

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Pre-U Certificate

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2013 series

9774 PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

9774/02

Paper 2 (Topics and Key Texts in Philosophy and Theology 1), maximum raw mark 50

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Page 2	Mark Scheme	Syllabus	Paper
	Pre-U – May/June 2013	9774	02

Topic 1 Epistemology

Section A

[Extract from **George Berkeley**: *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous in Opposition to Sceptics and Atheists*: Cahn, 720-721]

- 1 (a) **Explain how Philonous attempts to persuade Hylas that heat exists only in the mind, and not in material substances.** [10]

Berkeley's central contention is that whatever is perceived is perceived immediately; and since the only things that we perceive immediately are ideas, then we can only be immediately aware of the contents of our minds. What we have sense-knowledge of is therefore in the mind. Hylas argues, for example, that extreme heat must originate in the object that is hot itself, which seems to be a commonsense point, but Philonous replies that if something cannot be distinguished from pain, then it is pain. When one puts one's hand close to a source of great heat, the heat and the pain are both immediately perceived at the same time, so a great heat cannot be distinguished from pain, so in fact it is pain. If a pain cannot exist unperceived, no violent and painful heat can exist unperceived, so no violent and painful heat can exist unperceived. If external objects are not the subject of sensations of perceptions, then pain and heat cannot exist in external objects. Since pain exists in the mind only, then heat must exist in the mind only.

- (b) **Evaluate Berkeley's account of material substance.** [15]

Berkeley sets himself up as the philosopher of common sense, and the objection to Berkeley's account of material objects is frequently expressed on that level, reminiscent of Samuel Johnson kicking a large stone, and saying, 'I refute it thus'. Berkeley assumed that he was defending a number of commonsense principles – that we can trust our senses, that the objects of our perceptions are real, that the qualities we perceive as existing are real; and his denial of the separate existence of matter for him affirms those principles. Candidates are likely to consider the logic of Berkeley's rejection of secondary qualities of objects, and thereby his insistence that primary qualities likewise exist in the mind. Objections to Berkeley's account focus for example on his invocation of God as the guarantor of the consistency of perceptions, on the alleged superiority of realist or phenomenalist accounts of perception over his brand of idealism, and so on.

Section B

- 2 **Critically examine doubts raised by philosophers about the success of both empiricism and rationalism in understanding the world.** [25]

There are many ways in which candidates might approach this. Some will begin with an analysis of rationalist claims: for example empiricists argue that the concept of innate knowledge is empty, since it cannot be observed and is ineffective, moreover rationalists disagree as to what is innate and what is not; science proceeds by empirical principles, and is very good at doing so; the empirical method allows for ideas and concepts to be wrong, re-tested, changed, and so on, which is preferable to the absolute statements of rationalists about what is or what is not. Conversely, a defence of rationalist principles might point to the independence of logical and mathematical truths from sense experience. Locke's concept of the mind beginning as a *tabula rasa* concludes that our learned experiences tell us about the nature of reality, but the problem with this is that there can be no way of checking our experiences to confirm that they conform to reality. Candidates might offer various accounts of the scepticism that is due to empiricist or

Page 3	Mark Scheme	Syllabus	Paper
	Pre-U – May/June 2013	9774	02

rationalist procedures, or to both: scepticism has led to attempts to justify knowledge through a mental or an experiential foundation, neither of which has proved particularly successful. Some might argue for the abolition of ‘nothing buttery’, advocating instead the acceptance of both rationalist and empiricist principles where appropriate.

OR

3 Critically assess different phenomenalist theories of perception.

[25]

Since the question refers to ‘theories’, candidates are expected to consider Mill’s view that objects are ‘permanent possibilities of sensation’ and Ayer’s linguistic phenomenalism. As a radical form of empiricism, phenomenalism has antecedents in Berkeley’s subjective idealism, and Kant’s ‘epistemological phenomenalism’, for example. Mill holds that such permanent possibilities are sufficient for an object’s existence. The regularity of experience in the world of possible sensations is in other beings as well as in the individual, so there really is an external world. Mill’s account can be criticised on a number of fronts – for example it offers no explanation of why these permanent possibilities offer themselves – they just do, which seems rather inadequate by comparison (for example) with realist explanations that material objects exist, and are the cause of our sense experience.

