

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Cambridge Pre-U Certificate

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2015 series

9774 PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

9774/03

Paper 3 (Topics and Key Texts in Philosophy and Theology 2), maximum raw mark 50

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Topic 1 Philosophy of Mind

Section A

[Extract from **Derek Parfit**: *Reasons and Persons*: Ch.12, Section 89, pp.254–256]

- 1 (a) **With reference to this passage, explain Parfit’s conclusion that in terms of what survives, personal identity is not what matters.** [10]

This extract is from Chapter 12, in which Parfit examines ‘What happens when I divide?’. This is one of a series of thought-experiments in which Parfit considers this question. Parfit claims that there are only two alternatives explaining personal identity over time and the nature of persons: reductionism or belief in persons as separately existing entities. Reductionism wins. In the first instance, Parfit establishes the legitimacy of the thought-experiment, suggesting that even though it might never be possible in practice, it establishes the reductionist thesis. Since humans have, in point of fact, survived the loss of a single brain hemisphere with memory and personality intact, then theoretically a surgical division of the brain could lead to the survival of both hemispheres in donor brain pans (the two brain-dead triplets). Four possibilities are then given with regard to the outcome of the division and separation of the brain as it is described in the passage: (1) I do not survive, which can hardly be the case, for the reason given above; (2) I survive as (only) one of the two people, which is counter-intuitive, since both hemispheres will claim identity with the surviving triplet; (3) I survive as the other, which fails for the same reason; (4) I survive as both, which is held to be the likely outcome in so far as both hemispheres will have psychological continuity with the original / surviving triplet. Crucially, psychological continuity does not presuppose personal *identity*, since it is not possible that both the surviving hemispheres are identical with the original brain, despite being fully psychologically connected with it / him.

- (b) **Critically examine the implications of Parfit’s conclusions.** [15]

Parfit’s ambition is to establish the reductionist thesis of persons by refuting non-reductionist arguments, i.e. the supposed unity of consciousness, belief in separately existing entities, and the traditional concepts of rationality and morality associated with them. For example, with regard to the existence of ‘Cartesian Egos’, Parfit clearly rejects any such notion, since the abandonment of the concept of personal *identity* over time entails the abandonment of the dualistic notion that minds have a metaphysical soul-substance which is enduring and which survives the death of the brain. Candidates might argue that Parfit’s analysis is essentially correct, in so far as the thought experiments he envisages leave no room for continued identity. There appear to be only the four possible outcomes examined by Parfit in the passage. Candidates might question the reductionist thesis from a number of angles, for example its inability to give a satisfactory explanation of the phenomena of conscious awareness. Moreover Parfit claims that where strong connectedness exists between different states of a person, then psychological continuity is maintained, but this seems to be making use of the criterion that Parfit is supposed to be analyzing, i.e. the concept of ‘same person’. Parfit admits that his thought experiments are largely hypothetical, although given the difficulties in finding an acceptable answer as to where Cartesian Egos might go at the point of brain bifurcation, some might conclude that Parfit has a point. Some might discuss Parfit’s application of his ideas to ethics. Parfit’s reductionism leads him to object to the rationality of a self-centred attitude about the future, since to have future concerns about the self presupposes one’s own permanent existence (p. 283). Given that people have limited psychological connectedness with their future selves (a connectedness that necessarily diminishes with age), concern for one’s future self should rationally correspond to that degree of connectedness. Some might see the force of this, for example, with the possibility of succumbing to Alzheimer’s disease, where psychological

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connectedness rapidly reduces. Parfit makes a startling inversion of the Golden Rule of 'common-sense morality': *we ought not to do to our future selves what it would be wrong to do to other people* (p. 320). We still need to pay attention to strongly-held moral intuitions – it is morally wrong / greatly imprudent for one person to harm or interfere with another: society should protect individuals from such harm (pp. 318–320). Candidates might see Parfit's ethical ideas as the natural extension of his conclusions concerning the reductionist thesis, which change the framework of our moral judgements rather than the content; whereas some might question any such framework in the absence of any form of moral compulsion, since the latter would be jettisoned along with the concept of morally free and morally responsible Cartesian Egos.

