PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

Paper 9774/01

Introduction to Philosophy and Theology

Key messages

- Candidates need to pay careful attention to the actual question set and answer it precisely
- Candidates are advised to engage directly with the question, keeping any introductory remarks brief
- Candidates should avoid the over-use of logical fallacies, since these can easily distract from the logic of real arguments.

General comments

Candidates generally found all four questions accessible and seemed to be well-prepared. The strongest responses linked a variety of different ideas into a structured case, where the argument followed a clear path from start to finish.

There was a tendency in some candidates towards philosophical levity, which was often counter-productive. This was particularly true where candidates made derogatory comments about the work of various philosophers and theologians.

Some candidates could improve their knowledge of the grammar of philosophy and theology as they seemed to have difficulties with terms such as 'logical', 'induction', 'a priori', 'knowledge', 'metaphysical' and 'cognitive'. Candidates are reminded that understanding these concepts is a necessary prelude to study.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Many candidates produced high-grade responses to this question. The general consensus was that Plato's account of body and soul can make sense within the metaphysics of Plato's day, but is less convincing when contrasted with contemporary accounts of mind such as functionalism. Some argued, however, that all the 'big questions' about existence are inevitably metaphysical, so Plato's account of the relationship between body and soul may yet turn out to reveal some deep truth about mind/soul/consciousness.

Other candidates seemed to have difficulties with this question. Some wrote lengthy narratives on Plato's theory of Forms, together with detailed accounts of his allegories. Furthermore, critiques of Plato often led to a refutation of the theory of Forms. In particular, some candidates gave long accounts of the analogy of the charioteer in which the body did not figure at all.

Candidates are reminded that the focus in 'critically examine' questions is on the critical examination, rather than on what Plato wrote about the body and soul and their interrelationship. Candidates are also advised to consider the limits of the question, as answers about Plato's understanding of the relationship between body and soul do not need to involve a detailed account of Aristotle's account of that relationship.

Question 2

The most general trend in answering this question was to see the issue as a straight fight between the likes of Aristotle, Locke, Berkeley and Hume against the opposing ranks of Plato, Descartes, Leibniz and Chomsky.

Some candidates seemed to have difficulty in defining 'knowledge', talking about an aptitude, a trait or a sensation, as opposed to something to be understood in terms of propositions. Some claimed that all empiricists accept the idea of the mind as 'tabula rasa', which is not the case: Locke himself held that the mind has to have some inbuilt capacity for processing experience, and science generally accepts that the brain has pre-programmed structures to process sensory input, for example. Many candidates successfully outlined Hume's problem of induction, but then were unsure as to how that relates to the question. Equally, some explained Berkeley's arguments against the theory of primary and secondary qualities, but could not decide in what case that left empiricism.

A number of candidates demonstrated knowledge of keywords about different philosophers, but sometimes confused themselves in terms of how these might answer the question. For example, some suggested that Hume's 'missing shade of blue' proved the empiricist case, whereas Hume, never one to deceive himself, introduced it as a potential example of the mind being able to conceive of an idea without first being exposed to a corresponding sense experience.

More successful answers generally took a clear line of argument and defended it well. At this level, most took the line that the answer lay in Kant's synthetic a priori, although the concept was sometimes stated as an 'obvious' resolution of arguments without clarifying what was obvious. Very few were aware that the concept of the synthetic a priori is severely criticised. The main difference between Level 4 and Level 5 answers was generally in the quality of the evaluation, where Level 5 answers were committed to their own evaluations of their empiricist/rationalist debate as opposed to selecting one set of arguments 'on balance'.

Question 3

Less successful responses to this question sometimes assumed that it was directed simply at the Ten Commandments, with some dismissing them on the grounds that the commandments are male-orientated and subject to the dictates of an old and outmoded patriarchal society. Some assumed that there were no options between blind acceptance of God's commandments and absolute relativism, and others recited a list of things allegedly commanded by God in the Old Testament.