Another form of phenomenalism derives from the likes of Mach, Russell and Ayer, known as ‘linguistic phenomenalism’ – every empirical statement reduces to a set of statements referring exclusively to sense-data: e.g. sentences about ‘tables’ are to be translated into sentences which refer exclusively to actual or possible sensory experiences. This version relies on an incredibly complex set of ‘subjunctive conditionals’ / ‘counterfactual’ descriptions about the sense-data of what would be observed. Such descriptions render the theory too cumbersome, since the counterfactual descriptions (such as the possible sense-data descriptions of what I *might* perceive if I opened a book which *might* be in the library next door) would seem to be infinite. How, further, to use Dancy’s example, would I describe the subjunctive conditionals corresponding to the statement, ‘there is a red rose in the dark’? Phenomenalism is thus beset with problems, not least being the further issue that describing counterfactuals seems to require the existence of an enduring and material observer, which goes against the phenomenalist reductionist agenda.

Candidates might argue in defence of phenomenalism that it is a laudable attempt to explain the problem of the continued existence of material objects when they are not observed. If it is objected that its account is incomplete or unsatisfactory, then phenomenologists can argue that no other account of perception is complete or satisfactory.

Page 4	Mark Scheme	Syllabus	Paper
	Pre-U – May/June 2013	9774	02

Topic 2 Philosophical and Theological Language

Section A

[Extract from **Basil Mitchell**: *The Philosophy of Religion*: IV: 'An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief.' (R.B. Braithwaite): 81]

4 (a) Explain how Braithwaite supports his view that religious principles are moral principles. [10]

Braithwaite argues that religious propositions are essentially non-cognitive. When faced with the question of deciding whether or not any particular religion has factual primacy, Braithwaite concludes that the most likely solution is that religions are all meaningful non-cognitively, since they all have common ground in so far as religious propositions act as moral propositions. Religious propositions are not *reducible* to moral propositions but serve as statements of ethical intention – i.e. they signify the declarer's intention to act morally in accordance with the 'stories' of a religion. Thus a Christian will adopt Christian stories, a Buddhist will adopt Buddhist stories, and so on, as vehicles for expressing moral truths. To become a Christian or a Buddhist might on one level signify the acceptance of propositions about reality and metaphysics that the believer holds to be factual, but the reality is (whether they know it or not) that such propositions are significant morally. Thus it does not matter if propositions about the Virgin Birth in Christianity are factually true or not (in fact Braithwaite suggests that they might be an affront to common sense) – what is important is how the believer expresses faith by moral action: thus the story of the Virgin Birth will encourage a Christian to revere motherhood. Equally, the story of the Good Samaritan is the vehicle by which Christians signify their intention to love their neighbours. Since religious principles are moral principles, religious statements are therefore verifiable weakly, since the intention to behave morally can be empirically observed by looking at people's behaviour.

(b) Critically examine Braithwaite's claim that, "Unless religious principles are moral principles, it makes no sense to speak of putting them into practice". [15]

Braithwaite's analysis has many strengths. For a start, it solves the problem of religious pluralism – there is no need to hold that one religion is right and another wrong (and so on), since all religious propositions boil down to statements of ethical intention. Braithwaite seems on strong ground when he suggests that people become Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, etc., not because they are adopting a set of metaphysical beliefs but because they wish to embrace the way of life involved, and this is indeed a major criterion by which religious adherence can be tested and measured. It is also true that believers may not pay more than lip-service to particular doctrines, and that this does not cause anxiety because it is perceived that the religion concerned provides a complete framework in which to express moral conviction and to implement moral action. On the other hand it is unlikely that believers will be happy to be told that their beliefs are non-cognitive and are not significant over and above their practical moral application. Those who adhere to a faith generally believe that their acceptance of doctrine is significant in terms of what happens to them when they die and are judged by God, and there is no shortage of examples of religious institutions compelling belief in all sorts of unpleasant ways. Since all religions cannot be doctrinally correct, Braithwaite's view that the perceptions of the believer have no bearing on what religion is really about has persuasive power.

Page 5	Mark Scheme	Syllabus	Paper
	Pre-U – May/June 2013	9774	02

Section B

5 Assess the implications of the verification principle for the philosophy of religion. [25]

The VP derives its force from Hume's distinction between matters of logic and matters of fact. Matters of fact are testable empirically, and logical statements are self-evidently true. According to the VP, religious statements are neither logically true nor empirically verifiable, and so are meaningless. Candidates might consider the correlative implications of the falsification principle, which in effect adds another dimension to the empirical attack on religion; although the discussion should focus primarily on the VP. For the philosophy of religion, the VP as expressed in its strong or restricted formulations, is held by the likes of Ayer to show the meaninglessness of religious statements, to which some respond that the VP cannot meet its own criteria, or that religion is verifiable weakly, or eschatologically, or non-cognitively, or through some other criterion of judgement. The debate has meant, for example, that crude Creationist religious assertions have been relentlessly challenged, although the protagonists of that debate tend to impute that all religious philosophy suffers from the same weaknesses, which is hardly the case. In terms of ethics, Ayer's claim that religious statements are meaningless has contributed to the increased popularity of non-cognitive approaches to ethics, as well as to the recognition that religious theories of ethics have a great deal of trouble in justifying a connection between morality as it is practised throughout the world and the supposed moral commands from God that dictate such practice.