The discussion may be broader than the points raised above, assessing the broader sweep of Parfit's ideas. Any such approach is eligible for the full range of Levels and marks.

2 Evaluate the claim that functionalist theories solve the problem of mind. [25]

Candidates are likely to give an overview of functionalist accounts of mind. Candidates might refer to one or more functionalist accounts, such as computational / Turing machine functionalism, metaphysical functionalism and psycho-functionalism. Accept any accounts that are broadly functionalist, whether so-named or not. Functionalism holds that the mind is a programme run on the hardware of brain. On the functionalist account, mental states are characterised by the functions they perform. Candidates might begin with the idea that systems can be multiply realised: for example there are several ways to build a thermometer to measure air temperature, each with different physical properties, but ultimately being identical in functional properties. Equally, mental states can be described without reference to their physical substance: an account of any mental state is complete when all its functional properties have been identified. Although most functionalists are physicalists, in theory mental functions could be realised in a non-physical mind or soul as well as by a physical brain.

The strengths of functionalist accounts might be described for example in terms of multiple realisability; in terms of the likelihood of an empirical / scientific / physicalist explanation of mind; or in terms of the intuitive appeal of the functionalist idea. Functionalism has difficulty in accommodating some features of mind, for example intentionality and conscious awareness, which seem to be characteristics of biological entities and not of machines. Candidates might discuss these through thought experiments such as 'China brain', 'Chinese nation', 'Blockhead', 'Inverted Spectrum' and the like. Whatever stance candidates take, some attention is expected to the claim that functionalist theories "solve" the problem of mind. Candidates might also discuss the nature of that problem, for example as the articulation of the problem of the relationship between mind and matter / between consciousness and the brain.

3 'Other people have minds.' Evaluate this claim. [25]

The problem of other minds is that we can only observe people's behaviour. Going from the observable facts about behaviour to the supposition that behaviour results from minds like our own is a notoriously difficult step. How do we know that other people are not 'philosophical zombies' who display sophisticated behaviour? Type physicalists argue that to be in a type of mental state means only that they are in a type of (physical) brain state, so if another person appears to be in a certain type of physical state, we can know that they are in a certain type of mental state. Candidates might refer to behaviourism, where statements about mental phenomena can be analysed into statements about behaviour / behavioural dispositions. How do we go from knowing behaviour to knowing mental states? Candidates are likely to refer to the analogical argument, e.g. from Mill, that since I know I have mental states, I can infer that other humans have them too. The problem with this is that our knowledge of the mental states of others and of their conscious experience is not inferential: states such as anger are known through the

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behavioural criteria such as gesticulating, shouting and going red in the face. According to Wittgenstein, the language used to describe mental states can only be learned in third-person social contexts (and not in the privacy of one's own mind), so it is meaningful to attribute mental terms to ourselves and to others. Some might refer to Strawson's view that ascribing mental states to oneself is only possible if mental states can be described to others; although a common objection to both Wittgenstein and Strawson is that both accounts slide into behaviourism, which has notorious problems in its own right. Candidates might consider the case for solipsism, perhaps rejecting it on the basis that to think solipsistic thoughts in the first place does imply the existence of the inter-subjective world that solipsists call into question. Credit all reasonable lines of argument.

Topic 2 Ethics

Section A

[Extract from **John Start Mill**: Utilitarianism page 268–269]

- 4 (a) With reference to this passage, explain what Mill understands by the 'utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct'. [10]**

Expect some reference to the different factors people need to include when considering the utilitarian approach. This could include reference to the similarities to other ethical approaches and the criticisms made about utilitarianism.