Many candidates used the issue of what God does or does not command in the scriptures as an introduction to Divine Command Theory, a meta-ethical theory in which the status of an action being 'morally good' depends on its being commanded by God. This led to the Euthyphro Dilemma and the problem of God's abhorrent commands. Some became mildly confused between the two 'horns' of the dilemma, but most arrived at the clear problem of choosing between an omnipotent but arbitrary God and a God who loses omnipotence in face of a higher moral power than himself. Of the many proposed solutions to the Euthyphro Dilemma, the most popular was the suggestion that 'God' and 'good' are synonymous. Some linked this to Aquinas' view that sin is a falling short of a perfect action, and since God is omnipotent, his omnipotence would not allow him to sin. Some concluded simply that the very notion of 'God' is incoherent, so morality cannot be commanded by God except in the sense that the *idea* of God might be ethically effective.

Most candidates also considered the further question of where morality comes from if it is not commanded by God. Weaker responses simply did a trawl of alternative ethical theories. One popular conclusion emerging from such considerations was that moral commands have to be absolute, otherwise they are ineffective: many considered Kantian ethics here. Stronger discussions were those which concluded that to employ God as a moral commander missed the point of morality entirely, which is that morally good behaviour is 'good' only if it comes from the will of the individual rather than from obedience to God or any other compelling power.

Question 4

Stronger answers to this question tended to pay careful attention to the words 'nothing more than', since these three words were taken up as a springboard to the various options. Weaker answers simply listed theories of the conscience, sometimes without identifying any of them as having anything in particular to do with individual psychology.

For the most part, psychological views were illustrated through the theories of the American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, Sigmund Freud and Joseph Butler; and these were balanced by religious views, principally those of Augustine, Aquinas and Joseph Fletcher. Of the psychological views, that of Freud received most attention, some of it of the derisory kind referred to in the second 'key message' above. More balanced assessment of Freud accepted his general view that conscience is part of the operation of the

super-ego, being the repository of parental commands during an individual's childhood; guilt being a symptom of trying to escape them. Most who referred to Butler knew that his assessment was relevant to psychology: Butler considered conscience to be a God-given faculty, intuitive, reflective and autonomous, maintaining a balance between self-love and love of others, and manifesting particularly through compassion. This was often dismissed as wishful thinking.

For the religious views, there was some confusion between Augustine and Aquinas. Most had some sympathy for Aquinas' view that conscience is the God-given faculty of reason, although there was less certainty about the nature of the synderesis rule and the operation of conscientia. On the whole, most preferred Fletcher's view that 'conscience' is not a thing, but is a word for our attempts to make decisions in the best way, i.e. in accordance with the operation of *agape* love. Conscience is the individual making a decision: a calculation as to what best serves love in a specific situation.

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

> **Paper 9774/02**
> **Topics and Key Texts in Philosophy**
> **and Theology 1**

Key messages

- Candidates are advised to pay careful attention to the precise wording of the question.
- Candidates are reminded to analyse and evaluate rather than just explain.

General comments

There were responses to all twelve questions on the paper, but responses to **Questions 7**, **8** or **9** on the Philosophy of Religion topic were most popular.

The extracts included for *Section A* **part (a)** questions provide a useful 'entry' to the examination for all candidates. Stronger responses explained what the philosopher means and the best responses moved beyond the passage, drawing on their knowledge of other parts of the set text and, in some cases, from the canon more widely. Less successful responses quoted parts of the passage without further explanation of the point being made.

Command words for *Section A* **part (b)** questions tend to involve terms such as 'evaluate' or 'critically examine', which requires more than continuing to explain. The best evaluative responses developed an analysis of the issue which might be wide-ranging, but also included an awareness of problems specific to a philosopher's position.

The above comments, particularly the last point, are also relevant to questions asked in *Section B*.

Comments on specific questions

Topic 1 Epistemology

Section A

Question 1

(a)   Most responses focused on the passage, explaining what Berkeley meant by key phrases and provided reasonable accounts of Berkeley's idealism and of the role of God. One aspect of the passage that was rarely discussed was the reference to Hylas' position leading to scepticism. While the majority attempted to provide an argument for the claim in the question, a number of candidates concentrated on explaining the passage and therefore, did not address the specific question. Some candidates did the opposite by giving several distinct arguments from Dialogue 1, but not referring to the passage. Some candidates who chose to talk about the heat/pain argument from Dialogue 1 had difficulties to show why the Lockean primary qualities should also be considered mind-dependent, and therefore did not give an argument for idealism as opposed to indirect realism. Very few demonstrated further reading beyond the set texts as in most cases, Locke was the only other name referenced.

