



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)  
January 2013**

**Philosophy**

**PHIL1**

**(Specification 2170)**

**Unit 1: An Introduction to Philosophy 1**

**Final**

***Mark Scheme***

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## **Philosophy Unit 1: An Introduction to Philosophy 1**

### **General Guidance for Examiners**

#### **Deciding on a level and the award of marks within a level**

It is of vital importance that examiners familiarise themselves with the generic mark scheme and apply it consistently, as directed by the Principal Examiner, in order to facilitate comparability across options.

The generic mark scheme must be used consistently across all questions. The question-specific mark scheme will indicate a variety of material and approaches that a candidate is likely to use. It is not, however, prescriptive. Alternative responses are possible and should be credited if appropriate.

It will be found that when applying the generic mark scheme, many responses will display features of different levels. Examiners must exercise their judgement. In locating the appropriate band, examiners must look to the best-fit or dominant descriptors. Marks should then be adjusted within that band according to the following criteria:

- understanding of philosophical positions
- accuracy and detail of arguments
- quality of illustrative material
- grasp of technical vocabulary where appropriate
- quality of written communication

It must be noted that quality of written communication should only determine a level in cases where the meaning of a response is obscured. In most cases it will determine adjustments within a level.

It must also be emphasised that, although the question-specific mark scheme is not proscriptive, examiners must familiarise themselves with its content. Examiners must recognise creditworthy material and the subject-specific mark scheme is an important tool for achieving this.

**Generic mark scheme for questions with a total of 15 marks**

<b>AO1: Knowledge and Understanding</b>	
<b>0 marks</b> Nothing worthy of credit.	
<b>1–4 marks</b> The explanation will lack detail, or the detail may be narrow and/or only partially addresses the question. Blurring or conflation of issues may result in some lack of clarity. There may be significant omissions. At the bottom end of the level responses may be vague, unfocused or fragmentary.	<b>Level 1</b>
<b>5–9 marks</b> At the top end of the level there will be a clear, detailed and precise understanding of the relevant philosophical issues. Lower down the level, responses will be accurate and focused but may lack balance. At the bottom end there may be some blurring of distinctions, but one issue will be clearly explained.	<b>Level 2</b>
<b>AO2: Interpretation, Analysis and Application</b>	
<b>0 marks</b> Nothing worthy of credit.	
<b>1–3 marks</b> Where two illustrations are required, one may be clear and precise but the second confused or absent. Alternatively, there may be a blurring of points and their relevance to the explanation is not apparent. At the lower end of the level, examples will lack detail and clarity and may fail to serve their purpose. If only one illustration is required it will be vague or only partially succeed in achieving its purpose.	<b>Level 1</b>
<b>4–6 marks</b> At the top end of the level, the illustration(s) or example(s) will be clear and have a precise bearing on the issues being explained. Relevance will be apparent. At the lower end of the level, one illustration may be treated precisely with another illustration treated briefly, with only a partial grasp in evidence.	<b>Level 2</b>

