive.
- Scepticism: the view that we lack knowledge in those areas commonly thought to be within our experience, it comes in many varieties, *e.g.* Humean and Cartesian scepticism.
- Epistemic principles describe the normative epistemic status of propositions under varying conditions. It is generally agreed that if a person, S, is justified in believing any proposition, x, then S is not at the same time justified in believing that not-x. Other principles are more controversial.
- The simple claims of science can hide any number of complex issues *e.g.* verifiability, falsification and experimentation

### Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of Culture

#### 7. Intellectual progress is an essential element for the survival and maintenance of cultures. Explain and discuss.

This question invites discussion on a variety of possible conceptions of the dynamics and maintenance of cultures. The main issues are: what constitutes intellectual progress, and what is its role in a culture.

##### Key points

- The role and value of traditions within a culture: the sense of identity and meaning from a shared language, religion, history, purpose *etc.*, as well as the ability of traditions to stifle or oppress different ideas and minority groups; the power of obedience and certainty in traditions.
- Intellectual progress understood as technological and/or artistic achievements, or economic development; intellectual progress also seen as valuing the role of the contemplative life *i.e.* priests, intellectuals, mystics, shamans *etc.*
- The model of culture as a living, organic entity that is expressed through the activities and beliefs of its members. It needs replenishment and sustenance through new activities and ideas.
- Other measures that could be essential, or more valuable, for the maintenance and survival of cultures: social harmony and public compassion; a sense of awe or spirituality; sacrifice; humility.

##### Discussion

- The organic model of culture – a dynamic based on activity and production – is often criticised for leading to a consumerist, disposable society, and the alienation of its members.
- Are the causes of the current problems with terrorists to be found in the superstitions and prejudices of their cultures? Is it significant that these cultures are sometimes criticised for their lack of technological discoveries, their political and social restrictions, and lack of economic development? *i.e.* these are cultures bound by traditions
- If traditions are essential for giving a sense of purpose and continuity in people's lives, and if intellectual progress is also essential for a culture, then how are these two contradictory tendencies reconciled?
- Western culture embodies high technological, intellectual and artistic achievements, but has this made the culture more or less meaningful and satisfying to its members?
- Is intellectual progress a necessary and/or a sufficient condition?

**8. To what extent do you agree that economic dominance leads to cultural dominance?**

This question invites discussion on the impact of economic hegemony upon culture. Is it possible to separate economics from culture and what relationship exists between them?

**Key points**

- The symbols of cultural dominance: advertising, mass entertainment, dress, and language *i.e.* appropriation and objectification of cultural symbols
- Economic dominance as a source of specialisation and isolation of activities and discourses within a culture *e.g.* Marx
- Culture and civilisation as products of a repressed psyche; a reaction to economic dominance is loss of authenticity and autonomy. This can lead to further alienation and dominance of a culture, or to its re-invigoration.
- The reification of the subject within and by late democratic capitalism *i.e.* the reduction of human values into material possessions

**Discussion**

- The idea that power produces the subject; the dominant discourses within a culture define who we are, how we act, and what our values are *e.g.* Foucault
- Agreement with the proposition could be based on a Marxist notion of superstructure and base; that the mode of production determines cultural values, or exercises a control over cultural values
- Has globalisation driven the growth in nationalism and the re-discovery of traditional customs and language since the end of the Cold War?
- If culture is a mode of life, and economic activity is a part of that way of living, then the implicit assumption in the question that there is a difference between the two is incorrect.

## Optional Theme 4: World Philosophies

### 9. Analyse and discuss the idea of transmigration in the context of Buddhism, Hinduism or both.

The question gives an opportunity to analyse and discuss the idea of transmigration and the main concepts related to it, according to its central place in both traditions. Answers can refer to one or both traditions.

