

MARKSCHEME

May 2004

PHILOSOPHY

Higher Level and Standard Level

Paper 2

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

Examine and evaluate the idea that, strictly speaking, nothing can be said about the Tao.

The problem to which the answer should refer is that even though strictly speaking nothing can be said about the Tao, some hints have to be given about its nature. Arguments should take into account, on the one hand, the “nature” of Tao; on the other, the difficulties to use the language to approach it.

Key points

- The term “Tao” basically means: (a) literally, “way” or “path”, (b) “way of doing something”, and (c) “principle” or “set of principles”.
- The philosophical concept of “Tao” refers to an ultimate reality, prior to both heaven and earth. Tao is something “formless yet complete”, “without sound, without substance,” “depending on nothing, unchanging,” “its true name we do not know”. (Chapter 25)
- As an ultimate reality Tao goes beyond the world of ordinary experience, space, time and causality, and it is not an individual at all.
- Therefore, it is beyond the concepts or, as the text put it, names: “It was from the Nameless that Heaven and Earth sprang” (Chapter 1). The Nameless is that to which no names apply because it is not an individual.

Discussion

- One way to give some hints about the Tao is to describe it in negative terms, suggesting indefiniteness. For instance, Tao is described as Not-being (chapter 40).
- Good answers could refer to other possible ways in which the difficulty of saying something about which nothing can be said could be overcome in some way; for instance, images: Tao as uncarved block, water, female (indicating passivity, receptivity, indefiniteness).
- A comparison and contrast with other conceptions could be a valid approach as part of the answer. For instance, the impossibility of saying something about the “ultimate reality” could be analysed in relation to the Confucian idea that to follow the Way is to follow a set of principles or to the Christian idea of “Way”.

2. **Confucius: *The Analects***

Explain and assess what Confucius means when he states, “the gentleman collects friends through culture, and through his friends supports humaneness.”

In this question, candidates are expected to describe the Confucian concepts of culture and humaneness (the gentleman, or the goal of virtue ethics), and what role friendship can play in developing the virtuous man.

Key points

- Culture (*wen*) is the “adornments” to a civilization; music, art, and literature and are in contrast to, though complimentary with, social virtues *e.g.* respect for ritual.
- The social virtue of friendship (loyalty) as a site for other virtues (courage, good faith); promoting the Way.
- Humaneness (*ren*) as the goal of virtue and the necessary condition for wisdom.
- The rejection of wealth and position as measures of virtue; rather the need to use wealth and position to further virtue in oneself and others.

Discussion

- Are virtue ethics, in general, merely an exercise in mimicry where the agent has little to no true understanding of why an action is right or wrong?
- In the attainment of humaneness, is Confucius’ method one of blind ritual and subservience?
- Are culture and friendship ways to promote virtue, or ways of entrenching privilege?
- Is the gentleman that Confucius lauds capable of serving in the public’s interest?

3. Plato: *The Republic*

Is it the case that Plato believes that rulers are born, not made? Discuss.

This question draws together threads in Plato's description of the Philosopher King and the ideal state: the education and virtues of its leaders, and the reliance on breeding for maintaining the ideal state. The candidates are expected to make some analysis of the relationships between these explanations and hence respond to the claim made in the question.

Key Points

- The innate virtues and education of a philosopher: lover of knowledge, intelligent, honest, courageous *etc.*; learns mathematics as a preliminary for mastering the "dialectic"
- The central role of the breeding festival, and the selection of Guardians in the maintenance of the Ideal State (and in its destruction)
- The degradation of the state corresponds with the degradation of the character of the ruling classes
- The Ship's Captain simile as an example of untrained and ignorant leadership
- Candidates should point out that the philosopher king must have innate characteristics, these can only become manifest if the philosopher king undergoes the rigorous training Plato prescribed.

Discussion

- Are the virtues and education described by Plato all that are necessary for a successful leader? cf. Machiavelli: that a leader must be like a lion (courageous and terrifying) and like a fox (cunning and prepared to wilfully deceive)
- Is there a contradiction in Plato's description of the destruction of an Ideal State by its own structure and method of perpetuation? Or is this ending in keeping with his pessimism and skepticism about the possibility of the Ideal State's realization?
- Is Plato correct in his assumption that with knowledge there comes ethical responsibility?
- Even though we may be persuaded by Plato's criticisms of democracy, are the rulers and society that Plato hopes for ones that we would want?

4. Aristotle: *The Nicomachean Ethics*

Using some appropriate examples of Aristotle’s virtues, explain and discuss his view on the acquisition of moral goodness.

The candidate is expected to expose the main elements of Aristotle’s theory on how humans learn to be good persons. A key element of his ethics, Aristotle’s theory is coherently related to the goal: *eudaimonia*. Candidates are expected to make reference to some of the virtues Aristotle identifies in his discussion.