E.g. this passage addresses the challenges made by those who felt that Bentham's utilitarianism just allowed any form of happiness, regardless of the nature of that happiness. Mill insists that true utilitarianism has a lot of similarities to religious ethics, contradicting one of the charges made that utilitarianism was atheistic. The utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct means taking into account the whole population in so far as possible. Mill emphasises that moral rules have value as being a codification of utilitarian principles that have been shown to be efficacious in human affairs, e.g. 'Do not murder' keeps societies and individuals happy. The doer cannot place his own needs or desires ahead of the rest of society. Everybody should try to improve the lot of mankind, not just their own position. Mill emphasises the role of justice. The ideals of doing as you would be done by and loving the neighbour as yourself have great similarities to Mill's approach. People should be helped to develop through education, which does not just mean schooling but personal development. This education would help the individual to see how their own happiness is indissolubly linked to the happiness of other people, of all other people. Seeking the good or interest of others must be the driving factor in everybody's motives and actions. Mill distinguishes between higher and lower pleasures.

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- (b) Critically assess the claim that there are too many factors to take into account to make utilitarianism workable. [15]

Expect some development of the points made in the above passage about factors to consider when taking an ethical decision. Students could also include reference to the hedonic calculus, act and rule utilitarianism.

E.g. many people think that the hedonic calculus that measures intensity, duration, propinquity etc. is an impossible measuring rod. Not only are there too many elements to include, most of them demand that the individual is able to correctly predict the outcome. As people cannot see the future and have to make decisions often in split seconds, it is unrealistic to expect people to be able to consider even one of these factors properly. However, the general principle of wanting the happiness of everybody can be a driving force in people's decision-making. It does not have to be as arithmetical as Bentham's calculus implies. Nor do people have to work out which pleasures are the higher and which are the lower and decide what action is the best in that particular situation. If people attune themselves to working for the good of the whole of society, bringing in these disparate factors when there is genuine time for reflection but more commonly allowing the experience of previous decisions and their outcomes to give insight into the probable outcome this time, usually their decisions will be effective from a utilitarian point of view. Rule utilitarianism allows people to apply general principles rather than have to work out the details each time. If people are flexible in using rule utilitarianism, they can have a workable ethical system to guide their lives and actions.

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Section B

- 5 **'The ethics contained in the Sermon on the Mount are too idealistic to be put into practice.'** Critically assess this claim. [25]

There are many areas that candidates could look at in the Sermon. It is acceptable for them to choose to focus on certain teachings that are either too idealistic or very practical. Equally, they may choose to examine the underlying principles and show how they can or cannot be linked together. Some candidates might demonstrate their own Christian or anti-Christian sympathies in this answer. This has to be accepted, as long as the points made are justified by reference to the Sermon and are not simply vague generalisations.

e.g. One of the most memorable sayings from the Sermon on the Mount is: 'Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (5:48). No human being can be as perfect as the unlimited deity. This would suggest that the whole of Jesus' teaching which is summarised in this statement cannot be realised by any human being. This idea is reinforced by statements like: 'If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away' (5:27), sayings that seem too impractical to pay attention to. There are also apparent contradictions in the Sermon. In chapter 5, Jesus tells his followers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (5:13–14) so they have to set a high standard to show other people how to live. But in chapter 6, his disciples are told to give alms, fast and pray in secret so that they do not get noticed by other people. The intention is to do things for God alone, not for attention from others. If Christians don't do things in such a way that other people can learn from them, how can they be the salt of the earth? However, Christians must recognise when Jesus is using hyperbole to make a point, particularly the point that sin has to be avoided. Since sin starts with the intention, in the mind (see 5:28), it is at this point that Jesus' followers need to ensure that they have the right attitude. The central theme of the Sermon is on having the right attitude. The Beatitudes (5:1–12) all focus on the underlying attitudes Christians should have, which will bring about good actions: purity of heart, peace-making, etc. The correct attitude should permeate all Christian actions and it will automatically lead them to trust in God (6:25–30). This will then bring about a right approach to money (6:24) and to not judging other people (7:1–5) but treating all people as friends (5:43–47). Many people see the Golden Rule (7:12), 'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets,' as a good practical approach to take towards ethics. This would certainly help to produce the good fruit that Jesus' followers are called to yield (7:17–19). There is a great challenge in the Sermon that many people will find too demanding and will find excuses to avoid living by. However, for many Christians once the underlying attitude is corrected, most of the rest of the Sermon does become practical rather than too idealistic.

