

## ***CONFIDENTIAL*** ***MARKSCHEME*** **May 2003**

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**Essential reading:**

*Philosophy* guide (February, 2000)

Receiving and marking examination material

Writing reports

Instructions for marking scripts

**Forms:**

Sample materials record form (SMR) - one copy

Discrepancy report form (DRF1)

Problem report form (PRF)

Examiner report form (ER)

Examiner claim form (CF1)

## 1 The structure of the papers

Paper 2 for both higher and standard level is based on the Prescribed Texts. One essay question will be set on each text. Candidates are expected to write approximately 500 words in response.

### 1.1 Higher level paper 2

Candidates are required to answer two questions each on a different prescribed text. The maximum mark for each question is 30 and the maximum mark for the paper is 60.

### 1.2 Standard level paper 2

Candidates are required to answer one question. The maximum mark for the question is 30 and the maximum mark for the paper is 30.

## 2 The nature of IBO philosophy

The emphasis of the IBO syllabus is on doing philosophy. Candidates are expected to show an ability in their answers to reason and to argue and take a personal and independent position on philosophical issues.

## 3 Approach to marking

Mark positively and consistently, giving candidates credit for what they have achieved without being influenced too much by omissions. Apply the same standard of marking to higher level and standard level candidates.

Use the full range of marks available. Do not use decimals or fractions for individual answers. Do not subtract marks for material which is irrelevant or incorrect: you are looking for evidence of what candidates know and understand.

Refer to **Instructions for marking scripts: section 4.1** for additional guidance on marking scripts.

## 4 Comments on scripts

It is important that you write comments on every script so that it is possible to see how you arrived at the mark you gave the candidate. These comments should be in the left-hand margin or in the body of the script and should identify well-made points or significant weaknesses in the candidate's answer.

At the end of each answer write a comment which summarizes its general quality and explains the mark awarded, for example:

- interesting and original comments
- thoughtful and carefully developed arguments
- misunderstanding/repetition/irrelevance/contradiction
- unclear or underdeveloped arguments.

These comments are particularly helpful to the senior examiner reviewing your scripts for moderation and at the later stages, including the grade awarding and enquiry upon results.

As a general rule in group 3 examinations there will be a comment of some kind on each page. On those few occasions where you have made no comments you should indicate that you have read each page by writing your initials at the bottom of that page.

Candidates may now request the return of scripts. It is therefore essential that any comments you make are appropriate, constructive and professional.

## 5 The use of descriptors

In addition to the notes for individual answers in the markschemes there are assessment criteria. For each assessment criterion, there are a number of descriptors each describing a specific level of achievement. The aim is to find, for each criterion, the descriptor which conveys most adequately the achievement level attained by the candidate. Having read the essay to be assessed, read the descriptors for each criterion, starting with level 1, until you reach a descriptor which most appropriately describes the achievement level of the work being assessed.

**Example:** If when considering successive descriptors for a particular criterion you decide that the standard described by the level 3 descriptor has not been reached by the work, you should record level 2.

If, however, an essay seems to fall between two descriptors, only partially fulfilling the requirements of the higher descriptor, then you should reread both of the descriptors in question and choose the one which more appropriately describes the candidate's work. You may only record a whole number; partial marks, fractions and decimals are not acceptable. The highest descriptors do not imply faultless performance but should be achievable by the candidate. You should not hesitate to use the extremes, including zero, if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed.

A candidate who attains a high level of achievement in relation to one criterion will not necessarily attain high levels of achievement in relation to the others. Conversely, a candidate who attains a low level of achievement in relation to one criterion will not necessarily attain only low levels of achievement in relation to other criteria.

In the margin next to the candidate's essay you are marking, record the achievement level you have awarded for each criterion. Also record the total of the achievement levels and circle this total. This circled total represents the final mark out of 30 awarded for the essay.

Example:     A     (3)  
              B     (4)  
              C     (8)  
              D     (6)  
                      (21)

## 6 Assessment criteria

### Higher and standard level paper 2

#### A: Expression

- *Has the candidate presented the argument in an organized way?*
- *How clear and precise is the language used by the candidate?*
- *To what extent is the language appropriate to philosophy?*

#### Achievement Level

- 0** The candidate has not reached level 1.
- 1** The candidate expresses some basic ideas but it is not always clear what the argument is trying to convey. The use of language is not appropriate to philosophy. The candidate understands the author's use of specific terminology in only a limited way.
- 2** The candidate presents some ideas in an organized manner. There is some clarity of expression, but the argument cannot always be followed. The use of language is not always appropriate to philosophy. The candidate shows understanding of the author's use of specific terminology, though sometimes in a limited way.
- 3** The candidate presents ideas in an organized way and the development of argument can be easily followed. The use of language is appropriate to philosophy and the author's use of specific terms is generally understood.
- 4** The candidate presents ideas in a clear and coherent way and insights are clearly articulated. The use of language is effective and appropriate to philosophy and the candidate shows a clear understanding of the author's specific terminology.
- 5** The candidate presents ideas in a coherent and incisive way, insights are clearly articulated and the argument is focused and sustained. The use of language is precise and fully appropriate to philosophy and the candidate shows an assured understanding of the author's specific terminology.