Key points (see book II, 1103a14 ss)

- Moral goodness (or right conduct) is the result of habit. It is acquired, not innate. It depends on the instruction given to the person, it needs time and experience to be firmly anchored as characteristics of the person. Moral goodness is learned through the performance of acts of moral goodness. Aristotle makes an interesting parallel with the development of artistic talent.
- Consequently, Aristotle stresses the importance for society to give opportunities to practise actions that are exemplary of moral goodness: courage and temperance for example.
- Virtue is not a feeling nor a faculty but a disposition. It is critically important to practice acts of moral goodness as right conduct is easily corrupted by “deficiency and excess”.
- Moral goodness is concerned with pleasure and pain: “pleasure induces us to behave badly, while pain makes us shrink from fine actions. Education should aim at teaching to feel joy and grief over the right things”.
- Aristotle stresses that there is a difference between virtuous acts and acts that are incidentally virtuous. In the latter, the agent knows what he is doing, and chooses to act in this morally worthwhile fashion for no other reasons than the goodness of the act. The agent does it from a fixed and permanent disposition. The doctrine of the Mean: virtue as a mean between extremes.

Discussion

- Aristotle bases his argument on a comparison with nature (for example a stone cannot be trained to rise up, it will always be disposed towards falling down). Given this understanding of nature as premise, can Aristotle’s theory withstand the test of time when his understanding of nature has not?
- Aristotle points out that there are limits to what can be taught to an individual. Is this an acceptable view point when we talk of virtues?
- Aristotle places the responsibility of the education in moral goodness in society’s lap. Is this where it should rest? Does it not belong first and foremost to parents, family, and churches?
- Education as learning the 3 Rs (Reading, (W)riting and (A)rithmetic). Where is there room for education in moral goodness?
- How is the theory on moral goodness related to *eudaimonia*?

5. Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae*

Analyse and discuss Aquinas' reasons for thinking that the human soul is not a composite of matter and form.

The question gives an opportunity to explain Aquinas' conception regarding the unity between mind and body. Good answers should also explain why according to Aquinas the human soul is not a composite of matter and form.

Key points (*Summa Theologiae* p.75 part 5)

- Reasons to think that the human soul is a composite of matter and form. For instance: (a) matter implies potency, soul faculties implies potency, therefore soul contains matter; (b) only God is pure actuality, therefore pure form.
- Aquinas' direct answers are: to (a) the receptive potentiality in the intellectual soul is other than the receptive potentiality of matter, and to (b) in the intellectual substances there is composition of actuality and potentiality, but not of form and matter.
- Aquinas argues that whatever is received depends on the condition of the recipient. A thing is known in as far as its form is in the knower. But the intellectual soul knows a thing in its nature absolutely. Therefore the intellectual soul itself is an absolute form.
- Following the tradition from Aristotle, Aquinas conceives the soul as the form, actualization, or realization of the body. It is not a substance distinct from the body, but a co-substantial principle with the body, both being united to form the composite substance, man.

Discussion

- How is the nature essence of the human being to be understood? Answers can explain Aquinas' account versus dualist positions, for instance, Plato and Descartes.
- Are there religious assumptions in Aquinas' account? Aquinas, based on Aristotle's doctrines, firstly intends to give a rational, and therefore purely philosophical account of human nature.
- The term "mind" usually denotes this principle as the subject of our conscious states, while "soul" denotes the source of our vegetative activities as well. Aquinas identifies mind (*mens*) with the human soul viewed as intellectual and abstracting from lower organic faculties.

6. Descartes: *Meditations*

Why does Descartes introduce the Evil Genius hypothesis? Discuss.

The intention of this question is to allow candidates the opportunity to distinguish between the methodological doubt and metaphysical doubt, and show the supremacy of God as the ultimate justification of Descartes' epistemology.

Key points

- Having eliminated all doubts about certainty of his knowledge acquired with all that he had within the control of his mind, Descartes needed to address the possibility of a force that he could not control, that was outside his mind.
- The Evil Genius works in my mind, creating the illusion of certainty over my reason in resolving problems – how can I know that having carefully followed by rational method of reasoning, my answer is correct if the Evil Genius controls my mind?
- How does Descartes get rid of the Evil Genius hypothesis? – through his belief in God's Perfection: a perfect good will not let me be deceived by an evil genius.
- Descartes' skepticism is bolstered by the Evil Genius hypothesis reinforcing the dreaming argument.

Discussion

- With this hypothesis, Descartes links metaphysics with epistemology.
- Does Descartes really escape the prison of his epistemological skepticism?
- Can we nevertheless remain confident in the method proposed by Descartes or did he "shoot himself in the foot"?
- His epistemology rests on the validity of his proofs for God's existence. How valid is it then?

7. Locke: *Second Treatise on Government*

Are the limits that Locke sets for legislative power justified? Explain your answer.