- 6 **Critically assess the usefulness of Sartre's existentialist ethics when dealing with either environmental issues or abortion and euthanasia.** [25]

Expect some analysis of existential ethics and how helpful an approach it is in general. There does need to be specific application to the chosen area, which might be in general terms or through the use of more developed examples. If there is no reference to either existentialist ethics or the ethical issue, the candidate can gain a maximum of the top of Level 3.

Environmental issues cover areas like: How far should humans see themselves as stewards of creation and what does this term actually mean? Is the Gaia hypothesis correct and, if so, do humans need to do anything about the environment or should humans just leave the world to rectify itself, acknowledging that humans are little more than a temporary parasite on the globe? To what extent should humans limit aspects like deforestation, the use of fossil fuels, the use of nuclear energy, and focus on renewable sources of energy? How far should humans go in protecting the diversity of species? Is there such a thing as global warming and to what extent should humans adapt their lifestyles to allow for this? How far should humans preserve the

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environment for future generations or should they accept the belief that this world is coming to an end and it doesn't matter what humans do as there will not be any world left to be affected negatively?

Existential ethics suggest that humans have to take action to assert their freedom and to accept the responsibility for the consequences of their actions. Each individual has to make a choice. He cannot abandon the choice and leave it to others to act, because this in itself is a choice. Each person has to set the standard for action by his own deeds. By acting each person also in a way decides who he is – man is the sum total of his deeds. Each human has to decide what his attitude is about global issues. By abusing resources for himself, each person is setting the standard and saying that selfishness is acceptable and it does not matter about the future generations. Sartre would reject this line as it is not choosing for others in a positive, only a negative way – as this would end up with the position that: nobody matters, the world does not matter, everything can come to an end and it makes no difference. Unfortunately, for a person trying to live by existentialist ethics, these generalisations are not very useful guidelines about what specific action to take. For Sartre, actions are not derived from some pre-existing norm or value. Values exist in our actions. Human beings do need some practical or theoretical guidelines. By rejecting ideas like: humans have to care for the environment because it is a gift of God to all humans; showing care for the environment allows future generations to have somewhere to live and they need to be included in any equation about utility, etc. humans at least have a starting point for action. Existentialist ethics seems to reject these starting points and people have to act in a void, which is not very useful.

Abortion and euthanasia reflect a person's attitude about the meaning, purpose and value of life. Abortion can be seen to be making a decision about another being, a decision that some people believe it is not up to another human being to make. Some people claim that the decision is purely the mother's as it is her body that is being affected. The underlying question is: at what point does a life gain its individual value? Euthanasia is usually about a person wanting to bring about the end of their own life as it no longer has any positive value in their eyes. Some acts of euthanasia are decided upon by other people, especially when the individual who is dying is not able to make a decision. Issues that can be included are: how much value does the fact of life itself give a person? How can a person know that there is no hope of change or recovery? To what extent is an individual in control of their own life? Should an individual accept euthanasia if the outcome means there will be more money, facilities, etc. to treat other people who have better chances of a meaningful life?

An existentialist ethic has no pre-existing norm or values that can guide a person. There is no God or eternal value to direct a decision. A person has to make the choice for themselves but in so doing they are setting a standard for all people. Existentialist ethics might take the pressure off the decision-maker by stressing they are free to make their own choice without answering to an outside, greater agency like God. However, it could be a frightening thing to be faced with making a decision that other people will be expected to follow, whether the decision is to end the life or to make it continue. People are already in a stressful situation without having this extra burden put on them.