## **B: Knowledge and understanding of the text**

- *How well does the candidate know the text?*
- *To what extent has the candidate understood the ideas and arguments presented in the text?*
- *How detailed and appropriate are the candidate's references to the text?*

### **Achievement**

#### **Level**

- 0** The candidate has not reached level 1.
- 1** The candidate demonstrates a superficial knowledge of the text but there is only limited understanding of the key concepts and the arguments of the author.
- 2** The candidate provides some evidence that the text has been read with a basic understanding of the key concepts and the arguments of the author.
- 3** The candidate demonstrates a secure knowledge of the text and the key concepts are generally understood. There is some insight into the author's arguments.
- 4** The candidate demonstrates a wide-ranging knowledge of the text and the key concepts are clearly understood. The candidate is able to show understanding of more difficult or subtle points of the author's arguments with attention to detail.
- 5** The candidate demonstrates that the text has been thoroughly and carefully read. The candidate shows an in-depth understanding of the arguments of the author with a close attention to detail.

## **C: Identification and analysis of relevant material**

- *How well has the candidate understood the specific demands of the question?*
- *To what extent does the candidate provide relevant supporting material?*
- *To what extent does the candidate provide appropriate examples?*
- *How effectively does the candidate analyse the supporting material?*

### **Achievement**

#### **Level**

- 0** The candidate has not reached level 1.
- 1-2** The candidate shows little awareness of the specific demands of the question and identifies relevant material in only a limited way. There is little analysis and few or no examples are given.
- 3-4** The candidate shows some awareness of the specific demands of the question and identifies and analyses some relevant material. Some appropriate examples are used.
- 5-6** The candidate shows a good understanding of the specific demands of the question and identifies material which is nearly always relevant. There is sound analysis of this material. Examples are appropriate and give support to the argument.
- 7-8** The candidate shows a clear understanding of the specific demands of the question and identifies relevant material which is analysed in a thoughtful way. Examples directly support the overall argument in a persuasive manner. Some counter-arguments are presented.
- 9-10** The candidate shows a full understanding of the specific demands of the question and identifies relevant material which is always relevant. The implications of this material are drawn out in a detailed analysis. Examples are well-chosen and compelling in their support of the argument. Counter-arguments are presented in a convincing way.



## **D: Development and evaluation**

- *Does the candidate develop the argument in a coherent way?*
- *How well does the candidate test ideas and arguments?*
- *To what extent does the candidate express a relevant personal response?*

### **Achievement Level**

- 0** The candidate has not reached level 1.
- 1-2** The candidate develops ideas and arguments in a basic way but there is little or no evaluation of the text.
- 3-4** The candidate develops some ideas and arguments but the development is simple, or is asserted without reference to the text. There may be some basic evaluation of the ideas and arguments of the text.
- 5-6** The candidate develops ideas and arguments in a sound way and there is a consistent attempt to evaluate them, even if this is not fully developed.
- 7-8** The candidate develops ideas and arguments in a well-focused and coherent way in close response to the arguments of the text. Evaluation is thoughtful and convincing and the candidate offers a critique of the text which goes beyond a statement of opinion or belief.
- 9-10** The candidate develops ideas and arguments in an incisive and coherent way in a detailed response to the text. Evaluation is compelling or subtle and the candidate presents a critique of the text which shows clear evidence of personal reflection. There is an ability to challenge the assumptions made by the author and the candidate deals competently with counter-arguments.

## **7 Notes on individual questions**

It is essential to approach the task of assessing the candidates' responses to the questions with a flexible and open mind. The response to each question must be assessed on its own merits, bearing in mind the criteria of evaluation, the notes on individual questions and the special requirements of each question. The notes on individual questions are for guidance only. Candidates' answers may vary considerably, and it is possible to give a similar mark to different answers. Also, it is probably not possible for all elements indicated in the markscheme to be included in each answer.



# **MARKSCHEME**

**May 2003**

## **PHILOSOPHY**

**Higher Level and Standard Level**

**Paper 2**

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*The bullet points given under **Key Points** and **Discussion** are not prescriptive; they are suggestions and it is not expected that candidates would include them all.*

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

**How should rulers govern according to Lao Tzu? Discuss his position on this issue.**

Key points

- Good rulers allow the Way to use them: hence the power of non-resistance. Lao Tzu makes the analogy to water: “Nothing is weaker than water, but when it attacks something hard or resistant, then nothing withstands it and nothing will alter its way.” The good ruler is thus like water.
- “Administer the empire by engaging in no activity.” “The more laws and orders are made prominent, the more thieves and robbers there will be.” He can take upon himself the sins of his country. So rulers should govern as little as possible, taking care not to push people around, forcing them to rebel. The job of the ruler is to let the Tao operate freely, thus the ruler must understand the spiritual nature of the world.