**Generic mark scheme for questions with a total of 30 marks**

<p><b>0 marks</b> Nothing worthy of credit.</p>	
<p><b>1–4 marks</b> There may be an extremely basic awareness of one relevant point without development or analysis. The response may be tangential with an accidental reference to a relevant point. Errors of understanding are likely to be intrusive. Fragments of knowledge will feature in this level. Technical language is not employed or is employed inappropriately. The response may not be legible and errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar are intrusive.</p>	<b>Level 1</b>
<p><b>5–9 marks</b> There may be a basic or philosophically unsophisticated grasp of some issues. Analysis may be predominantly simple and/or lack clarity in places. There may be errors of reasoning and understanding. Evaluation, if present, will lack penetration or be very narrowly confined. The response may lack overall purpose and may fail to directly address the relevant issues. At the lower end of the level, the response may be disjointed. Technical language is limited in its employment or used inappropriately. The response may not be legible and errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar may be intrusive.</p>	<b>Level 2</b>
<p><b>10–15 marks</b> Responses in this level may be short or of limited scope. There may be narrow focus on one aspect or a range of issues may be referred to with limited understanding or analysis. Evaluation may be replaced by assertion or counter-suggestion. Sporadic insights may be present but they would lack development. Some knowledge will be present but it is likely to either lack detail and precision, or will not be analysed or evaluated. This is likely to feature at the lower end of the level. The response is legible, employing some technical language accurately, with possibly some errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	<b>Level 3</b>
<p><b>16–21 marks</b> The response will explain and analyse some relevant material but positions might be juxtaposed rather than critically compared. Relevance will generally be sustained, though there may be occasional tangents at the lower end of the level. Knowledge of issues will be present but may lack depth and/or precision. Evaluative points are likely to be underdeveloped or applied to a limited range of material and may not be convincing. Examples are likely to be used descriptively rather than critically. The response is legible, employing technical language accurately and appropriately, with few, if any errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	<b>Level 4</b>
<p><b>22–25 marks</b> Relevant philosophical issues will be analysed and explained but there may be some imprecision. Examples will be deployed effectively but their implications may not be made fully apparent. Evaluation must be present but may lack philosophical impact, or it may be penetrating over a limited range of material. Knowledge and understanding of the issues will be apparent but not always fully exploited. The response is legible, employing technical language accurately and appropriately, with few, if any errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The response reads as a coherent and integrated whole.</p>	<b>Level 5</b>
<p><b>26–30 marks</b> Relevant philosophical issues will be analysed and positions clearly and precisely explained. The analysis and use of examples will proceed from a secure knowledge base. Evaluation must be present and will show sophistication and direct engagement of the issues. The relation between argument and conclusion will be clear. The response is written in a fluent and sophisticated style with minimal, if any errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The response will read as a coherent whole.</p>	<b>Level 6</b>

**Theme 1: Reason and experience**

**Total for this question: 45 marks**

**0 1**

Illustrating your answer, explain the difference between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge.

(15 marks)

*Explanations should incorporate something like the following:*

This is an epistemological distinction that concerns two types of propositional knowledge and is, perhaps, most easily approached by asking how we become acquainted with different types of truths or with how truths are justified and known.

- Knowledge that is *a priori* may be described in various ways. For example, *a priori* knowledge is certain or, insofar as necessary truths may be grasped intuitively via the intellect or through reason, these are truths that are known independently of and (in some cases at least) prior to experience (*although whether a proposition is known a priori is not the same issue as whether it is innate knowledge*). Mathematical propositions, for example, are quite likely to be offered as illustrations and the point here is that they can be known or justified independently of experience. The objects of *a priori* knowledge are generally regarded as being necessarily true (*although some students might challenge this*). Illustrative examples could also include ‘an object cannot be both black and not-black at the same time’ or ‘cannot be black all over and red all over’ and various analytic propositions concerning e.g. unmarried bachelors. There may also be references to the synthetic *a priori* eg  $7 + 5 = 12$  or  $832 - 820 = 12$  or, perhaps, ‘every event has a cause’.
- *A posteriori* truths, on the other hand, are known and justified through experience and classically held to be contingent – they could have been, and could be, otherwise. That some bachelors are eccentric, ravens are typically black, Paris is the capital of France and the boiling point of water is 100 degrees Celsius (at sea level) etc are all examples of propositional knowledge, or truths, known *a posteriori*.

Note that (following Kant) there will probably be some blurring between *a priori* and *necessary* and between *a posteriori* and *contingent* and (following Hume) between *a priori* and *analytic* and *a posteriori* and *synthetic*. This is acceptable (although it has been challenged and some students may be aware of this). Some responses may draw from Hume both in exposition and illustration.

*No marks are available for critical/evaluative accounts although relevant knowledge and understanding in such accounts should be rewarded.*

**0 2** How convincing is the claim that at birth the mind is a *tabula rasa*?

(30 marks)

The view of the mind as a *tabula rasa* (a blank slate or a piece of white paper devoid of any characters) should be well understood. Candidates are likely to spend some time ‘translating’ *tabula rasa* and/or finding some alternative image that does the same work eg the mind is an ‘empty cabinet’ waiting to be furnished by experience.

The view will probably be identified as an empiricist approach to the acquisition of ideas, beliefs and knowledge and linked to the view that knowledge, or at least non-trivial knowledge, is acquired through experience. There probably will be references to one or more of Aristotle, Locke or Hume.