OR

6 Evaluate the claim that Wittgenstein's theory of language games solves the problem of the meaningfulness of religious language. [25]

Wittgenstein's Language Game theory supposes an irreducible connection between language and truth, to the extent that truth is user-defined in relation to the particular LG being played. In the LG of chess, for example, truth is defined solely in terms of the arbitrary rules without which the game cannot be played meaningfully, and this kind of thinking is held to govern the multiplicity of religious language games, where truth derives not from the absolute commands or nature of an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God but from the habit that the religious LG has of making statements to that effect. Empirical verification is held to be the province of the scientific LG, which by definition does not govern the religious LG. Such a view has been seen to have the merit of removing the need for empirical justification of religious beliefs, although it has led others to remark that LG theory makes belief in God no more true or false than belief in the Great Pumpkin of the Peanuts cartoons. Wittgenstein's notes show that he believed the issue to be far more important than that, but given that the debate is confined to what can be established by linguistic usage, the accusation still has force. Candidates might consider the resultant debate about coherence theories of truth / anti-realism, and their knock-on effect with the post-modernist agenda to ask what LG theory has or has not solved.

Page 6	Mark Scheme	Syllabus	Paper
	Pre-U – May/June 2013	9774	02

Topic 3 Philosophy of Religion

Section A

[Abbreviated extract from **John Hick**: *Evil and the God of Love*: 238-240]

- 7 (a) Explain points of contrast and agreement that Hick makes between Augustinian and Irenaean types of theodicy. [10]

Hick suggests that Irenaean-type theodicies are purely theological, not being committed to a Platonic or any other form of framework. Whereas Augustine sees God's relationship with creation mainly in non-personal terms, in Irenaean-type theodicies humans are destined for a personal / love relationship with the Creator. Augustine looks to the past – specifically to the alleged 'Fall' - to explain current evil, whereas for Irenaean theodicies evil has eschatological justification. For Augustine, humanity is inherently sinful, a position rejected by Irenaeus, for whom human imperfection is a necessary precondition of the 'long climb' from imperfection to perfection. Augustine foresees a final division between the elect and the damned into heaven and hell, whereas for Irenaean theodicies, hell has no part to play in a Christian theodicy. Points of agreement include: the view that creation as a whole was good; that evil is ultimately God's responsibility; that the end-product justifies the existence of evil; and that theodicy as a process involves a logical self-restriction on God's control of evil. Candidates could explain some or all of these; some will focus on a few points with more breadth of explanation. Credit will be given for explanation of items not specified in the abbreviated extract, although their absence will not preclude candidates from reaching Level 6.

- (b) Evaluate Hick's Irenaean-type theodicy. [15]

The Hick/Irenaeus theodicy [HIT] puts an emphasis on the creation of humans *imago dei*, so that the ongoing processes of the universe become a soul-making process; but the *imago dei* doctrine is a secondary level of theological interpretation even within the biblical text, since it derives from the ancient notion that humans look like the gods physically, the Hebrew *tselem* depicting a physical likeness rather than anything spiritual. The idea that humans have a soul is also seen by many as a Greek importation and perversion of the Jewish concept of bodily resurrection, or of the resurrection of humans as the resurrection of something that is a psycho-somatic unity, although some might claim that this makes no difference to the essential thrust of the HIT concept of eventual perfection. The HIT relies on the free will defence, concerning which Hick and Mackie disagree on the question of whether God (if he existed) could or could not do the logically impossible. Some argue that God should be able to do this, so the problem of evil has no solution in HIT terms. Hick makes some very odd comments that can be challenged on many levels, for example that evil is 'demonic' and suffering is a function of sin. In particular Hick has no valid explanation for the existence of unjustified and unassuaged animal pain / animal suffering, but instead discusses seemingly inconsequential issues such as the supposition that animals are unaware of their impending death. According to Hick, God's responsibility (ultimately) does not take away each human's accountability for his own deliberate actions, which some might argue begs the question of the Creator's design format for humans and pays little attention to Dostoyevsky's complaint that the level of suffering is simply too much to make the whole process worthwhile.