Discussion

- Lao Tzu’s view of government is utopian: give people what they want, do not force them to do what they object to. Let the Way happen. One could easily argue that this leads to a Hobbesian world. Lao Tzu seems ignorant of the darkest forces lurking in man’s soul, as those revealed by Freud and Nietzsche. Perhaps we could share his utopian view if Lao Tzu gave us a means to guarantee that the dark forces would be kept in check.
- One could also question if Lao Tzu is not confusing the cause and the reaction: clearly rulers do not enact laws to create further problems but to curb existing ones. Could it be that by creating laws and orders, rulers are unknowingly deceiving themselves and only managing to aggravate the situation they aim at correcting?

## 2. Confucius: *The Analects*

**“He who learns but does not think is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in danger”**  
**Outline Confucius’ theory on learning and thinking, then discuss it.**

### Key points

- Confucius was very supportive of learning as a way of achieving some wisdom. This learning is not acquired merely by the addition of life-forming experiences, but requires reflection on these as well.
- There is, for Confucius, a set body of knowledge that amounts to wisdom, and we must seek it, as only through achieving wisdom will we act in a principled manner: “Love of wisdom without requisite knowledge results in utter lack of principles” (18-8). This contributes to making the person a man of humanity; thus it is never a completed task.
- Learning is a task to help one find the right conduct. It is intimately linked to morality.
- Learning implies a reverence to the past and requires a master to guide the learner.

### Discussion

- Is learning so intertwined with morality? Can we not argue that sometimes the more we learn, the more confused we become about what we should do? To achieve the goal of furthering morality, learning must be very didactic and limited to specific topics. This type of learning can exist, but is it one that invites free thinking or simply imitation of the model?
- An education model based on freeing the mind and developing creativity is not compatible with a Confucian approach to learning. Is there a way by which to reconcile these two different approaches and reap the benefits of both? Or are they exclusive of each other?
- If learning is based on the faithful imitation of a perfect model, how can there be any innovation? Is such an educational scheme an inherent rejection of innovation, or is this rejection an unfortunate consequence?

## 3. Plato: *The Republic*

**“I believe that Plato’s political programme, far from being morally superior to totalitarianism, is fundamentally identical with it.” Critically evaluate this statement in the context of Plato’s *Republic*.**

### Key points

- Explanation of Plato’s ideal state, its justification, the aim for justice and its connection to his theory of knowledge.
- Definition of totalitarianism.
- Plato’s criticism of alternative forms of government such as timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny.

### Discussion

- Does purely rational theory of an ideal state necessarily sacrifice individual interests in the name of the common good?
- Is totalitarianism, to an extent, an unavoidable component of human societies?
- Criticism from J S Mill: democracy and individual freedom produce the greatest advances in society as a whole.
- Criticism of Plato’s assumptions regarding politics as a skill and the possibility that the philosopher king has “true knowledge”.
- Why is Plato proposing a political system akin to totalitarianism? What elements of totalitarianism (if any) could Plato have believed desirable in human society?

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

**“A just man becomes just by doing what is just.” Critically discuss this statement in the context of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*.**

Key points

- Apparently circular argument (quote comes from Book II, Chapter 3).
- Aristotle’s view on “justice” (within the limits of the reading).
- Aristotle’s theory of virtue as a disposition of character that can be developed by doing virtuous acts.
- Virtuous character trait depends on the situation and the “amount” of character trait that is present – virtue lies in the middle of extremities of a particular character trait.

Discussion

- The problem of virtue ethics: which character traits are regarded as virtuous? Assumptions regarding human nature (Aristotle assumed that humans are essentially rational). Difficulty in applying the theory to pass moral judgments on individual actions.
- Is the object of ethics to assess the value of action or value of being (character)?

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

**Does Aquinas have good reasons for thinking that human understanding is a faculty of the human soul, and not its essence? Analyse and discuss Aquinas' reasons in the context of his account of intellective faculties.**

Key points

- Concepts of human understanding or intellect, mind and spirit
- Function of intellect regarding the other faculties
- According to Aquinas it is necessary to say that intellect is a power of the soul, and not the very essence of the soul. The essence is that which operates as the immediate principle of operation, operation itself is its being. Thus power is related to operation as its act; essence is related to being. But the act of understanding is His very Being in God alone. Therefore in God alone is His intellect, His essence, while in other intellectual creatures the intellect is a power.
- Aquinas asserts that understanding is a faculty of human soul and not its essence referring to Aristotle's opinion.