Key points

- The term “legislative power” needs to be defined. It is the law making body of the government. Locke defines it for example in *Second Treatise* §§ 143. Candidates should explain how the limitations Locke suggests are linked to his overall argument.
- Locke argues that “the legislative” should govern by clearly expressed laws that apply equally to all citizens; it should only pass laws that benefit the citizens; it cannot decide to raise taxes without the consent of the people or their deputies; and it cannot delegate the power of making laws. *Second Treatise*, XI – Of the Extent of the Legislative Power, §§ 134 – 142.
- Locke argued that legislative and executive powers were conceptually different. Because there is a danger of corruption if legislative and executive powers are in the same hands, the power of the legislature is curtailed by the separation of powers. *Second Treatise* §§ 143, 144, 150, 159.

Discussion

- One can discuss whether the limitations Locke places for the legislative arise from a particular point of view. Locke’s argument is based on preservation of freedom of citizens and avoiding corruption and tyranny, but there may be other perspectives too. A utilitarian argument for example might take a different form, and some, like Plato, would oppose the idea of separation of powers.
- Ultimately political theories are based on particular ideas of human nature, which should be made explicit.
- It is possible to discuss Locke’s use of concepts. His definition of terms is often vague. For example he does not make clear distinction between legislative, executive and judicial power.

**8. Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
Explain Hume’s criticism of excessive skepticism. Critically evaluate his argument.**

The purpose of this question is to engage the candidate to explain and evaluate in Hume's criticism of excessive skepticism.

Key points

- The term that needs to be defined is “skepticism”. Skepticism involves doubt about knowledge and existence. Varieties of skepticism can be distinguished by the extent of the doubt.
- In *Enquiry* Hume starts by accepting two statements: there is an “external” world independent of us; and we are only in direct contact with the contents of our mind. He reaches the skeptical conclusion that we cannot know the nature of reality, be sure of God’s existence, or trust causal and inductive thinking.
- In Section XII of the *Academical or Sceptical Philosophy* Hume asks how far one can push philosophical doubt. He criticizes excessive skepticism, pyrrhonism, which was a starting point for Descartes’ philosophy. According to Hume, excessive skepticism cannot lead to constructive philosophy. He also points out that skeptics of this kind are proven wrong by their own experiences for “nature is always too strong for principle.”
- Hume is proposing that a mitigated skepticism that starts from some accepted ideas or theories is useful for mankind. This type of skepticism criticizes some preconceived ideas and points out the limits of our understanding.

Discussion

- One could link Hume’s distinction between universal and limited, or local, skepticism into the modern discussion and consider some modern claims against universal skepticism. One could mention for example, Moore who has defended common sense or explain the fallibilistic theory of knowledge.
- One could also argue against Hume and defend universal skepticism. It is possible that most things we know are erroneous. However it could also be that the argument for universal skepticism is erroneous.
- A philosopher can for example point out that we cannot always trust our senses, but sense perceptions need to be corrected by reason, or that sometimes we make unjustified assumptions as in the case of causal thinking.
- It is possible to discuss the limits of knowledge that Hume’s mitigated skepticism allows.

9. Rousseau: *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality and Social Contract*
Explain and discuss how, according to Rousseau, early human society became corrupt. What remedy does Rousseau propose?

The purpose of this question is to engage the candidate to explain and discuss Rousseau's theory of corruption of the early human society and his suggested remedy for this condition.

Key points

- “Early human society” needs to be described.
- General will needs to be explained as the remedy.
- In the *Origins of Inequality* Rousseau argues that early human society was corrupted by the idea of property and the development of language. Humans lost their original freedom, and became selfish and alienated. The society was turned into a collection of self-interested individuals with conflicting aims.
- In the *Social Contract* Rousseau aims to establish freedom in society by suggesting that after the initial social contract the political society should not be governed by the individualistic “will of all” but by the infallible “general will” that aims towards the common good.
- Because individuals or the minority do not always will what is good for all, at times they must be “forced to be free” by “the legislator”.

Discussion

- It can be argued that “general will” is not a complete remedy since the original state of nature cannot be recreated. Because humans have lived in a society their nature has changed.
- There is a difference between social contract theories in *Origins of Inequality* and *Social Contract*.
- It is possible to criticize Rousseau’s rosy view of “the natural man” and early society, and his overly gloomy view of modern society. It is also possible to criticize his methods and logic both in the *Origins of Inequality* and the *Social Contract*.
- One can also discuss Rousseau’s idea of social contract, and the undemocratic features of the “general will” and “the legislator” – it can be argued that Rousseau’s vision would not lead to preservation of freedom but authoritarianism.

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

Explain and evaluate Kant's claim that "a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same".

Candidates must show that we must be autonomous beings, capable of being motivated by the conception of ourselves as legislative citizens in the kingdom of ends. We are autonomous, and thus are bound by moral law.

Key points

- Since reasons are derived from principles, the will must have a principle. A free will must therefore have its own law or principle, which it gives to itself. It must be an autonomous will. But moral law is just the law of an autonomous will.
- Rationality requires that we act under the idea of freedom, and freedom is government by moral law, so rationality requires that we regard ourselves as governed by moral law. The will is the causality of a rational being.
- According to the principle of autonomy we should so act that we may think of ourselves as legislating universal laws through our maxims.