*Expect some of the following or equivalent points to feature in exposition of and/or defence of the claim:*

- Developments of the view that there is no innate knowledge because there are no innate ideas and the view that all of our ideas derive from sensory experience and reflection on sensory experience.
- Locke’s view that if a proposition is innate its component elements must be innate – but there are no such innate elements. While ‘whatever is, is’ looks like a proposition that is known independently of experience, and should be universally assented to, its component elements are so abstract that no child knows the truth of it. Similarly ‘whatever is white all over is not black all over’ is necessarily true but not innate because it requires ideas of white, black and difference. That universal assent wouldn’t demonstrate innateness and that no proposition is universally assented to anyway – necessary truths may be unknown to children and idiots. Truths discoverable by reason are not innate.
- Examples of where sensory impairment and/or an inability to reflect deprive us (allegedly) of certain ideas and/or knowledge. Humean examples - a blind man having no idea of colour, a deaf man of sound. Alternatively, the addition of sensory equipment would provide us with ideas, concepts, beliefs and knowledge eg Condillac’s statue.
- How the imagination draws from sense experience so that no idea is novel – golden mountains, unicorns, etc.
- How allegedly innate ideas might be grounded in experience eg Hume on God or causation.

*Critical discussion is likely to focus on views claiming:*

- We possess some concepts, capacities, abilities and knowledge prior to or independently of experience – do claims about eg God, the propositions of logic, identity, universals, morality, necessity, etc escape the empiricist framework? Some ideas may be best regarded as innate, (eg a Euclidean straight line, God).
- Plato’s Forms and the claim that some knowledge is innate in the Lockean sense (possessed at birth and remembered via experience).
- Whether Locke’s approach to innate ideas and knowledge is adequate. Nativist claims that we are genetically, or cognitively, programmed in such a way that allows us to acquire certain skills such as language, folk psychology, etc (the point may be implicit in references to birdsong).
- The conceptual scheme under which our experience of the world is subsumed is acquired via experience and something else. The active power of the mind in shaping our knowledge. There may be references to Leibniz’s example of the block of marble containing the figure of Hercules and/or to Kant’s account of the categories through which the mind organises experience into something intelligible and/or to Chomsky’s universal grammar.
- Whether innateness or nativism more adequately captures the above.
- Some ideas, eg a missing shade of blue, do not appear to derive from sense experience.

- Justifications of empirical knowledge are not immune from scepticism.
- Innateness as a default position.

There may also be references to instincts (suckling babies etc) whether functioning as evidence of innateness or as a straw man argument leading to the claim that instincts aren't ideas or knowledge in the mind. Depth perception in babies.

Following discussion it could be argued that:

- The claim provides a clear account of the acquisition of ideas, sets a limit on appropriate objects of knowledge and allows us to proceed without getting distracted by empty (or unverifiable) metaphysical speculation. It reflects our experience of learning, where knowledge is acquired through new experiences. At birth the mind is a *tabula rasa*.
- Some ideas, concepts, capacities, etc. are held prior to experience and some knowledge does not depend upon experience. If experience is 'given' this is testimony to the existence of certain (synthetic *a priori*) principles or genetic predispositions which govern our experience of the world. At birth the mind is not a *tabula rasa*.



**Theme 2: Why should I be governed?**

**Total for this question: 45 marks**

**0 3**

Outline and illustrate **two** reasons which may justify political dissent.

(15 marks)

Two reasons for believing that political dissent might be justified are likely to be selected from:

- State or government actions have failed to connect to widely held moral and political values – dissent produces a better outcome than consent.
- The State or government has violated natural moral law – which is ‘above’ actual law. We are moral agents first and subjects second: autonomy and individual conscience are more important than obedience.
- The State or government is serving sectional interests and failing to promote the good of the social whole or the common good, or failing to extend rights to certain groups (these may be groups within the State or outside of it).
- The State or government is disrupting social unity, order and cohesion because its actions directly discriminate against certain groups and/or individuals.
- The State or government is disrupting social unity, order and cohesion because its actions undermine tradition.
- The government is not regarded as legitimate (this point is likely to be made in reference to a ‘rogue’ State and also may be implicit in accounts of Hobbes’ or Locke’s versions of the social contract: the government is failing to secure rights or provide security).
- The State or government is attempting to regulate an area of life which is not regarded as the legitimate concern of government – it violates the freedoms of individuals.
- The State or government is failing to ensure that law is applied fairly.
- There may be some references to defences of civil disobedience (eg Rawls) – dissent is itself a political act, other avenues for righting wrongs have been duly tried, dissent does not undermine the rule of law generally.