Discussion

- How is the essence of the human being to be understood? Different positions. Dualism.
- What role should reason play in the understanding of human beings?
- Possible comparisons and contrasts with other conceptions of understanding and reason, such as those of Aristotle or Descartes.
- Understanding is the real essence of human beings. That is the meaning of *animal rationalis*.
- Possible implications of the statement, e.g. are we humans as far as we understand?
- Objections to Aquinas' view, for example, Augustine says "mind and spirit are not relative things, but denominate the essence". Therefore, the intellect is the essence of the soul. However, it could be said that intellect is sometimes taken for the power, and sometimes for the intellective soul.



## 6. Descartes: *Meditations*

**Explain Descartes' view of the power of imagination in his discussion on mind and matter, then critically examine it.**

Key points (see *Meditations*, VI Meditation)

- The question should be placed in the context of the Sixth Meditation: of the existence of material things, and of the real distinction between the soul and body of man. The question remains whether material things exist.
- The faculty of imagination is capable of persuading me of the existence of material things. Imagination is nothing but a certain application of the faculty of knowledge to the body, which is immediately present, and therefore exists.
- The difference that exists between the imagination and pure intellect or conceptualisation. Example: if I think of a chiliagon, I can conceive that it is a figure composed of a thousand sides, but I cannot in any way imagine the thousand sides of a chiliagon. I need a particular effort of mind in order to effect the act of imagination, such as I do not require in order to understand. This particular effort of mind manifests the difference which exists between imagination and pure intellect.
- One's power of imagination, inasmuch as it differs from the power of understanding, is in no way a necessary element in my nature, or in my essence. If I did not possess it I should doubtless remain the same. We might conclude from this that it depends on something which differs from me.
- If I can conceive that something exists, which I know about, then it may be that in this way I imagine objects. When I imagine I think of the body/object and see something conforming to the idea I have made or perceived. This is somewhat different to intellectual activity when I consider some of the ideas I already possess. I easily understand that the imagination could be thus constituted if it is true that body exists; and because I can discover no other convenient mode of explaining it. I can conjecture with probability that body does exist.

Discussion

- Can we plainly understand imagination as a form of "I think"?
- Imagination was later characterized as "blind faculty", does it apply to Descartes account of it?
- The problem of imagination's placement as a faculty between mind and body.
- Descartes' approach to imagination is directed by his dualistic assumptions.
- Different approaches to the relation reason-senses.
- We always are already in the world, the only way to correct our deceiving perceptions is by means of others sensual perceptions.

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

**Outline and discuss Locke's theory of the State of Nature with particular reference given to his reasons for abandoning this state.**

Key points

- State of nature: benefits and deprivations
- Labour and property: how through my labour I acquire property. Definition of property: of self (my own person), the product of my work, my freedom
- The function of government: protection of persons, their liberty, their properties
- Tacit consent

Discussion

- Is the sole motive of the protection of property a sufficient condition to leave the state of nature?
- Is Locke's government a fair and representative body? What other roles can and should a government play?
- Do finite global resources make Locke's argument irrelevant?
- Are state of nature theories convenient myths or useful contributions to political philosophy?
- Is Locke's concept of tacit consent vague or empty?

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

**Explain Hume's claim that mankind has always agreed on the doctrine of liberty and necessity. Do you agree with his explanation that "the whole dispute has been merely verbal"?**

Key points (see *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section VIII)

- It might be expected that the meaning of the terms should have been agreed upon among the disputants. It is not the case in this dispute.
- Hume says that it will not require many words to prove that all mankind has agreed on the doctrine of liberty as well as in that of necessity, and that the whole dispute, in this respect also, has been hitherto merely verbal. A few intelligible definitions would immediately have put an end to the whole controversy.
- Examination of the doctrine of necessity and causation in the natural world and in human actions. The philosopher, to be consistent, must apply the same reasoning (applied to the natural world) to the actions and volitions of intelligent agents.
- Our idea of necessity and causation arises entirely from the uniformity observable in the operations of nature, where similar objects are constantly conjoined together, and the mind is determined by custom to infer the one from the appearance of the other.
- By liberty, Hume means: a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will. He states that this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to every one who is not a prisoner. Here, then, is no subject for dispute.
- Hume thinks that we may change the name of things; but their nature and their operation on understanding never change.

Discussion

- Constant and regular conjunction of similar events gives only a weak link. It would not be enough to found the ideas of causation and necessity.
- We cannot conceptualize human actions in the same way we account for natural phenomena.
- Uniformity is a characteristic of the natural world, but human actions follow different reasons and motives.
- Is the concept of cause a sufficient basis on which to understand the concepts of necessity and freedom?
- Different historical accounts of freedom and necessity.

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

**What reasons does Rousseau give when he claims that institutions such as the Law have become corrupted? Evaluate the validity of his reasons.**

Key points

- State of Nature *versus* modern man; natural freedoms and rights; equating happiness with simple independence.
- Origins of inequality and source of corruption: language, property, and relationships.
- Institutions and governments: laws have always favoured those who make them; the right of conquest cannot stand as a basis for other rights.
- The need for a social contract.

