



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

Philosophy 1171

PHIL2 An Introduction to Philosophy 2

Report on the Examination

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PHIL2

Question 01

Many candidates were able to identify two distinctions between primary and secondary qualities. Some candidates are under the misconception that sense-data and secondary qualities are synonymous. This led some of the responses to distinguish between sense-data and physical objects, which, though at points coincided with the rubric, did not tackle the question directly. There was also a tendency at times to engage in unnecessary evaluation. Occasionally candidates just discussed primary qualities in one passage of writing, then secondary qualities in another, leaving the distinctions implicit in the two treatments. Some candidates tended to blur several points so it was unclear where one distinction ended and the next began. Some would start off with an opening sentence which alluded to several valid distinctions that were then not discussed, suggesting they were unaware that these were in fact distinctions which could be drawn.

Question 02

Many responses discussed various strengths of sense-data theories related to illusions, hallucinations, time-lag, etc. Weaker responses tended to refer to these issues without really unpacking them. Some candidates muddled up this material by arguing that these issues were problems for representative realism. Most candidates then went on to discuss the weaknesses with sense-data theories such as the problem of scepticism. Stronger responses unpacked the various kinds of sceptical implications such as the problem of communication and other minds. Some candidates discussed idealism, but not many were really able to make this material have a significant impact on the direction of the argument. A few candidates defended direct realism, and these responses tended to be very good.

Question 03

There were many competent answers to this question. The majority of candidates were able to identify two characteristics of a tolerant individual. Some candidates failed to produce decent illustrations. There was some blurring on the idea of Forst's three components of tolerance. Candidates that used this distinction to answer the question would often muddle up its application to the question. For example, they would muddle up the ideas of 'object' and 'reject' and end up only making one point about tolerance having a limit. There were also some candidates that said that reasonableness was a characteristic of a tolerant individual but the point was too vague to give full credit and would have benefitted from linking it back to, e.g. issues of fallibility or power.

Question 04

The best responses remained focussed on the question, which meant two things. First, they maintained a critical discussion regarding the conceptual relationship between being a liberal society and being tolerant. Second, they littered their response with illustrations of controversial practices carried out by religious minorities. There were some excellent answers which combined a good understanding of the liberal tradition, usually grounded in Locke and Mill, and illuminated this theoretical material with historical and more contemporary examples of religious controversies within modern societies. However, many candidates ignored one or both of these key aspects. In the first instance there were quite a few candidates that just discussed the

merits of tolerance by juxtaposing liberalism and conservatism. This material was rewarded to an extent but it should be noted that the question was not an invitation to just write about whether tolerance is a good thing. In the second instance some candidates just ignored the reference to religious minorities, or, at best they gave really uninteresting examples of practices we should not tolerate (like bombing people). It was disappointing that there were not more candidates that tried to work out where to draw the line with the harm principle by considering trickier cases like, for example, inciting racial/religious hatred.

Question 05

Many of the candidates were able to produce two reasons why art should be valued for its formal qualities. However, there was a tendency at times to either blur the two reasons together, or there was a failure to produce clear and convincing illustrations relating to the points raised. Candidates should think carefully about which piece of art they are going to use to illustrate their selected point; not any old illustration will do. On occasion candidates would list four or five reasons in the space of as many lines without any development. This is not meeting the needs of the question. It was good to see that hardly any candidates confused Plato's theory of forms with formalism.

Question 06

Quite a lot of candidates tended to juxtapose the view that art is valued because of the information it conveys ('cognitivism') with formalism and expressivism without actually picking up on any salient reasons why we may want to adopt these theories over cognitivism. The preferred approach seemed to involve describing (sometimes in great detail) works of art which are valued for a range of other reasons. Stronger responses tackled this question by drawing out various interesting points, e.g. form as a vehicle for knowledge, forgeries, etc, rather than just juxtaposing theories. Sometimes the candidate seemed to pick on examples of art work that did not necessarily suit the point they were trying to illustrate. For example, sometimes candidates would note that art is valued because it imitates, and then cite *Scream* as an example.

Question 07

Many candidates were able to cite two ways in which natural disasters may be compatible with God's existence. The most common theodicies applied to the question were the free will defence and soul-making. Frustratingly, quite a few candidates would give a drawn out account of Augustine/Irenaeus/Hick without actually giving an example of a natural disaster. Some candidates said that God was not all powerful. But this is not a resolution to the problem of evil as the task is to show that natural disasters are compatible with the divine attributes. Some candidates said that natural disasters are the work of the devil, but failed to link this back to why God would allow this. There was also a tendency to blur fragments of a number of potentially distinct responses to the problem of natural evil together, without developing any one of them. Quite a few candidates simply said natural evils are a test of faith without linking this to any of the theodices, e.g. Irenaeus where it could be said to strengthen one's faith and aid spiritual growth.

Question 08

There is a great deal of accessible literature on the design argument and many candidates were able to select and apply this material judiciously. However, quite a few candidates simply listed a number of problems with the argument without actually showing clearly how it undermined it. For example, there were plenty of references to the theory of evolution, but this material was not

always directly applied to, say, Paley's analogy with the watch. Paley's watch and Aquinas' arrow were often hastily explained, without much application to the natural world itself. Some candidates described in detail the workings of the watch and its design features with scarcely a mention of nature, and then moved straight to Hume's criticism of design arguments. It would be nice to see these analogies explained properly. For example, Paley makes some interesting points about spatial arrangement, about knowing the watch would be designed even if it was broken, about oval frames, etc. It was a little bit disappointing to see that not many candidates latched on to the 'clearly demonstrated' aspect of the question. The very best answers would say that it is not clearly demonstrated in the deductive sense and then move on to talk about it as an inductive argument/abductive argument. Not many candidates did this.

Question 09

Many candidates had a clear grasp of determinism and were able to illustrate the theory. However, many candidates struggled to give a clear account of fatalism. Responses tended to say such things as 'Fatalism is the view that everything in life is fated to happen'. But this is not very informative. They also tended to say things like: you are free apart from when it comes to certain important things in life like what job you have or when you die. This kind of response sometimes made reference to Oedipus. It is dubious whether this kind of 'localised' fatalism is tenable, but even if it is, it does not distinguish it from determinism, as some determinists believe we are free too. Better answers referred to the epiphenomenal nature of decisions and were able to illustrate this. The best answers explained logical fatalism or predestination, and then sharply drew out the differences between this and determinism, sometimes by explaining how the two philosophical positions would each construe a single scenario. Often an account of each theory would be given and it would be left up to the examiner to draw out the distinctions.

Question 10

There were some good responses to this question. Some candidates were able to retain a focus on the issue of moral responsibility by drawing on material from, for example, Hume, Frankfurt, and Strawson. Many responses would simply trawl through hard determinism, libertarianism and compatibilism identifying how each theory may characterise our moral responsibilities. The result was that these responses did not really critically engage in the issues in any depth. Some candidates just described the three theories without really applying them to the issue of moral responsibility at all. Moreover, for some candidates, hard determinism appeared to be the only form of the theory they recognised, while others failed to properly distinguish between libertarianism and compatibilism. The accounts of libertarianisms often relied on Descartes and Sartre, but candidates were often content to give brief summaries of Cartesian dualism and existentialism without showing how exactly these theories are supposed to secure our freedom and our moral responsibility. There was a misconception in a number of responses that talk of praise and blame is identical to talk of moral responsibility. Although the two are clearly related, it may be possible to make sense of praise and blame without talking about moral responsibility. Similarly, showing how, for example, hard determinism can make sense of praise and blame is not the same thing as showing how hard determinism can make sense of moral responsibility.

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