Discussion

- An analysis of the concepts involved in the question (freedom, will, moral law) is appropriate, but it should be incorporated into an argument focused on the question.
- The argument can be developed following the different dimensions of the categorical imperative: (a) an action is moral if and only if the maxim on which it is based can be universalized, (b) an action is moral if and only if it is carried out based on a freely imposed rule (autonomy) and, (c) an action is moral if and only if it treats persons as ends in themselves.
- Other approaches can argue that a free will in order to be really free should not be under a moral law at all. In this sense, Nietzschean and Sartrean counter arguments can be elaborated.
- Kant's view on the identity between free will and a will under moral law does not earnestly accept the nature of moral conflicts. "Real" moral life involves making painful decisions as to which moral principles to obey and which ones to break.

11. Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals*

Nietzsche states that the creative act of *ressentiment* was in giving birth to its own set of values. Evaluate this claim.

Candidates are expected to describe what *ressentiment* is using Nietzsche's historical example. A discussion of slave and aristocratic moralities, and the values born from *ressentiment* (guilt, bad conscience, ascetic ideal) is expected.

Key points

- Nietzsche's historical description of slave and aristocratic morality; the role of the priest in the overthrow (and maintenance) of values; the use and meanings of punishment.
- The re-direction of the will to power inwards by the creation of guilt, the bad conscience, and the soul (the creation of self punishment and hatred and the setting of unattainable goals and adoption of unnatural role models.)
- Some of the values that were born: guilt, the bad-conscience and the "soul"; the denial of sensual and instinctual pleasures; responsibility and surety for "the self"; "truth" above all.
- The ascetic ideal as a preserver of life: how the restricted conditions for life (morality) literally protect and preserve life, and sets up a clear distinction and appreciation of the values that make life bearable and dangerous.

Discussion

- Is Nietzsche's historical description credible (a parable of revolution), or merely a convenient story created to fit his predetermined psychological and moral concepts?
- Though physical and mental suffering is unavoidable in life, does this mean we should embrace this suffering or give it a positive value? Do social values like compassion necessarily mean weakness?
- Does Nietzsche's perspectivism necessarily deny the individual the concept of some authentic set of moral values?
- If what Nietzsche describes is indeed what we are, then the "priests" are right: we do need protecting from ourselves.

12. Mill: *Essay on Liberty*

With the help of examples, assess Mill’s view that a man can be punished for harming others, but not for harming himself.

The intention of this question is to allow candidates to examine the concept of personal sovereignty within a social framework in *Essay on Liberty*. Additionally, candidates are expected to explain and analyse the balances and limitations Mill sees between personal liberty and social liberty. In the end, candidates are expected to take a position on this issue of lasting importance.

Key points

- The concept of liberty over oneself is unlimited provided the individual is an adult, of sane mind and is one whose thinking is not altered by substances.
- Even if harming oneself were inevitably to cause harm to society, Mill argues: “the inconvenience is one which society can afford to bear, for the sake of the greater good of human freedom”. Examples should be given.
- Mill further argues that:
 - ♦ society has the opportunity, prior to the individual becoming an adult, to educate its citizens to become rational beings. Should an individual, having reached adulthood, continue to behave childishly, the fault lies with society
 - ♦ should society decide to intervene to prevent individuals from harming themselves, it would generally make a mistake. In doing so, society acts as if it knew better than the individual what his own good is, and where and how his own good lies *e.g.* seat belts.
- Society can and ought to express its displeasure at individuals engaging in self-harming activities. This is hopefully a deterrent.
- The limit lies in the point where self-harm affects (thus potentially harm severely enough to warrant intervention) others. Then society can punish.

Discussion

- How does this view fit in with the utilitarian economy calculations?
- This position rests on granting the individual an ability to judge rationally what is best. Considering that one popular form of self-harm is the consumption of illegal drugs that create a chemical dependency, is Mill’s view defensible? Are humans that capable of rational decisions?
- Joel Fienberg’s development of Mill: paternalisms and moralism
- Given that pain thresholds are very subjective, how can we ever hope to measure at what point the harm caused to others becomes too severe to bear? For example, what time of day and what volume of music is too loud?
- Candidates should use examples such as:
 - ♦ banning of smoking in public places
 - ♦ compulsory wearing of bicycle helmets
 - ♦ interdiction to deal in illegal drugs
 - ♦ criminalization of suicide and abortion in some countries.

13. **Freud: *Civilisation and its Discontents* and *Outline of Psychoanalysis***
Freud contends that “civilized man has exchanged a portion of his possibilities for happiness for a portion of security”. Explain what Freud means by this, and critically analyse it.