Discussion

- Do humans have a “natural” sense of their autonomy, freedoms and rights as Rousseau suggests, or are we naturally gregarious, socially dependent agents?
- Do citizens have to submit, always and unconditionally, their natural rights and freedoms to the whole of the community in order to be a part of it?
- Is Rousseau warranted in separating the source of intellectual knowledge from moral knowledge, *i.e.* is an uncorrupted heart to be trusted?
- Are our natural desires any more moral than our “civilised” ones?

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

**What is the importance of moral worth in Kantian ethics?**

Key points

- Action from motive and action from good will: a necessary distinction.
- Universal maxims (the formula of the law of nature) and the formula of autonomy, the formal principle of duty, and acting out of reverence for the law.
- The categorical imperative.
- The presuppositions of a fully rational man and the idea of freedom if correct moral judgments are to be made.

Discussion

- Is Kant’s formula for moral goodness practical? How does one decide if competing or contradictory duties are formulated using his principles?
- Is it moral to ignore the consequences of our actions when deciding their value?
- Is it possible to make universal moral imperatives using any formula?
- Are all our inclinations based on pleasure or are there altruistic ones that Kant has not recognised? Are the emotional aspects of moral sentiments like compassion, pity, and love irrelevant, or are they central to their value and meaning?

11. Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals*

Analyse Nietzsche's claim that the origin of language is the master's expression of power. Discuss the implications of this claim on language and values.

Key points (see *The Genealogy of Morals*, Book 1, Chapter 2)

- The “good”, that is, the noble, and the powerful were the ones who felt themselves to be good, and placed themselves as such, in contrast to everything weak, low-minded, common, and plebeian. On the basis of this pathos of distance, they first claimed the right to create values, and to give names to values.
- The pathos of nobility and distance, the enduring, dominating, and fundamental overall feeling of a higher ruling kind in relation to a lower kind, a “below”, became the origin of the difference between “good” and “bad”.
- The right of the masters to confer names developed into the origin of language as the expression of the power of the rulers: they say “this is such and such”, they put their seal on each thing and event with a sound, and in the process took possession of it.
- There is from the outset absolutely *no* necessary connection between the word “good” and “unegoistic” actions. It is only with the decline of aristocratic value judgments that this opposition between “egoistic” and “unegoistic” comes to impose itself increasingly on the human conscience. It is the *herd-instinct*, which here finally has its chance to put itself into *words*.
- The designations of “good” coined in various languages led back to the same transformation of concepts: “refined” and “noble” is the fundamental concept, from which “good” in the sense of “having a refined soul”, necessarily developed.
- Will to power is a common source of values and language.

Discussion

- “Every word is preconcept.”
- The assertion that language is originated in will to power is simply an exaggeration
- Language has different functions. Exerting power by means of language is only one possible function of language

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

**Is Mill’s argument for individual freedom incompatible with his belief in the principle of utility?**

Key points

- Individuals should be allowed to be free (“liberty of action”) as long as their actions do not harm others. This is in the best interest of both the individual and society.
- Principle of utility: whatever produces greatest happiness for the greatest number of people is morally right. Additionally, Mill limits the majority’s happiness by introducing the notion of minorities’ rights.
- Concepts of negative and positive freedom.

Discussion

- Difficulties of knowing: (a) what constitutes harm to others (clash between private and public interest) and (b) what principle or action would produce greatest happiness to the greatest number of people, and (c) how to measure happiness.
- Must society necessarily limit an individual’s freedom to make them conform? Can an individual only acquire certain freedoms in a society? (Concepts of negative and positive freedom.)
- Does the possible incompatibility of individual freedom and the principle of utility arise from the concepts used? How does the application of terms like “utility” or “freedom” change our view of an individual’s role in a society?
- Is there an incompatibility between Mill’s three prong view: minorities’ rights, greatest happiness for greatest number of persons, and maximum liberty for all?

**13. Freud: *Civilisation and its Discontents* and *Outline of Psychoanalysis*  
Analyse and evaluate why Freud claims that religious wants, desires and demands derive from infantile helplessness and the yearning for the father.**

Key points (see *Civilization and its Discontents I-II*)

- Freud is concerned with the sources of the religious feeling and he discusses the question whether the so called “oceanic feeling” (described as something limitless, unbounded, which produces a sensation of “eternity”) ought to be regarded as the main source of the need for religion. He dismisses this possibility as a final source.
- Infant’s helplessness is a main characteristic of human species; the need for a father’s protection is the strongest need in childhood.
- Religion appears to be a form of compensation if science and art are missing. Freud quotes Schiller: “He who possesses science and art also has religion; but he who possesses neither of these two, let him have religion.”
- Religion assures the common man that “a careful Providence will watch over his life”. Freud holds that the common man cannot imagine the Providence otherwise than in the figure of an enormously exalted father.
- A valid answer can be given following main concepts of this text and *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, e.g.: evolution of psychical apparatus; development and function of the “I”; conservation of the psychic experience; Freud’s conception of wants and desires; importance and characteristics of early familiar relationship.