#### Key points

- The combined beliefs in *karma* and rebirth, that is, the retributive power of actions and decisions and a beginningless, though not necessarily endless, succession of births and deaths for living beings, although such notions are by no means exclusively Indian, constitute a fundamental premise of the great majority of India's religious and philosophical traditions.
- The idea of karmic retribution postulates that the act itself will hold its originator responsible. Acts of moral or ritual significance will bring about their own reward or punishment, that is, favourable or unfavourable experiences.
- In its various contexts and applications, the doctrine of *karma* has at least three different yet interrelated functions and dimensions: it is used to provide causal explanations (especially in the realm of life); it serves as a framework for ethical discipline and religious orientation; and it provides the rationale for a fundamental dissatisfaction with worldly existence and a commitment to final liberation from such existence.
- Favourable or unfavourable experiences and conditions are forms of reward or punishment for past actions and decisions. Karmic retribution takes place through a sequence of countless existences and may involve a movement through a vast variety of forms of life. This implies that birth into a particular species, physiological and psychological features, sex, social status, life span, exposure to pleasant or unpleasant experiences, and so on, appear as results of previous actions (usually acts committed in previous lives), and that current actions are expected to have a corresponding influence on future existences.
- Basic contributions of ancient Buddhism to the development of the *karma* theory relate to the following areas: (a) a stricter notion of causality which postulates a pervasive coherence of karmic events, but insists on the feasibility of choice and responsibility; (b) a notion of agency which defines the act as rooted in, or even as essentially identical with, volition and decision; (c) a more radical notion of final liberation (*nirvana*) and the commitment to achieve it by eliminating the roots of karmic existence, that is, selfish desire and the illusion of the self.

### Discussion

- The moral relevance and metaphysical qualities of acts and decisions, the nature of karmic causality and the mechanism of rebirth, the possibility of a transfer of *karma*, the compatibility of knowledge and action, and the prospects of and problems concerning the elimination of *karma*, and the ultimate transcendence of rebirth provide topics of debate.
- A strong motivation for accepting the doctrine of rebirth was to support the notion that people are responsible for their actions to the very end of their lives; the doctrine thus plays a central role in Buddhist ethical theory.
- Some Buddhist philosophers tended to argue that the only kind of happiness worth pursuing was lasting freedom from the pains and turmoil of life; this could be won only by bringing rebirth to an end. The only hope of any lasting freedom from the pains of existence is to remove oneself from the cycle of birth and death altogether.
- Is there an intermediate existence between death and rebirth? How does *karma* influence the external, material world, and how does it determine the physiological or psychological constitution of sentient beings?
- What is the special karmic situation of those whose selfish desire has been eliminated? *i.e.* *nirvana* in Buddhism or *Brahma* in Hinduism

**10. “As an agent, one is necessarily responsible for one’s actions.” Analyse and discuss this statement from at least one of the three ethical views: Buddhism, Hinduism, or Islam.**

This question can be explicitly developed in many diverse ways. Some possible developments might include responsibility, self, action, causation, determinism, freedom, and destiny. Developments can reflect or compare one or more of the traditions.

**Key points**

- According to Hinduism in general, the joys and sufferings of a human individual are of his own making; the destiny of the soul is immortality through self-realization. Hinduism tends to hold that there is nothing in the universe that is absolutely good or absolutely evil; good and evil are value judgments made by the individual mind in keeping with its inner disposition caused by past *karma*.
- Buddhism points to man and man alone as the controller of his own life and destiny. In this aspect, the individual is the creator of his own world, the master of his own life, the controller of his own fate and destiny under the causal law of action (*karma*).
- Looking at the social aspects of personal responsibility, Buddha maintained, in contrast to other views prevalent in his day, that a person’s station in human society need not be determined by birth. Buddhist philosophers redefined the notions of purity and nobility, replacing the concept of purity by birth with that of purity by action. Thus the truly noble person is the one who habitually performed pure and benevolent actions.
- Islam looks at the individual as a whole. On the one hand he is required to submit to Allah, but on the other, it teaches freedom and therefore personal responsibility. The Islamic concept of freedom applies to all voluntary activities of man in all walks of life. Man is born free from subjugation, sin, inherited inferiority, and ancestral hindrance.
- Every man is entitled to exercise his freedom of belief, conscience, and worship. Islam presents the Truth of God in the form of an opportunity and leaves the choice for man to decide his own course. His right of freedom is sacred as long as he does not deliberately violate the Law of God or desecrate the rights of others.