The intention of this question is to allow candidates to examine the process of civilization and how it affects the psychological make-up of man. Candidates are expected to identify Freud’s premises: that one of the great forces of life is Eros, and that it is the recognition of the impossibility to satisfy it without the contribution of others that brings forth the economy of pleasure one is forced to do when becoming a member of a society.

Key points

- The pleasure principle is egoistical. To satisfy it at a maximum degree, we are forced to compromise its satisfaction in order to establish an order that will allow its more regular satisfaction: *e.g.* the creation of the family: a man agrees to form a monogamist relation with one woman as it guarantees that the object of sexual satisfaction will be available easily, and a woman agrees to enter into the relationship as it promises security for her offspring.
- Development of psychological apparatus; ego, superego, id.
- Monogamy as the limiting model that protects social order by, among other things, forbidding incestuous relationships and preventing fights between neighbours.
- Analogy between the process of civilization and the path of individual development, all the way to the creation of the cultural super-ego, a parallel to the individual super-ego: a controlling force that acts as a pleasure limiting agency.
- Repression of natural impulses whose satisfaction would yield pleasure. Its repression can lead to sublimation, neurosis, aggressivity.

Discussion

- Freud echoes Rousseau and Marx in his remarks over the role of private property in the generation of conflicts between individuals. Thus, the compromise of living together in relative security acts as a diminishing factor on the desire to possess what we perceive as the potential source of happiness.
- Most of Freud’s theories have been amended by modern day psychiatry, particularly approaches to clinical treatment. Notwithstanding this, what value can we find in his analysis of society?
- When we look at the phenomenal amount of explicit sexuality in the media, in particular in publicity and films, what can we conclude about the validity of Freud’s proposal that we exchange pleasure for security?

14. Buber: *I and Thou*

Explain the critical difference Buber sees between “relation” and “experience”. Analyse it critically.

The point of this question is to allow candidates to explore the nature of one’s interaction with the outside world. For Buber, this can happen in a binary way, each exclusive of the other, with one recognized as richer and more fulfilling. Candidates are expected to expose the various elements of each type of interaction and critically comment on it. Parallels can be drawn to other existentialists’ approach on the same issue.

Key points

- The relation is the privileged interaction, the interaction with a *Thou*. This can happen with another person, an animal, a natural element (*e.g.* a forest), a work of art, a spiritual being. It is essentially a communion, a joining of selves, a reciprocal understanding: a talking to and a being listened and talked to. It is the absolute living in the moment.
- The world of *It* is a frozen world, where I can pile up experiences I have. *It* is the world of having, while the *I-Thou* world is the world of being.
- Cultures, as they evolve, sink progressively in the world of *It*. We get caught in the material world and lose the spirit.
- The experience is one way: from me to the outside entity, be it human or otherwise. I reach out to it, in order to add another element to my past history. It is not living in the present but in the past, it is egoistical, and devoid of sharing, though others can have the same experience in parallel to me at the same time. But there is no “*us*” in the experience, rather there is a sum of “*I*”.
- “*The relation*” requires that one listens, is quiet, and attentive.

Discussion

- Can we possibly live in the Buberian world of *I-Thou* and still be functional, effective adults, who earn a living to survive?
- How, if at all possible, can we preserve the relation in our lives, when the imperatives of the *It* world are calling so strongly for us to engage in various activities?
- Is it really such a binary division between the worlds? Can I not go and have an exciting experience, say go white water canoeing, and at the same time have a relation with the world around me?

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

“History is a system, the system of human experiences linked in a single, inexorable [inevitable] chain.” Explain how Ortega reaches this conclusion and critically evaluate it.

The purpose of this question is to engage the candidate to explain and discuss Ortega’s idea of history as ‘a system’.

Key points

- Ortega explains that there is no fixed human nature but humans are constantly in the process of “becoming” *i.e.* accumulating experiences and ideas.
- Because there is no fixed human nature we can only understand individuals in the light of what he or she has been. Similarly, cultures and societies are historically evolving self-reflective symbolic systems. They have their own dynamics of development.
- History is a “systematic science of the radical reality, my life”.

Discussion

- Ortega’s argument provides many avenues for criticism:
 - ♦ One could criticize his views of human nature or existence.
 - ♦ One could also point out that the relativism he advocates, when applied to his own philosophy, undermines his own argument.
 - ♦ One could also criticise Ortega’s choice of words: in what sense, if any, is history “a system” or the study of history “science”?
- In what sense, if any, are human experiences linked, as Ortega claims?
- Does Ortega’s view of history allow for individual autonomy and freedom?

16. Wittgenstein: *The Blue and Brown Books*

“The sign (the sentence) gets its significance from the system of signs, from the language to which it belongs. Roughly: understanding a sentence means understanding a language.” Analyse and assess this idea in the context of Wittgenstein’s investigation of meaning.

According to the way in which Wittgenstein analyses the question, the answers could be developed in very different ways and connected to the discussion of themes such as: language, understanding, meaning, mental representation, thinking and philosophy.