Illustrations, or a single illustration covering two reasons, might draw from specific acts of dissent, eg protests against the poll tax, the ban on hunting, interference in parenting, smoking bans, discriminating against fathers, the use of speed cameras, European legislation, wars perceived to be unjust, police brutality, etc or be fictional examples of a law which *would draw dissent* were it enacted. Some may employ historical examples. Illustrations don’t have to be from the UK.

*No marks are available for critical/evaluative accounts although relevant knowledge and understanding in such accounts should be rewarded.*

**0 4** 'It is in our interests to be politically organised in a State otherwise we would not have consented to it.' Discuss.

(30 marks)

This provides an opportunity to describe liberal justifications of political obligation; to develop various accounts of consent *and* various accounts of why it is rational or in our interests to consent. Consequently, different ways in which we might be said to have consented, or consent (or submit) now, should be identified as well as the *reasons why* we consent (or submit). These will probably be linked to different versions of the social contract.

It is possible that the question will provoke different types of discussion:

How have we consented? Do we consent at all?

- Some may identify different views of what constitutes consent: the political obligations of individuals are grounded in a voluntary and explicit act of consent; *or* political obligations are those that rational individuals would hypothetically consent to were they to be placed in an 'original position'; *or* obligations arise from our tacit consent and acceptance of the benefits afforded by the State. A focus like this might be developed into an account of how consenting secures our interests.

Why is political organisation within a State in our interests?

- Alternatively the main focus of discussion could be on different versions of the condition of man in a 'state of nature'. Hobbes: in a state of nature there is a war of all against all in which life is 'nasty, brutish and short'. Locke: in a state of nature men live together according to reason, in perfect freedom and equality without superiors (on earth) to judge them – the lack of a body to resolve the occasional dispute is, however, potentially problematic. Rousseau: in a state of nature men are primitive but noble savages – life is not unpleasant but noble savages are not progressive beings.

The above approaches may intermingle in specific treatments of different philosophers:

- Locke's view that when, via a contract, individuals form a body politic 'every man...puts himself under an obligation to every one of that society to submit to the determination of the majority'. If this were not so the body politic would dissolve and this would not be in our interests. While the resultant 'state of nature' would still be one in which natural moral laws are present, and generally prevail in man's relations with others, there would also be disputes (about property for example) and the 'inconvenience' of not having a body to enforce moral law.
- Hobbes' view that submitting or consenting to sovereign rule is in our interests because our security/safety is established: the alternative, a state of nature, is characterized by scarcity, mutual suspicion and hostility and an absence of faith or trust in others. This would be a state of war in which life would be 'nasty, brutish and short'.
- According to Rousseau it is in our interests to consent to government so that the general will can be enforced – our development as individuals (positive freedoms) is only possible in a body politic in which we participate.

Good analytical answers will go beyond describing and contrasting positions to include critical discussion of the points raised. For example:

- The State is a fact – we are born into it – consent is a fiction. Our obedience is required 'because society could not otherwise subsist' (Hume).
- No theory of how we express consent – explicitly, tacitly or hypothetically – is convincing. Each view is subject to a range of criticisms.
- The extent of our submission could be questioned – is it virtually unconditional or subject to provisos?

- Attempts to describe life without a State may be unconvincing (eg in terms of the view of human nature offered) or inconsistent (eg can hostile and suspicious individuals form a contract or be trusted to keep to it?)

A range of argumentation is possible depending on the approach to the question taken:

- It is in our interests to submit to political authority but some arguments supporting this view may be regarded as more convincing than others.
- Can self-interest really be the basis of our political obligations? Even if it is would this trump moral obligations? These might include obligations to citizens of other states.
- The notion that we consent or submit to authority is useful because it places the individual at the heart of political theorising: an insistence that the authority of the state is the creation of the people who constitute it forces rational reflection about the basis and extent of authority and of our political obligations.
- Consent may also imply a guaranteed moral right of dissent.
- Have we consented at all? Explicit consent has not been given and hypothetical and tacit consent are unconvincing. We were born into obedience. The sources of power and authority can't be found in the consent of individuals.
- Some may question notions of consent and/or the notion of legitimacy – we are obligated through force and manufactured consent (ideology).

**Theme 3: Why should I be moral?**

**Total for this question: 45 marks**

**0 5**

Outline and illustrate the view that a contractual approach to morality fails to adequately account for our moral interests and obligations.