Page 7	Mark Scheme	Syllabus	Paper
	Pre-U – May/June 2013	9774	02

Section B

8 'The existence of morality does not prove the existence of God.' Discuss. [25]

Candidates are at liberty to consider any version of the moral argument. Most are likely to focus on Divine Command Theory together with Kant's argument concerning the *summum bonum*. For DCT, this is often claimed to be incoherent in so far as it falls foul of the Euthyphro Dilemma, although candidates are likely to be able to discuss the various replies to this objection. Some might argue that DCT's real weakness is that it pushes humans towards an absolutist conception of morality that is not borne out by the reality of moral experience. Kantian arguments are generally considered weak for a number of reasons: for example that the logic of the *summum bonum* stems really from Kant's evangelical Christian background rather than from vaunted reason, although Kant did point out that his propositions were merely postulates of practical reason as opposed to logical constructions. Candidates might consider what the existence of morality might (or might not) prove if morality does not point to God: for example, some might argue that morality is a human construct based on social contract, or that it is a system for expressing emotional reactions, or for prescribing a system of personal preferences.

OR

9 Critically examine religious responses to scientific theories about the origin of the universe and of life on earth. [25]

A complete knowledge of the scientific theories for the origin of the universe and of life on earth is not required; nevertheless what is offered should be accurate, as a precondition for saying anything intelligible about religious responses. The general scenario for the origins of the universe accepted by both the scientific establishment and many religious believers is the Big Bang, concerning which candidates might suggest that a concept of the Big Bang which derives that event from nothing is less coherent than one which derives it from a creative act by God. Some might refer to more recent discussions of Big Bang theory in which that event is not seen as an absolute beginning but is in some degree a free lunch, or is the product of colliding 'branes' in the kind of cosmos envisaged by M-Theory, where the theological implications are, frankly, not at all clear (which would be a very reasonable comment to make). For the origins of life on earth, some might focus on the Creationist debate, where a critical examination of theories like Intelligent Design leaves such theories in isolation from mainstream scientific opinion and invites scientific ridicule; although a more fruitful focus might be found in considering Swinburne's consideration (for example) of the fact that evolutionary theory and genetics are descriptions, and not explanations, of the origins of life on earth.

Page 8	Mark Scheme	Syllabus	Paper
	Pre-U – May/June 2013	9774	02

Topic 4 New Testament: The Four Gospels

Section A

[Luke 9: 28 – 36]

10 (a) With reference to the passage above, outline the debate about who Jesus was. [10]

Candidates are expected to refer to the nature of the transfiguration event as well as to the conversation which followed. Reference may be made to Jesus as the fulfilment of the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah) as well as to his divine nature (evidenced in the events themselves but also in the voice from the cloud). Variations between the synoptic records may be observed (the addition of 'my Chosen' by Luke). Awareness of related events including Jesus' baptism and resurrection may be included as well as commentary on the religious symbolism used to communicate Jesus' divine status.

(b) 'Jesus never taught about discipleship, he made his followers work it out for themselves.' Critically examine this claim. [15]

Candidates may include reflection upon the experiences of the disciples in the set passage but are invited in this question to extend their thinking to other gospel narratives. Expect some critical engagement with both the words and works of Jesus. It may be argued that Jesus' life and continuing influence as a role model for discipleship limits the importance of his teachings. Conversely it may be argued that Jesus taught extensively about the demands of discipleship with close reference to the relevant set texts. An appreciation of the relationship between what Jesus said and what Jesus did will be evident in higher level papers.

Section B

11 Discuss the relationship between the four Gospels. [25]

Candidates may draw upon a range of scholarship or may focus on the internal evidence of the gospels. It is anticipated that many will weigh their essays towards the synoptic problem. Well chosen examples and illustrations from the text as well as awareness of the historical social and religious background which influenced the development of the gospel narratives will be evident in the higher level scripts.

OR

12 Examine critically the significance and historicity of the resurrection accounts. [25]

Candidates may address the question in a number of ways. Mature responses will use the tools of Biblical criticism to address the issue of historicity. The question of interpretation can be dealt with at the level of the gospel writers 'interpreting the events', the early church 'interpreting the events' or Biblical critics 'interpretation of the events' or the interpretation of the events made by modern day Christians. Any of these approaches is singularly acceptable for the highest level.