Key points

- To understand an expression or sentence is to master its use within a grammatically structured means of communicating, that is a language.
- Linguistic activity is like playing games. Linguistic expressions are like game pieces, used to make moves in rule-governed conventional social practices. A “pawn” or a “rook” is defined by the chess rules; so too, a linguistic expression’s meaning is constituted by the tacit rules governing its use. In this text “language games” mainly refers to “primitive forms” of languages or “primitive” languages; other characterizations can be appropriate too.
- One should think of words as instruments characterized by their use. Language can be understood only if one understands that a great variety of games are played with sentences: giving and obeying orders; asking questions and answering them; describing an event; telling a fictitious story; telling a joke; describing an immediate experience, making conjectures about events in the physical world; making scientific hypotheses and theories; greeting someone, *etc.*

Discussion

- Meaning is not a correlation between a word and another thing. The meaning is not a mental accompaniment to the expression. Meanings are not abstract objects like propositions either. Words have the meaning we give them.
- An objection to Wittgenstein’s view on meaning as use: many rule-governed social activities (sports and games) do not centrally involve the kind of meaning that linguistic expressions have.
- The discussion could refer to other conceptions of meaning such as of logically proper names or logical analysis.

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

**“World alienation and not self alienation, ..., has been the hallmark of the modern age.”
Explain and evaluate.**

In this question understanding Arendt’s claim rests on knowing the historical events outlined below. The critical point in Arendt’s argument is because of Cartesian scepticism and the *cogito* (driven by earlier scientific discoveries), people in the modern age look only to their subjectivity as an arbitrator of their experience, and not to any external ‘worldly’ standards.

Key points

- The three historical events that have shaped the modern age: discovery of new world (commerce, trade, and map making); appropriation and distribution of Church property (the beginning of private property); science and the nature of the universe understood from a point beyond the earth (Galileo and his telescope)
- Cartesian scepticism and the beginning of the withdrawal of man from the world (mistrust of senses, and a difference between appearances and reality; location of Archimedean point within man)
- With man unable to trust either his senses or his reason for certainty, truth is highly problematic. There is a shift in focus from ‘what and why’ to ‘how’; the *process*, the means to an end, now become his preoccupation. The processes of science, materialism and *homo faber* (man as maker) are the new paradigms for man; God is a watchmaker.
- *Homo faber*’s principle of utility and his certainty in made objects, is superseded by the maxim ‘the greatest good for the greatest number’. God is now dead and individual life – and its processes – now occupy the position that the ‘life’ of the body politic once had. Man is now alienated from the world and withdrawn into his subjective individualism.

Discussion

- Is Arendt’s characterization of modern science as having a preoccupation with processes correct? Surely theoretical questions of ‘what and why’ are still necessary concerns?
- Rather than a turning away from the world, the historical and scientific events Arendt describes could be interpreted as man’s understanding of his position within the world, using standards from the world.
- Is Arendt correct in her assumptions about the value humans place on objects and permanency?
- If Arendt is correct in her analysis, is it possible for any meaningful political actions? Are we condemned to superficial, anxious lives because of our philosophical skepticism?

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

Critically evaluate the role the concepts of “the present” and “the future” play in de Beauvoir’s ethical theory.

The purpose of this question is to engage the candidate to explain and critically discuss de Beauvoir’s ideas of “the present” and “the future” as part of her ethical theory.

Key points

- De Beauvoir argues that when making an ethical choice we have to consider whether it leads to greater freedom in the future. The future exists in one’s being because an individual is constantly “becoming”. One is an unfinished project aiming to reach certain ends. These “ends” are used to justify present actions.
- Linked to the idea of projects de Beauvoir defines future as “a direction of a particular transcendence”. She says that it is impossible to make distinction of present and future as temporal form.
- She criticizes utopian theories, “future myths,” that regard history to have some purpose or goal. Such utopias turn present into mere instrument, they are even used to justify injustice in the present in order to reach the future state, and people who believe that at some point everything will change are not living authentically in the present.
- People should affirm their idea of future in their current existence, and live for the “finite” or “human future”. We will never have complete knowledge when making choices but we must use our will and our will fashions the future.

Discussion

- De Beauvoir’s existentialist ethic tries to void the rigidity of normative ethics. For example, she explains that ethical judgments depend on situations and one’s preconceptions about the future. It is possible to criticize this situationalist and relativistic approach by arguing that it leaves too much room for interpretation.
- De Beauvoir argues that the future needs to be part of my “project”, my authentic living and decision making. If the future is but wishful utopia it will reduce me to my “facticity”. De Beauvoir’s idea of “the present” and “the future”, and time in general, is consistent with her existentialism, but many philosophers have understood the nature of time differently. Augustine, for example, regarded the nature of time as a paradox, Kant thought time is a category of our thinking and Merleau-Ponty claimed that the flow of time we experience is not real.
- One can also discuss any of the concepts de Beauvoir uses such as “infinite future” or “finite future”, “transcendence” and so forth.