(15 marks)

It is likely that one version of a contractual theory – probably Hobbes, possibly Rawls – will be briefly described. The view in question may then be linked to one or more of the following points:

- We haven't *actually* made a conventional agreement with others and/or even if we argue *hypothetically* (ie that we would agree to accept moral conventions if given the opportunity to do so) this may not generate the obligations that *actually* exist (ie conventional views concerning unacceptable and, perhaps, intolerable behaviour). It seems unlikely that all of these would be items in a contractual agreement.
- This approach leaves the question of what is moral open (dependent on whatever agreement we're willing to make) and certain moral interests may be omitted. Could conventional agreements favour the strong (as Marxists suggest)? Could they favour the weak (as Nietzsche or Callicles would suggest).
- Some proposed contractual theories might be said to license a 'tyranny of the majority' (Rousseau) or at least conventions developed by 'any number of freemen capable of majority' (Locke) and some stress 'the authority to coerce those to whom (the law) applies' providing it is not self-contradictory (Kant). Do minorities or outsiders have no moral rights?
- What about those who cannot enter into a contract – for example, non-human animals, human infants, those suffering from various mental disorders or disabilities – do they not have moral interests and should they not feature in our moral thinking?
- Don't some moral interests extend beyond the boundaries of the State? Do we not recognise the rights of citizens of other States? Similarly, do we have obligations to future generations?
- Similarly, aren't some moral principles universal? If it is possible to contract into an immoral agreement (which may be one in which universal principles have not been acknowledged) then morality cannot be constituted by any contract.
- Aren't dissent and civil disobedience typically undertaken on moral grounds?

Illustrations may draw from the philosophical literature, for example the extent to which a contract would cover the tastes and actions of individuals (Mill) or of how conventional agreements are not in the interests of the strong (Nietzsche); from history or current affairs, for example where moral interests of minorities have been neglected; or provide examples of how rights are, or ought to be, possessed by eg children or animals or those with diminished responsibility; or provide examples of acts of civil disobedience or dissent undertaken on moral grounds.

*No marks are available for evaluation although relevant knowledge and understanding in such accounts should be rewarded.*

**0 6** Assess the view that self-interest can be realised only in the context of a virtuous life.

(30 marks)

A relevant knowledge base could be selected from either Plato or Aristotle (or both) but references to more recent versions of virtue ethics – eg Foot, Williams, MacIntyre, etc – and to the role of particular virtues (such as temperance, justice, courage, wisdom and Christian virtues such as faith, love, etc) in describing how we should be in order to flourish as persons should also be rewarded. Character, or the development of character, is placed at the centre of morality and the central issue here is how this connects, either intrinsically or extrinsically, to self-interest.

Good answers will sustain a clear focus on the issue of how virtue connects to self-interest. Thus:

- In virtue ethics the focus is on dispositions, moral education and developing moral character and on questions concerning how we should live/how we should be: virtue is connected to how we are and to what we do.
- This may be developed through discussions of how virtuous character traits and habits enable us to live well: these are most likely to draw from Plato (eg the charioteer) and/or Aristotle (eg the archer). Reference to man having a function.
- The central issue of how this connects to self-interest should be clearly addressed: why will being 'good' make us happy? A consideration of character, and the development of character through time, connects clearly to a view of the good for man, or a good life, but this should be explicated further eg in terms of how the virtuous act for the right reasons, the right feelings and to the right degree and/or in terms of a well-balanced soul (eg Plato) or an essentialist view of human nature (eg Aristotle's view that our function is to reason).

Relevant critical discussions might focus on:

- Whether, for example, temperance is its own reward or whether it is rewarding because it leads to other goods: this might lead to a discussion of how virtue is constitutive of self-interest. It may be suggested that self-interest is, ultimately, the motivation behind the acquisition of virtues (although this should not be presented as a crude form of egoism) and this might be countered by eg 'Gyges'.
- Whether a lack of virtue/surfeit of vice leads to ruination – some illustrative examples might help. Examples might be given of people who've been ruined through a lack of self-control (or other virtue) *and/or* of wicked people who've led happy lives.
- Whether the possession of virtue/lack of vice is useful and/or 'agreeable' (to oneself and to others) – again, illustrative examples might help: the regard in which the 'moral saint' is held *and/or* the misery experienced by some of the saintly.
- How either of the above connects to *eudaimonia*, well-being, happiness, flourishing, etc.
- Elitism and/or the view that circumstance means that it is more difficult for some to develop moral character and/or to experience a rewarding life. Moreover, is virtuous character an effect of a rewarding life rather than a cause?
- Are notions of 'great-souled men' or 'moral saints' relative and/or are the qualities they supposedly possess still desirable? Whether it is more virtuous to overcome temptation/vice or to not experience it at all and, if the latter, whether this is more 'agreeable' to us than to individuals with a 'dark side'.