**Discussion**

- Although the content of the statement can be approached from any of the three traditions, the way in which concepts are presented seems to be too Western.
- Eastern philosophic traditions generally tend to see the individual as an intrinsic and inseparable part of the universe, and to think that attempts to discuss the universe from an objective viewpoint as though the individual was something separate and detached from the whole are inherently inadequate.
- Implications of individual freedom and responsibility for Buddhism: the threefold action: in thought, in speech and in deed. Man has human value in the individual who acts in a worthy way for his own welfare and for that of others. Everyone, expressing himself through body-with-mind, is a chooser; he has the choice between free play of will and restraint of will by regulation.
- In Islam as man has an opportunity to justify his actions to God, does this make him more free?
- Possible comparisons with aspects of Western thought by means of concepts such as action, responsibility, freedom, determinism

### **Optional Theme 5: Nature, Work and Technology**

- 11. Critically evaluate the claim that there is a philosophically justifiable hierarchy of labour (e.g. those near the bottom, manual workers, have less status than those at the top, managers).**

The purpose of this question is to give an opportunity to explore whether it is possible to justify, from a philosophical point of view, the establishment of divisions in society according to occupations with the possible social and economic status that results.

#### **Key points**

- Criteria to construct such a hierarchy – activity, reward (wage) contribution to society
- The possible measures of the value of labour
- The notion of labour in a market and labour that can be ‘sold’
- The relations of ‘in work’ to unemployment and the possible low status of the unemployed
- Social and economic status.

#### **Discussion**

- Marxist view of the sale of labour (surplus value) compared to the market view of labour
- The change concept of manual work and manufacturing and moves towards service activities
- Do these divisions create stress upon human relations?
- The cross cultural issues that such hierarchies might be changing in post industrial societies and are very different in emerging economies or agrarian societies
- Whether status can or should be measured by scale of income of contribution and social need - the garbage collector may have more value than the university professor but may have a different status.
- The problem of the non-productive worker; how do you equate the teacher or poet with the stonemason? Can you, should you?
- The issue of social mobility in terms of occupation – are you bettering yourself if your family moves from a mining tradition to a teaching tradition? How is this betterment justified or validated?



**12. Explain and discuss the consequences of defining the quality of civilization based solely on sophistication of technology.**

This question presents the possibility of investigating the relationship between technological growth and the improvement of civilization with the related dilemma of evaluating the notion of betterment in civilization.

**Key points**

- Definition of technology
- Definition of civilization
- Criteria for the notion of advancement and betterment to justify progress. This could include factors beyond technology

**Discussion**

- Whether there is a relationship between technology and civilization. Is one a subset of the other?
- Can one have advanced civilizations with crude technology or none at all?
- Technology and civilization might both be defining qualities of humans; technology *per se* is the defining quality of civilization and *vice versa*, therefore they are both one and the same.
- Does technological advance result in more sophistication? Do these advancements really mean an improvement in quality of life? How does one measure the improvement of quality of life?
- How far does the collapse of technology affect the level of civilization or *vice versa*?
- The extent to which small and simple leads to a better quality of civilization
- Is it possible that hierarchy of civilizations are based on technology, the quality and type of metal might describe a culture? Does it also define the quality of that culture?
- Is there more to civilization than technology, if so what?

## Optional Theme 6: Philosophy of The Arts

### 13. Critically assess the following statement: “True art should have political effects.”

The question addresses the subject of the political responsibility of the artist: is it an essential ingredient of the artist’s work, or could it be overlooked? Or should it even be overlooked, as long as the genuine artist has a totally different role in our societies to that of anyone involved in politics?

#### Key points

- The statement implies that an essential feature of art consists in its political consequences. It opposes the view that art has mainly to do with subjective or transcendental values, and also the view that art is good for its own sake (*l’art pour l’art*).
- The difference between art and mere political propaganda or indoctrination might be explained, according to this view. The dangers of a political use of art by totalitarian regimes (Nazism, Stalinism) could also be assessed. A political use of art might imply rebellion and political change, but also conformism to political power.
- The statement seems to be opposed to the view of art as a mere consumer good. But some critics of the statement might say that it instrumentalizes art (it considers its value according to an external standard *i.e.* its political effects); and this instrumentalization is similar to the view of art as a consumer good.
- Artistic notions as ‘transgression’, ‘academicism’ or ‘subversiveness’ have an implicit political reference.
- If the art did not have any political effects, then the concept of censorship might be meaningless.