Discussion

- Can the “new”, adult, phenomena be reduced to early child experiences?
- Freud translates individual or historical experiences into general humankind characteristics.
- What about the possible influence of female models in the constitution of religion?
- It is not a simplistic explanation for such a complex phenomenon as religion?

14. **Buber: *I and Thou***

**“When a culture is no longer centred in a living and continually renewed relational process, it freezes into the It-world.” Examine and evaluate this statement.**

Key points (see second part of *I and Thou*)

- The mutually exclusive worlds of the relation (I-Thou) and of experience (I-It). The further away we move from the world of relation, the more we sink into the world of It.
- It “freezes”: Buber views the world of It as a static world where we only pile up material things. Such material things include experiences and emotions: we just add them, and more of them. In doing so, we fail to enter the spiritual world of relation with the Other, with the Thou.
- By definition, the relation is never static: it constantly renews the process.
- Cultures are like persons: they can be more embedded in the It world, or more connected within the world of relation. Buber’s theory is that as cultures age, they move progressively more into the world of It, thus entering a decadent age.

Discussion

- What gives a culture its dynamism? Buber argues that it is the life of the relation that infuses it with spirit. Can we hold a materialistic worldview and accept Buber’s analysis of the decadence of culture? Is it the case that cultures become progressively more fixated on the material dimension?
- Buber’s comparison of the Roman’s belief in a medley of gods and the contemporary belief in a medley of forces in front of which we capitulate: psychological laws, social laws, cultural laws ... culminating in the denial of freedom.

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

**Explain and discuss the philosophical implications of Ortega y Gasset's claim that the human being is responsible for both what he is and what he is going to do.**

Key points (see *History as a System*, VII, pp 201-02)

- Some points to be considered: “I” am “me” and “my circumstances”; human life is a “task”: we are always doing something; human life as a set of possibilities; “possibility” as concept applies to human life and means something special, making it different from every other concept or form of possibility; double orientation of human action: towards himself and towards the world.
- Ortega states that various possibilities open before me at every moment of my life, allowing me to do this or that. Man is the entity that makes itself, an entity which traditional ontology only stumbled on precisely as its course was drawing to a close, and which it in consequence gave up the attempt to understand: the *causa sui*. With this difference, that the *causa sui* had only to “exert itself” in being the *causa* of itself and not in determining what *self* it was going to cause.
- But man must not only make himself: the weightiest thing he has to do is to determine what he is going to be. He is *causa sui* to the second power. Every person decides according to a vital programme, the *ego* of which allows him to choose from the various possibilities of being, and these are at every instant, open before him.

Discussion

- Concerning these infinite possibilities of being the following remarks can be made: (1) That they likewise are not offered to me. I must find them for/by myself. I invent projects of being and doing in the light of my circumstances. (2) That among these possibilities I must choose. Hence, I am free. But, be it well understood, I am free by compulsion, whether I wish to be or not.
- A human being is not always able to decide to make himself according to a decision or a previous project.
- Ortega y Gasset does not provide a philosophical analysis of the concept of freedom, as it is presupposed in his claims.
- Possible comparisons to other similar approaches, *e.g.* existentialism.



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

**“Meaning is one of the words of which one may say that they have odd jobs in our language. It is these words which cause most philosophical troubles.” Explain and discuss Wittgenstein’s claim.**

Key points

- Meaning as “fixed unitary object”
- Language games (sense and reference)
- Wittgenstein’s “method” as solution
- Examples used: perception of colour, the diviner, Other’s pains and solipsism, what is time and knowledge.

Discussion

- Are all the problems of philosophy merely linguistic confusions? What of moral issues? What use, if any, is there for philosophy?
- If the meaning of words is context dependent, then what is understood by words like truth?
- Is Wittgenstein’s method a hermeneutic that generates multiple answers that guarantee confusion?
- Is language necessary for thought?

17. **Arendt: *The Human Condition***

**Arendt distinguishes between immortality and eternity and concludes that there is eventually a “victory of the concern with eternity over all kinds of aspirations toward immortality”. Present the elements of the distinction she makes and discuss them.**

Key points

- Arendt’s analysis is rooted in Ancient Greek philosophy and medieval philosophy: the life of the *polis* versus contemplation: the desire for immortality can be summarised as the desire to leave things, one’s contribution behind, a contribution that will forever after be a testimony of one’s life. This encapsulates the deeds of men of action, who choose the *vita activa*. These men perceived their tasks, as mortals, as consisting of the production of everlasting things: deeds, words, or works. On the opposite side, are men of thought, who choose *vita contemplativa*. Eternity is experienced, or rather glimpsed at, in moments of absolute quietness.
- The Christian heritage has weighted heavily on the side of the superiority of the *vita contemplativa*, thus downgrading all other attempts as inferior in nature. Arendt contends that even Marx and Nietzsche’s efforts to turn things upside down failed.
- Arendt proposes that perhaps it is because philosophers realised the preposterous nature of human attempts at immortality (“all strivings for immortality as vanity and vainglory”), that they further valued their experience of contemplation.
- The fall of the Roman Empire and consequent rise of Christianity to its place as the predominant religion of the Western world succeeded in making strivings for immortality “futile and unnecessary”.