- Does moral behaviour flow from (a relatively stable) moral character or are situational factors more significant?
- Discussion of Plato's/Aristotle's conceptions of human flourishing and virtue.

Argumentation should connect to our motivation for reasons for being moral and particularly to the relationship between virtue and self-interest. It could be argued that:

- Virtue ethics provides answers to questions concerning what constitutes a good life or to how we should be in order to live well *and*, therefore, to why we should be moral. Thus, it may be argued that virtue ethics does provide a convincing account of moral motivation because a virtuous life is rewarding. Moreover, the relationship between moral behaviour and self-interest is 'internal' – unlike in egoism where moral behaviour is a means to an end so the relationship is 'external' – and this may be seen as convincing.
- Virtue ethics is inadequate, unconvincing or incomplete as a theory of the good for man. A virtuous life is not necessarily rewarding (it may be dull, one may be oppressed by the wicked); vice doesn't necessarily lead to unhappiness or to the absence of rewards (envy, greed and other vices can generate efforts that produce good things or wealth that can be used to good ends); some may argue that notions like obligation, duty and rights are more important than flourishing; some may claim that the 'whiff' of self-interest associated with virtue ethics (moral traits benefit us) undermines it as a view of *moral* motivation.

**Theme 4: The idea of God**

**Total for this question: 45 marks**

**07**

Explain and illustrate **one** version of the ontological argument.

(15 marks)

There may be some general points concerning eg that ontological arguments are *a priori* arguments which attempt to establish God's existence without recourse to empirical evidence; from a purely formal consideration of the concept of God it is claimed that we can establish that the concept of God is necessarily instantiated; existence is part of the definition or concept of God; to define or conceive of God is to define or conceive of a necessarily existing being. Some may refer to eg definitional, conceptual or modal versions of the argument.

One version is likely to draw from:

- Anselm: God is a being than which none greater can be conceived (even the fool understands this but denies that God exists outside of his conception); it is greater to exist both in the understanding and in reality than in the understanding alone; the greatest conceivable being exists both in reality and in the understanding; God exists. (Perhaps also that God is a being who cannot be thought not to exist).
- Descartes: some background may be given to Descartes, argument (triangles, mountains and valleys, etc) but the argument itself can be stated quite simply: God is the supremely perfect being; a supremely perfect being possesses or contains all perfections; existence is a perfection; God exists. 'God' is a unique concept.
- Plantinga: there is a possible world in which there is an entity which possesses maximal greatness; so, there is an entity which possesses maximal greatness; this being exists in all possible worlds, God necessarily exists in all possible worlds. (Plantinga's reformulation/ defence of Anselm's original argument might also be given).
- Malcolm: if God does not exist His existence is logically impossible; if God does exist His existence is logically necessary; God's existence is, logically, either impossible or necessary; His existence is impossible only if the concept of God is absurd or contradictory; it is neither absurd nor contradictory; so God's existence is necessary.

Given that versions of the argument can be presented quite succinctly the version of the argument identified should not be a blurred version of two different arguments, the details of the argument should be clearly expressed (so it should be clear how the argument is supposed to work) and illustrative material should be clear (eg if Anselm, why the fool is a fool, the difference between an artist's conception of a painting and the painting once it is completed; if Descartes, triangles, mountains and valleys, winged horses).

*No marks are available for evaluation although relevant knowledge and understanding in such accounts should be rewarded.*

**0 8** 'It is difficult to make sense of the idea of God.' Discuss.

(30 marks)

It is likely that candidates will begin with a list of God's attributes and/or describe some reflections on the nature of a supreme being eg God is omnipotent, omniscient, supremely good, immutable, etc or God is the creator of and sustains the universe, He is a personal God, emotional, righteous, a lawmaker, etc. The issue is whether we can make sense of such ideas of God, whether such ideas cohere?