#### Discussion

- Historical examples of the use of art for political purposes might be philosophically assessed in the context of this question.
- Some philosophers have given the arts a leading role in the political configuration and possible change of our societies (G. Lukacs, A. Gramsci, T. W. Adorno). Their philosophical approaches could be examined in connection with this question, as well as their critics’ view (*e.g.* C. Greenberg).
- Is the political use of art similar or different to the religious use of art? And what about the moral use of art?
- Some people think that every work of art has a political effect, even if the artist does not want it to be politically relevant. To what extent is this view sound?

**14. Can a TV commercial be considered a work of art?**

The statement presented in this question might elicit critical reflection on the specific value of artistic experience, as opposed to other uses of beauty (in publicity, as is cited in the question, but also in similar spheres as design, fashion). Matters such as the difference between an artistic judgment and a professional judgment (*e.g.* to maximize publicity) might be addressed in this context.

**Key points**

- Definition of the work of art (and the artistic experience that it is intended to generate) as something different to publicity (and the experience and effects that it provides).
- The similarities between both uses of beauty might also be explained in order to expose why a sentence like the one cited in the question could make sense, to some extent. Does every work of art, or at least some, have a propaganda or publicity value?
- The social uses of art and publicity might be clearly different. Art and publicity have different markets. Art has its own group of professionals and critics that differ from the group of professionals and critics that are related to the world of publicity. The extent to which this is pragmatic or a social difference is the essential difference between both activities.

**Discussion**

- Pop art and other contemporary artistic trends have attempted to blur the difference between art and other human activities (especially mass culture); so many of them would totally agree with the statement cited in the question. A philosophical analysis of the meaning, development and purposes of these recent artistic movements could be examined in this context.
- Some critics (*e.g.* C. Greenberg) have considered that publicity often uses a sentimental sort of pseudo-art which rips off the products of 'quality' high art. In short, publicity would be a kind of kitsch.
- If we assume a subjectivist position, and we consider that art is in the eye of the beholder, then everything (including publicity) could be considered a work of art.
- Some artists see the mass media (and publicity) as an image bank full of repressive stereotypes and consumerist ideology. They use the language of these media in order to subvert these very values, and in order to criticize the complacency of the bourgeois art world. The language and images of consumer capitalism are used to criticise itself.

### **Optional Theme 7: Philosophy of Religion**

**15. Critically assess the claim that the use of language in describing and expressing religious experience is useless because religious experience is beyond reasoned explanation.**

This question invites an assessment of the validity of using language at all in the context of religion and it might lead to an evaluation as to whether linguistic expressions in this realm lose all meaning.

#### **Key points**

- Whether language and reason are linked in the context of the philosophy of religion
- The use of language as metaphor in the context of religion
- The relationship of reason to religious experience
- How is the validity of linguistic expression achieved?
- Emotion, intuition, introspection, mysticism.

#### **Discussion**

- Whether belief statements that have their own language structures effectively create a new 'language game'
- Is it true that when one believes, one enters a new community and then learns a new language?
- The possibility of non-linguistic communication. Can an icon express spirituality and belief although it has no words?
- The degree to which 'fideism' is possible in religion *i.e.* there is no rational debate
- The possibility that religious experience is not separate to other parts of life and therefore is in the realm of being able to be described and understood in terms of words
- The notion that religious experience is private and correspondingly unintelligible and therefore not communicable
- Whether religion is like science and can just invent new words that are given arbitrary yet precise meanings. Does this mean that real or full understanding is limited to a few?

**16. Explain and discuss the impact of religious belief on ethics.**

This question offers an opportunity to investigate the relationship between the development of ethics and religion and whether they might or might not be mutually exclusive. There is also the possibility to raise issues on whether the appeal of ethics to the metaphysical creates an irrational basis for moral action.