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Topic 3 Old Testament: Prophecy

Section A

[Extract from **Amos** 7:10–17 New Revised Standard Version]

- 7 (a) **Examine what this passage tells us about the nature of Old Testament prophecy and people's reactions to prophets.** [10]

Expect reference to the different types and roles of prophets, supported by explicit reference to the Amos text given. The nature of the prophetic call should be referred to. Students might also refer to the extent to which prophecy is about the present or the future. There should be mention of the different ways in which people treated prophets, particularly those prophets who did not belong to one of the standard groupings.

E.g. the people of Amos' time accepted that there were official prophets especially temple and court prophets. These groups, that were often formed from hereditary prophecy, 'a prophet's son', were acceptable because they were under control. Prophecy was cultic, therefore Amos appeared in the shrine at Bethel. Verse 14 is sometimes translated in the past tense as 'I was no prophet (nabi), nor one of the prophets' sons (bene hanabi'im)', implying that now he has been called, Amos has a right to be in the shrine at Bethel. Other prophets often simply presented the ideas that the king or the priests wanted people to hear and justified it by saying it was the word of God. Amos, however, represents the real nature of prophecy. He was called by God in such a way that he could not ignore the summons: 'The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken; who can but prophesy?' (3:8). True prophets do not say what people want to hear but what God wants to tell the people. They cannot keep silent as they are compelled to speak God's message. Because of this, their words are powerful and will come true. Many people dismiss true prophets as they do not want to accept what they have to say. It is easier to reject the so-called prophet by dismissing him as a fraud, than it is to accept that the message is true but the person is unwilling to pay it any attention. Amaziah tries to destroy Amos by getting the king to remove him, using earthly powers to overcome the word of God. This also suggests that Amaziah lacked the power to deal with Amos so had to appeal to Jeroboam. Since people are deliberately choosing not to listen to the word of God spoken by his true prophet, the punishment will be greater and the people will be exiled.

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- (b) **‘Prophets had to be unusual people to get their message across.’ Critically assess this statement.** [15]

Expect some reference to the nature of divine revelation and how the prophet needed to be open to it. The use of symbolic acts and abnormal psychological phenomena could also be referred to, particularly in the way that these happenings might reflect on the psychological profile of a prophet.

E.g. many people expect the prophets to be weird people, doing unusual actions, living by extreme rules. In 1 and 2 Kings there are references to prophets going into trances all the time, or dancing extravagantly to induce frenzy, gashing themselves to go beyond the pain-threshold and using drugs to open their minds up to the beyond. Even ‘genuine’ prophets like Ezekiel and Jeremiah were not averse to taking unusual actions to get their message across. For many people, including the prophets, if the message was not shown through extreme measures, people will not listen and they will fail in their mission. However, many of the true prophets were simple everyday people who were inspired by a simple but direct message from God. They spoke the words firmly but rationally. Like Amos and Hosea, many prophets got inspiration from everyday events, not from extravagant psychological events. Even the visions they record are based on simple everyday occurrences, like a basket of ripe fruit or a plumb-line, but these simple things gained extra meaning that the prophets were able to convey to the people. People might not listen to what they had to say, but this is because people do not want to hear, not because the message was badly presented.

Section B

- 8 **‘The pre-exilic prophets were concerned only with ensuring that the Jewish people did not follow foreign gods.’ Critically assess this view. Refer to at least two prophets in your answer.** [25]

Candidates need to show some contrast between the actions of the prophets against foreign cults and the influence of foreign cults in the worship of God, and other aspects like the political stability of the country that is faithful to God, the people abiding by the covenant and aspects of social and economic justice.