*Some of the following or equivalent points will be raised and developed:*

Some may focus on the interpretation of specific attributes:

- Can we make sense of omnipotence? Can God do anything or is He limited by the laws of logic. Is it possible to describe what He can't do? Likely to be reference to making a weight He cannot lift. Is this a logical impossibility in disguise? Could it have any application to an incorporeal being?
- Can we make sense of omniscience? Is this confined to knowing *that* (eg I will answer this question) or does it extend to knowing *how*? If it is limited to knowing *that* then whereas God knows that 'George will answer this question', George knows that 'I will answer this question' and this isn't the same proposition.
- Can we make sense of supreme goodness? Is 'x' good because God commands it or does God command 'x' because it is good?

It is likely that the main focus will be on whether His attributes are mutually coherent.

- If He is omnipotent, omniscient and supremely good why does evil exist? If He knows about it and doesn't stop it then either He is not good or He is not able to stop it. Is there a convincing solution to the problem of evil? (It might be noted that the issue extends beyond a discussion of God's attributes – it involves God's attributes plus something else).
- Can God will evil? If He can't is this not a limit to His omnipotence?
- Perhaps a more significant question is whether God can create beings (ourselves) over whom He has no control (because we have free will)? The issue of free will might also be used to raise questions concerning omniscience: if God is omniscient then He knows what we will do and we could not have acted differently; if we have free will then we could have acted differently. On the other hand, does God's knowledge of how we will act cause us to act? Does it imply that we are not free?
- If God is transcendent, eternal (rather than everlasting) and immutable can He also be omniscient, benevolent and personal?
- If God is immutable is there any point in prayer? Can He respond to the way I feel?
- Can God be infinitely just and infinitely merciful?
- If God is incorporeal does this impact on eg omniscience or omnipotence?
- If God is impassable, could He understand our emotions?

Good answers may discuss the issue by either developing a range of the above points or by concentrating on one or two points in depth.



Various positions might be argued:

- Some will argue that the way we conceptualise God is mistaken: *either* it is a mistake to attempt to conceptualise what is beyond our understanding *or* we need to rid God of some of these attributes *or* not multiply attributes to infinity.
- Some will argue that there are convincing theistic responses to at least some of these issues. Expect to see references to Swinburne, Hick, etc.
- Some may adopt the view that faith should prevail where reason will not and/or that experience should prevail where reason will not.
- It may be suggested that making sense of a supreme being is not a case of making sense of the God of the philosophers and/or that the process of 'making sense of' is not any kind of metaphysical, ontological or epistemological enquiry – rather it's a way of seeing or form of life.
- Some may argue that, following reflection, our idea of God is incoherent and – while this doesn't prove anything – faith or trust in a supreme being is, effectively, a form of belief without warrant and, possibly, a 'suicide of reason'.

**Theme 5: Persons**

**Total for this question: 45 marks**

**0 9**

Outline and illustrate an argument in support of the claim that the concept of a person is logically primitive or basic.

(15 marks)

*Note that this argument is complex and explanations that are broadly correct, without being sophisticated, should be rewarded in the top band.*

Expect (something like) the following points:

- The concept of a person is something to which both mental and physical predicates apply. It is basic and irreducible.
- We have to accept the concept in order to rid ourselves of two (sceptical) questions. Why are states of consciousness ascribed to anything at all? Why are states of consciousness ascribed to the same entity as corporeal characteristics?

The argument is that:

- It would be impossible to ascribe states of consciousness to oneself unless one could also ascribe states of consciousness to others. A condition of considering oneself as a subject of experience is that one should also recognise others as subjects of experience.
- The condition for recognising others as subjects of experience is that they should be entities, like oneself, to which both corporeal and conscious predicates apply. The *logically adequate* criteria for ascribing states of consciousness to others are behavioural (this doesn't imply that all of our other-ascriptions are correct).
- We couldn't self-ascribe at all unless we were able to other-ascribe, on the basis of behaviour, and we couldn't do this unless we had the concept of a person.
- It is illegitimate to claim both that 'I know I feel 'x'' and 'I don't know whether others feel 'x': a condition of making the first claim is the ability to other-ascribe 'x'.

Much of this may be implicit in an illustrative example – Strawson uses the example of 'depression' – of how we are able to ascribe states of consciousness. Depression, or any other relevant example, is something I observe but don't feel in others and feel but don't observe in myself. If this weren't so I would never learn how to ascribe depression to myself. The concept of depression, or other relevant example, closes the space in which sceptical views are employed. If I can say eg 'I feel jealous of...' or 'I think I'm becoming obsessive about...' then I must also be able to apply jealousy and/or obsession to others who I see as persons.