Discussion

- Does Arendt adequately measure the extent of the secularisation of the world? Is her analysis still valid at the beginning of this new millennium?
- Perhaps Marx and Nietzsche failed, but haven’t things been turned upside down?
- Even in the realm of morality, with the rise of relativism, the Western world has lost the dominium of contemplation and the means for it. Has the value of contemplation not been degraded as a result?
- With the rest of the world crying for development, aren’t they crying for what will eventually separate them from access to a life of contemplation as their labour will become further divorced from them?
- Echoes of Martin Buber’s relation.

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

**What does de Beauvoir mean by saying: “the child is metaphysically privileged”? Evaluate her argument.**

Key points

- The child normally escapes anguish as he totally involves himself in living and fails to feel the burden of his existential responsibility.
- His imitation play of models found around him, in games, literature, *etc.* becomes a reality. He lives it fully in the present and it doesn't represent the *bad faith* that adults can be accused of when they play a game with life.
- The child is spared the burden of responsibility for his actions, for himself. It is therefore nonsense to speak of freedom for a child.
- Children's situation is comparable to that of slaves and women, living under the domination of men, though, contrary to the child, the women choose their condition (at least women in the Western world do).
- De Beauvoir's analysis of this issue is enshrined in a view of human potential choices once childhood is finished: one can become a sub-human, a serious man, a nihilist, an adventurer, or a truly moral person.

Discussion

- Does de Beauvoir's argument make sense? Is it still the case that we can compare the situation of slaves and women to that of a child?
- Can we accept her view of this metaphysical void?
- An opposite view point: Karl Jaspers said that around the age of eight children often articulate true metaphysical questions. Can we reconcile these opposite views?

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

**Are the principles chosen by individuals in the original position necessarily morally binding? Assess Rawls' view.**

Key points

- Original position is a situation in which, “behind the veil of ignorance”, rational agents choose fundamental principles that govern the society.
- Principles chosen in the original position are: (First Principle) Everyone will have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with similar liberty for others; and (Second Principle) social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged and that they are attached to positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunities.
- These principles could be regarded as morally binding because they are chosen by rational agents using fair procedure. It would be inconsistent to understand the principles as right but wishing not to follow them (Kantian nature of Rawls' social contract theory).

Discussion

- Assumptions on the type of rationality and self-interest of people in the original position.
- It may be that the distribution of economic benefits and burdens in society changes over time because of individuals' voluntary action (for example by trade). This may result in an inequality that will not give the greatest benefit to the least advantaged. If this is the case, is the state unjust in trying to impose the rule that “inequalities must be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged”? Are people not entitled to what they have acquired by their actions? (Nozick's theory of entitlement).
- Why should the principles be morally binding? If individuals chose not to abide by them, could society survive?
- If they are **morally** binding, should they not also be **legally** binding?

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

**Explain and discuss Feyerabend's argument that we cannot regard natural sciences as superior to other forms of understanding.**

Key points

- The problem of determining “superiority” because this value judgment is linked to one’s way of conceptualising reality.
- Facts, values and rationality cannot necessarily be separated. If so “the theoretical approach” is not objective but necessarily biased.
- According to Feyerabend the theoretical approach of western natural sciences assumes unjustifiably that only intellectuals can make worthwhile contributions; it ignores the problems it creates and fails to recognise the other ways of understanding, while emphasising objectivity and tolerance.

Discussion

- The answer depends on definition of terms, “forms of understanding”, “theoretical approach”, “objectivity”, “incommensurability” *etc.*
- Assuming that forms of understanding are incommensurable and objectivity is impossible, could we argue that particular form(s) of understanding produce knowledge with greater instrumental value? Could this be used to demonstrate superiority?
- Implications of incommensurability of forms of understanding to the theory of knowledge.

**21. Foucault: *The History of Sexuality***

**Foucault distinguishes “ars erotica” from “scientia sexualis”? Critically evaluate his distinction.**

Key points

- In many societies, particularly oriental, knowledge and truth about sex are drawn from pleasure itself (*ars erotica* – erotic art). This knowledge is learned by practice and the master can pass on its secrets in an esoteric manner.
- Modern western civilisation has no *ars erotica* but is probably the only civilisation to practice a *scientia sexualis* which is based on telling the truth about sex. This has come about by confessional sexual sins in the context of Christianity. Later, in the 19th century, the practice of producing truth about sexuality was taken over by doctors and research. Power relations, scientific studies and social control mechanisms developed – and most importantly, a discourse that aimed to produce truth about sexuality.