E.g. for prophets like Elijah, destroying the power and influence of the baals was primarily to preserve the rule of God in the country. He was concerned with defeating the machinations of Ahaz and Jezebel by undermining their efforts to get the people to follow the baals which would undermine the influence of God in the people’s lives. The arguments about Naboth’s vineyard and Ahab’s treatment of the conquered kings are really about obedience to God’s law and will. For Elijah, following foreign gods would destroy the religion that God wants. For Amos, the prophecies of destruction take place in the sanctuary where the influence of worshipping foreign gods has infected the true worship of God. This has led to people rejecting the laws of God, like them ignoring the rules of justice. If people stop sinning by not resorting to temple prostitutes, offering meaningless sacrifices, etc. then they will be able to focus on what God really wants them to do. The fertility cults were too attractive and destroyed the people’s sense of right and wrong in God’s eyes. For Hosea, the love of God was central to his message. The imagery of Hosea’s faithless wife, who may have acted as a temple prostitute, offering herself to other gods, became symptomatic of all that was wrong in the Jewish ‘following’ of God. While it may be too much to say that the prophets were only concerned with removing the influence of the foreign gods, this did play a strong part in their message. However, true obedience to the will of God, genuine acceptance of their part of the covenant, these were what God wanted from the people and these form the core of the prophets’ message.

If the candidate refers to only one prophet, maximum Level 5 (18 marks).

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- 9 'There are too many different ideas about the Messiah for people to claim that the prophets are talking about one person.' With reference to the texts you have studied, critically assess this claim. [25]

There are many different elements of the Messiah in the set passages and in the Old Testament that could be included in the students' responses. Inevitably, there will be selection and marks should be awarded on the basis of depth versus breadth. A really good answer might only look at two aspects of the Messianic ideal or it could enhance many different elements in a more generalised way. There has to be some examination of the question: who is the Messiah? even if the response is: nobody knows. Candidates can gain maximum marks by limiting themselves to the Messianic ideas found in Second-Isaiah, Micah and Malachi.

E.g. 'Messiah' means the anointed one. There are a number of people who are anointed to play a role for God. The Davidic kings were anointed as part of their call e.g. Samuel anointing Saul and David. Priests were often anointed to induct them into their ministry. God even said he had anointed Cyrus the King of Persia to complete God's work (Is 45:1). Each of these people had separate roles to play, some of which seem incompatible, e.g. Cyrus might send the Jewish people back to their own land but he cannot be a priestly figure. The role of the Messiah was to bring the people back to God, but this could be seen as the people of the whole earth or just the people of Israel. It could be the re-establishment of the covenant on earth, of the foundation of the paradise state, the return to the Garden of Eden with the close, harmonious relationship between God and the people, symbolised by the harmony of creation (e.g. Is 11). When combined with ideas about the Suffering Servant, the one whose innocence can gain pardon for the whole people, and the Danielic Son of Man who brings in the glorified reign of God at the end of time, the role of the Messiah becomes even more disparate. The one who offers the perfect sacrifice (Mal 2:4), the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings (Mal 3:20) add further dimensions to the Messianic idea. Some people think that the Messiah is only a symbol for the purified people of God, the true Israel, who go back to the desert and by their example show the whole world how to live in obedience to God. Others see the Messiah as a descendant of David (Mi 5:1), who will rule in justice and in this way bring the perfection of God's reign to earth. It is possible for one person to encapsulate the central ideas of all the different approaches to the Messiah: obedience to God as David showed, which would lead to the perfect offerings of worship (symbolised in sacrifice but not necessarily by a direct priestly figure), who is prepared to suffer to ensure that God's will is done. However, this approach would be to limit the depth of some of the prophecies and could lead to a thin amalgam of ideas. If the Messiah is the whole people of Israel, with different members fulfilling different roles, it is possible that all aspects of the prophecies may come to fruition. Perhaps the real fulfilment of these roles will only come at the end of time with the in-breaking of the glory of God.