Alternatively, it might be argued that the concept of a person is logically primitive because there is no adequate conceptual analysis of it and/or that it is a 'whole' which cannot be broken down into parts. The concept, as employed in the way we talk, is simply part of our basic conceptual scheme. If we do break it down we create problems associated with Descartes.

*No marks are available for evaluation although relevant knowledge and understanding in such accounts should be rewarded.*

1 0

Assess the implications of the view that being a person is a matter of degree.

(30 marks)

The view that being a person is a matter of degree may be contrasted with being human (which may be presented as a matter of kind or type). 'Human' may be seen as an essentially 'biological' concept: one either is or is not a member of the species or genus human. Persons may be complex or simple, diminished, there may be ex-persons and potential persons.

The implications of such a view may be linked to questions concerning whether all humans are persons and whether some non-humans are persons as well as to moral and, perhaps, political issues.

It is likely that there will be an account of some proposed characteristics of personhood, such as: self-awareness and continued self-awareness through time; self-control or self-creation, autonomy and responsibility; the ability to reason, reflect and employ higher-order reflective skills; sociability and the requisite communication and language skills that underpin sociability.

Expect critical discussions to focus on:

- Potential and ex-persons: a foetus is human, as is someone in a vegetative state, but either 'not yet' or 'not still' a person.
- Diminution refers to a lessening (rather than a complete loss) of personhood, so that in certain important respects one becomes less complex, weakened or reduced in some way. Again, the point is that diminished persons are no less human than they were before (biographical diminution seems more important than a grasp of any biological changes that may have occurred).
- Some animals and/or some machines may be seen as sufficiently complex in certain relevant respects to be on the scale of personhood.

Discussion of any of the above could be developed through illustrative examples (either factual or fictional) but *may* also be further developed:

- There may be ethical implications with regard to eg whether diminished persons are seen as having diminished responsibilities and as being less accountable, and punishable, for their actions; they may be regarded as having fewer legal rights and/or as less able to exercise natural rights. Conversely, if some non-humans were accepted onto the scale of personhood they may be seen to possess some rights: this point is likely to be linked to animal rights.
- There may be some discussion of 'speciesism' and whether this is or is not like racism or sexism. This is most likely to be applied to animals but could be stretched to cover artificial systems – if an automaton were sufficiently sophisticated, in terms of the relevant attributes, would it have the right not to be dismantled?
- Some may detect a whiff of elitism and identify moral and/or political positions which may be regarded as unattractive (although some might regard them as attractive) eg: whether we should be governed by an intellectual oligarchy, or by those with iron wills; whether anyone is beyond conventional morality; whether ageism, racism or sexism could be justifiable.

A range of argumentation is possible depending on the approach taken:

- Other than the fact that we feel sad when someone close to us becomes diminished or glad when a new potential person arrives, there are no implications.
- The concept of human rights serves a moral and political purpose. It doesn't apply to non-humans and we risk weakening it by opening it to scrutiny. The law, and relevant moral concepts, relates to humans. It may be claimed that 'human' is not a purely biological term.
- Alternatively, perhaps a person is a 'sub-class' of the things that we attach both physical and psychological predicates to. It includes humans but no non-humans.

- Can it be intended that vulnerable humans lose rights as a result of analysing the concept of a person? Is it desirable that certain (eg wealthy) humans might gain power as a result of genetic or technical enhancements that speed evolution (transhumanism)?
- Scrutiny of issues such as this increases the scope of rights – if humans have a right to life as biological systems that house (or used to or will house) persons then other sufficiently similar systems should also enjoy rights. There are not, or would not be, good grounds for denying rights to other species or systems – given their possession, or possible possession, of several relevant attributes – and non-humans should be considered in our moral thinking.
- Moral relations/obligations grounded in relations we sustain with others. Non-human systems not part of such sustainable relations. However, some might argue that we can and do form sustainable relations with non-human animals. There may be references to Gaita.

**Assessment Objective Grid**

<b>AS Assessment Objective</b>	<b>Marks allocated by Assessment Objective</b> 15 mark question	<b>Marks allocated by Assessment Objective</b> 30 mark question	<b>Total Marks by Assessment Objective</b>
<b>AO1</b>	9	9	18
<b>AO2</b>	6	12	18
<b>AO3</b>	0	9	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>45</b>