19. Rawls: *A Theory of Justice*

Analyse and evaluate Rawls' claim that the principles of justice define an appropriate path between dogmatism and intolerance on the one side, and a reductionism which regards religion and morality as mere preferences on the other.

Different lines of answers can be followed because the question involves central doctrines of Rawl's conception. Although it can be appropriate depending on the constructed argument, it is not compulsory to discuss the original position.

Key points (*A Theory of Justice*, Chapter 39)

- Dogmatism and intolerance on the one side, and indifference on the other undermine democracy. The principles of justice, on the contrary, keep democratic institutions alive by allowing religion and morality.
- A formulation of the first principle of justice: "each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with similar scheme of liberties for others."
- The second principle (second formulation) states: "social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) to the greatest expected benefit of the least advantaged and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity."
- The central ideas and aims of the conception of justice as fairness are those of a philosophical conception for a constitutional democracy. The basic liberties of a democratic regime are most firmly secured by the conception of justice as fairness.
- The principles of justice are not dogmatically based on absolute grounds, but they are teleological; as teleological principles they permit grounds for equal liberty and provide the strongest arguments for freedom.

Discussion

- Utilitarianism cannot provide a satisfactory account of the basic rights and liberties of citizens as free and equal persons, a requirement of absolute importance for an account of democratic institutions.
- The path defined by the principles of justice is the ground on which liberty of conscience and freedom of thought can be based. Can liberty of conscience and freedom of thought be based on dogmatism, intolerance or indifference?
- Do you agree with Rawls that the principles of justice are so detached and independent from ethical foundations. If not, does Rawls' argument still stand?

20. Feyerabend: *Farewell to Reason*

To what extent, if any, do you agree with Feyerabend when he states “...science is a tyranny that removes complexities from real life”?

In this question, candidates are expected to explain Feyerabend’s epistemic relativism, which is fundamental to his argument against Science and conventional notions of truth, and to his version of democracy.

Key points

- An explanation of Feyerabend’s argument
- Feyerabend’s argument is that neither values, facts, nor methods can support the claim that Science overrides all other frameworks or traditions of understanding.
- Epistemic relativism: values are essential “ingredients” to knowledge; opinions not tied to human traditions are outside human existence; opinions are objective in the sense that they are supported by a culture’s traditions but without explicit reference to them.
- The example of western medicine vs. traditional medicine as a contrast in the underlying assumptions and values of science and non-science: exclusiveness or inclusiveness; theoretical and dogmatic, practical and pragmatic.
- Feyerabend’s political context and tenets of democratic relativism as a requirement for the cross fertilization of western and other traditions.

Discussion

- Does the claim of “one amongst many” imply an inherently self contradictory position when it comes to any theory of knowledge? (the criticisms of Popper and Putnam on relativism and Feyerabend’s response).
- Is it not the case that experts often do know what is better for me and for others than we do? *i.e.* some knowledge is privileged, exclusive.
- Is the tyranny of science replaced by the tyranny of populism and prejudice in Feyerabend’s democracy?
- Given current geo-political events, is it still possible for cultures, civilizations, values to co-exist?

21. Foucault: *The History of Sexuality*

What does Foucault mean when he speaks of the deployment of sexuality? Explain his views and comment critically.

The point of this question is to allow candidates to examine Foucault's theory on the deployment of sexuality and the fact that he ascribes it to a point in time, starting from the eighteenth century. The continuous development of the science of sexuality from that point on has normalized and pathologized behaviour in opposite categories that results in a new interplay of power with sex. Candidates are expected to point out the relevance of this analysis.

Key points

- Foucault's premise is that sexuality is one of the elements of power that has the "greatest instrumentality".
- The four strategies, beginning in the eighteenth century that "formed specific mechanisms centring knowledge and power on sex" and the four corresponding figures:
 - ♦ hystericization of women's bodies: the "mother" versus the "nervous woman": the hysterical woman
 - ♦ pedagogization of children's sex and its paradoxes: the masturbating child
 - ♦ socialization of procreative behaviour: socio-fiscal measures to bear on child reproduction: the Malthusian couple
 - ♦ psychiatrization of perverse pleasure: pathologies and correctives: the perverse adult
- The parallel with the deployment of the alliance, the link with economy and wealth
- The role of the family, in the form that became valued after the eighteenth century in the deployment of sexuality:
 - ♦ main elements of the deployment: the feminine body, infantile precocity, regulation of births, specifications of the perverted
 - ♦ the two axes: husband-wife, parent-children
 - ♦ the family as the "anchor of sexuality"
- Prohibition of incest as a means to curb the deployment of sexuality
- Charcot's early contributions to the study of the hysterical woman

Discussion

- Is Foucault's analysis of the relationship between power and sexuality convincing? Or does he have a predetermined view of the importance of sexuality?
- With the advance of medical sciences and the increased understanding of human reproductive processes, it is not the case that women have been liberated from the inhibitive fears of unwanted pregnancies; is it not the case that power is now in women's hands rather than women being controlled by medical powers?
- With nearly 50% of marriages ending in divorces the role and structure of family has been significantly altered, therefore can we argue that sexuality has now moved from the power structure Foucault ascribed it, and it has taken its rightful place as a mere organic function?