**Key points**

- The moral codes that exist within religious tradition – their origin
- The secular notion of ethics not based on a religious tradition
- The influence of both morals and religions on society
- The impact of beliefs on behaviour

**Discussion**

- Whether a decline in religious belief creates a less moral society
- The possible difference between moral codes that reflect religious beliefs and those of a secular basis
- Whether our societies, greatly influenced by western traditions, can escape the history of a religious background as the basis of moral action
- Whether beliefs establish justifications for actions which are not reasonable or are intolerant or absolute and not pragmatic
- The issue of the nature of human dignity/autonomy might be infringed if appeals to the supernatural are used to justify actions
- The degree to which morals are better if founded upon religious belief
- Nietzsche's position that religious based ethics is weak ethics
- God justified actions might seem bizarre in some circumstances
- If a purely rationalist society was in existence would any ethical stances develop? Would it be an amoral society?

## Optional Theme 8: Theories and Problems of Ethics

### 17. Critically discuss the role scientific knowledge should play in the application of ethics.

This question invites a discussion of whether scientific discoveries can improve our understanding and practice in our ethical life. Concepts such as interconnectedness, tolerance, or survival of the fittest are paradigms that could serve as a basis for human moral conduct.

#### Key points

- Some benign moral qualities identified by environmental ethicists are interconnectedness (responsibility/stewardship), natural diversity (an intrinsic value) and symbiosis (tolerance)
- Moral relationships with others: their nature, and distinction from other relationships, often found in the particular symmetries and responsibilities from these relationships
- Science provides a biological origin of virtue; our genes are mainly responsible for our attitudes, moods, behaviours, and preferences. This has consequences for the responsibility of actions.

#### Discussion

- Does respect for nature and all living things stretch to cover the AIDS virus and malaria-carrying mosquitoes? What should be the objects of moral concern?
- If humans are the only creatures to adopt complex moral postures and be motivated by moral concerns, then how can nature, which is supposed to be amoral, inform ethical behaviour?
- Using science emphasises the instrumental value of objects and relationships, and does not value intrinsic worth or the concepts of beauty.
- Human survival depends on the use and exploitation of natural resources, but this does not necessarily mean that we must exploit others.
- Darwin's Natural Selection is often identified with ethical theories such as *e.g.* egoism, survival of the fittest, and 'might as right', Ayn Rand's Objectivism.

**18. Neither duty nor the benefit of the majority are adequate principles for a moral theory because they undervalue the role of personal sentiments and emotions. Explain and discuss.**

This question invites an analysis of the role of emotions in moral decision-making. The opposition between the emotions and moral/rational maxims *i.e.* is it a legitimate one, is it an issue that could be discussed and evaluated.

**Key points**

- Moral arguments that appeal to duty (Kant) or to the benefit of a majority (Utilitarianism) are characterised by a denial of personal preferences or emotions in making rational choices, usually because emotions are seen in opposition to rationality and its processes.
- Egoism or hedonism are often used as examples of moral theories where personal emotions or sentiments function as universal principles; the subsequent immoral consequences and contradictions of such theories
- Emotions and sentiments are considered morally valuable often because of the objects they are associated with; generosity, love, and compassion are examples where the action, or thought of action, is accompanied by an appropriate emotion
- The rationality of emotions is seen as their ability to act as motivations for moral action *i.e.* a ‘sense’ of justice, a feeling of compassion or pity.

**Discussion**

- The difficulties of proposing egoism as a moral principle: how can I form moral imperatives if they are supposed to have authority over all other considerations, self-interest in particular? How can I resolve conflicts when my interests conflict with another?
  - If the definition of rational emotions is that of emotions that motivate moral action, then how do you know if the actions motivated are good ones?
  - The very strength of duty and Bentham’s utilitarianism are that they deny the role of personal whim and feeling and ask the agent to consider their actions from another’s position; if the personal is the maxim for moral action, then altruism loses its meaning
  - The alternative of a virtue ethics based on mentoring, like Confucianism, or platonic education.
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