Discussion

- Has Foucault discovered or created the history of sexuality? Criticism of the methods of his research; the risk of anachronistic interpretations and projecting modern discourse and concepts of sexuality on history.
- Are there other methods of producing truth about sex, other than the two Foucault mentions?
- Foucault’s constructivism: assuming it is true that we construct “realities” such as our ideas of sexuality, is it possible to take an “outsider’s” view on a discourse that we are part of?

22. Putnam: *Reason, Truth and History*

**“The assumptions about rationality are largely unexamined collections of cultural myths and prejudices.” Discuss Putnam’s view on the relative priority of rationality and value.**

Key points (see *Reason, Truth and History*, Chapter 8)

- According to a traditional view reason is a faculty which chooses ends on the basis of their *goodness* (as opposed to the “passions”, which try to dictate ends on the basis of the appetites; or “inclination”); a claim which supports the view that it is *rational* to choose the good, which in turn supports the claim that goodness and badness are objective.
- The question is always whether there is any sense in which it can be called *irrational* to choose a bad end, as if goodness were on trial and rationality were the judge. To assume this stance is to prejudge the question of the status of value judgments in advance.
- Putnam proposes to reverse the terms of the comparison and to ask not how rational is goodness, but why is it good to be rational?
- M. Weber introduced the modern fact-value distinction, his argument against the objectivity of value judgments was that it is not possible to establish the truth of a value judgment to the satisfaction of *all possible rational persons*.
- Other points to be considered: (a) different conceptions of rationality. Instrumentalism. Majoritarianism; (b) the success of science in the general culture and its implications; (c) “method fetishism”; (d) it is good to be rational because if one is rational one can discover truths; (e) to identify rationality with scientific rationality would be to beg the question of the cognitive status of value arguments.

Discussion

- It is not good to be rational.
- Each era has its own idea of rationality, our time is the one of scientific rationality.
- There is a fetishism of the method, but method is convenient and necessary for scientific knowledge.
- Comparison to other historical conceptions, for instance Socrates and Nietzsche.

23. Taylor: *The Ethics of Authenticity*

**“It is our individualism that desires authenticity. It is also our individualism that makes authenticity trivial.” Do you agree with this assessment of Taylor’s view?**

Key points

- The birth of individualism from the Renaissance/Enlightenment periods; the influence of the Cartesian concept of consciousness, Rousseau’s rejection of reason in making moral judgments, and the concomitant development of liberal democratic traditions.
- The problems of individualism: the current domination of instrumental reason and moral subjectivism in the evaluation of ethical issues; the disappearance of social and institutional links; the alienation of the individual in market driven capitalism.
- The benefits of individualism: freedom of expression and thought; social and moral pluralism; for an increasing number, a materially satisfying existence.
- The belief that our feelings, intuitions and emotions **are** important and, indeed, are the source for our authenticity.

Discussion

- Does Taylor’s characterisation of the modern quest for authenticity mean that its goals are necessarily trivial? Moreover, **is** this quest trivial as the statement suggests, or a deeply felt need? Is **this** an essential feature/quality of our human nature?
- Are meaningful moral judgments possible without objective reason? Would subscribing to a deontological system of moral evaluation provide a firmer basis for authenticity?
- Is it possible for authenticity to be conceived of without reference to the individual at all? Are there degrees of authenticity?
- Taylor claims that the paradox of moral subjectivists is that they cannot rationally defend their position. Is this not a fatal weakness in this moral position, and so does this undermine the value of authenticity?

24. Nussbaum: *Poetic Justice*

**What does Nussbaum mean when she speaks of rational emotions? Is her explanation valid?**

Key points

- Nussbaum’s rejection of economic models, disinterested reason and utility as the sole guide for a normative ethic.
- Some (or all) of the four objections to rational emotions and Nussbaum’s response:
  - (a) emotions as blind forces;
  - (b) emotions as false judgments;
  - (c) emotions are prejudicial in public judgments;
  - (d) emotions are concerned with particular cases and not general ones (Marxist criticism).
- The connection of rational emotions to concepts of empathy, fancy and imagination.
- The role of literature as a guide to moral understanding.

Discussion

- Does empathy help in making laws? Is a level of disinterestedness necessary in ensuring that the laws apply to all?
  - Is Nussbaum’s idea of a judicial spectator a purely theoretical construction?
  - Are the models Nussbaum uses valuable for current moral dilemmas, *i.e.* 19th century bourgeois English values? Moreover, can’t other textual interpretations (deconstructive reading) highlight contradictions in such “moral” readings of a text?
  - Is the fancy that Nussbaum discusses a force that can adequately address real problems in the real world?
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