22. Putnam: Reason, Truth and History

In the context of Putnam’s account of reason and history explain and evaluate his idea that cultural relativism is internally incoherent.

The question asks for an examination of Putnam’s account against cultural relativism. Answers can discuss in general how reason and history could be connected. Good responses could refer to the thinkers who are regarded as relativist by Putnam, for instance, Althusser and Foucault.

Key points

- Putnam does not conclude from the fact that our conceptions of reason evolve in history, that reason *itself* can evolve.
- Putnam regards the dichotomy between an historical unchanging canons of rationality and cultural relativism as outdated.
- Foucault focuses on irrational motives in order to suggest the utterly non-rational character of the real reasons that people have for adopting ideological positions.
- What troubles Putnam about Foucault’s account is that the determinants he points to are *irrational by our present lights*. If our present ideology is the product of forces that are *irrational by its own lights*, then it is internally incoherent.
- According to Putnam, the relativist cannot, in the end, make any sense of the distinction between “being right” and “thinking he is right”. That means that there is, in the end, no difference between *asserting* or *thinking*, on the one hand, and *making noises (or producing mental images)* on the other.

Discussion

- No relativist wants to be relativist about everything. Moral, political and ideological assumptions provide a basis to put a limit on the relativism.
- There is no use in discussing relativism. After all, is it not *obviously* contradictory to *hold* a point of view while at the same time holding that *no* point of view is more justified or right than any other?
- Self-contradiction is not a final absolute reason against cultural relativism. One can argue, following W. Whitman lines: “I contradict myself, so what?”
- Cultural patterns and judgment values have reasons that reason cannot understand.
- Putnam’s example of “brains in a vat” (BIV) with regard to reference and meaning as a means of establishing his argument against relativism.

23. Taylor: *The Ethics of Authenticity*

Taylor argues that you cannot live an authentic life without “horizons of significance”. Explain and critically evaluate Taylor’s argument and say why you agree or disagree with his conclusion.

Key points

- The terms that need to be defined are “authentic life” or “authenticity” and “horizons of significance”. Authentic life means a significant, emotionally appropriate way of living or being faithful to oneself. “Horizons of significance” is the background against which our tastes and desires and opinions and aspirations make sense.
- Taylor is arguing that the self-centred narcissistic individual, who determines meaning-based feelings is not living authentically. What has significance depends on the context of our lives, and is, in that sense, given to us. Thus we cannot choose freely what is significant but our choice has to take place against the “horizon of significance.”

Discussion

- One could argue that Taylor’s “horizons of significance” is a trivial concept because it is clear that all choices have a cultural and personal background, even those that Taylor regards as self-centred and narcissistic.
- Taylor’s criticism of modern culture and his idea of “horizon of significance” seem to carry a conservative flavour. Authenticity includes being faithful to something which was produced by people before us. He is arguing that individuality realizes itself in a social context.
- How is Taylor’s concept of authenticity different from that of the existentialists?

24. Nussbaum: *Poetic Justice*

Explain and critically discuss Nussbaum’s view on the judicious spectator.

The main point of the question is focused on the specific discussion on the conception of judicious spectator, but more general arguments, discussing Nussbaum’s account of rational emotions and public rationality, are adequate.

Key points (*Poetic Justice*, Chapter 3.)

- Emotions must be “filtered” in order to play the valuable role they ought to play in public life. “Judicious spectator”, a figure introduced by Adam Smith in The “Theory of Moral Sentiments”, refers to a kind of reliable filtering device which helps us to decide which emotions we are to trust or how literary readership helps us to discriminate the trustworthy from the untrustworthy.
- Adam Smith’s conception of the judicious spectator offers a way to evaluate emotions. He uses literary readership (and spectatorship at dramas) to illustrate the stance, and the emotions, of the judicious spectator; literature becomes a source of moral guidance.
- The judicious spectator as a spectator is not personally involved in the events he witnesses, although he cares about the participants as a concerned friend. He will not, therefore, have such emotions and thoughts as relate to his own personal safety and happiness; he surveys the scene before him with a certain detachment.

Discussion

- References to either literary works, *e.g. Hard Times* are appropriate.
 - The judicious spectator provides a paradigm of public rationality (whether for the leader or for the citizen). More generally, the contrast between emotion and reason as a commonplace of public discourse can be discussed.
 - To be a good guide, the emotion must, first of all, be informed by a true view of what is going on, of their significance for the actors in the situation. Appropriate emotions are useful in showing us what we might do, and also in motivating appropriate action.
 - Although literature can be a way of emotional education for public rationality, this education should be based on other equally important, dimensions: history, morality and politics.
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