(b)   Most candidates provided critical essays on the role of God. Many criticised the ad hoc nature of Berkeley's use of God without showing awareness of Berkeley's own presentation of his argument, where God is the inevitable conclusion of the impossibility of matter, often complaining that

Berkeley brought in God 'with no proof'. Generally, the view taken was that God saves Berkeley (rather than the other way around).

Section B

Question 2

Most candidates answered this question well. Some tried to cover too much ground, for example by spending a lot of time talking about Descartes' scepticism, but without directing this material at the question and not explaining how Descartes' arguments undermine empiricism. Often scepticism was more the focus than empiricism, and some candidates provided an 'empiricism versus rationalism' response, which needed to be more directed at the question.

Question 3

This question was well answered by some candidates, while others seemed to have difficulties with the fact that there were two theories to consider. Those who chose to evaluate coherentism and then reliabiism often seemed to run out of time, which was also an issue for candidates who additionally wrote about foundationalism. In general, coherentism seemed to be better understood than reliabilism as there appeared to be some misunderstandings when discussing illustrations such as Fake Barns or clairvoyants. Nevertheless, it was often suggested that reliabilism is a stronger ground of justification.

Topic 2 Philosophical and Theological Language

Section A

Question 4

(a) Overall, responses to this question were good. Most candidates focused heavily on the second paragraph of the passage provided in order to explain Hare's notion of 'bliks'. Many made the point that, while a 'blik' is not falsifiable, it is nonetheless meaningful to the individual who holds it given that it affects attitudes and behaviour. Some did not explain the reference to 'non cognitive' in the question.

(b) The strongest answers to this question focused narrowly on one or two issues and developed a clear analytical discussion. A number of other responses that were more wide-ranging were also very good and some were outstanding. Some candidates seemed to struggle to develop a critical analysis of Hare's position and in some cases, there was repetition of points made in response to the **part (a)** question. On the whole, candidates were inclined to agree with the view provided in the question.

Question 5

The best responses to this question were discursive and analytical, while others were largely descriptive. The tendency in both cases was to focus on ethical naturalism and non-naturalism, and in most cases, utilitarianism featured as the example of naturalism and Moore featured as the main critic. There was a tendency to support Moore's arguments and a tendency not to provide a developed critique of Moore's position.

Question 6

There were fewer responses to this question which, on the whole, was less well-answered. Few candidates provided examples of mythological language employed in any of the world religions or provided a clear account of what a myth is. Where this did occur it was usually via Tillich. Most responses focused heavily on Bultmann's approach of demythologising the Bible so that it can be reinterpreted for a contemporary Christian audience. There were only a few examples of what this might involve and critical discussion was also limited. Some candidates contrasted the view in question with alternative interpretations of religious language as symbolic or analogous.

Topic 3 Philosophy of Religion

Section A

Question 7

(a)   More successful answers dealt with the difference between pain and suffering as well as the positive value of mystery, demonstrating detailed knowledge of the text. Many candidates could explain how suffering may have some purpose, but more needed to clearly address the issue of dysteleological suffering which the passage directed them towards. Some candidates could have improved their response by considering the distinction between pain and suffering, both of which were referred to in the question. Many candidates also seemed to rely heavily on the wording of the passage, but without really explaining it. For example, they would note that suffering challenges Christian faith, but not unpack why.

(b)   Most answers confined their critical remarks to material contained in the text itself and then would explain Hick's responses to, e.g. Augustine and Flew. Such responses risked appearing more as interpretations of the text rather than critical engagement with it. Better responses were evaluative and, whether ultimately supportive or dismissive of Hick's position, references were often made to animals and to whether Hick's eschatological argument was either comforting or convincing.

Question 8

This was a popular question and many responses began with a reference to Aquinas before moving onto Paley and criticisms of Paley. The critique of Paley could often be developed more, which, for example, includes the range of points offered by Hume. The impact of Darwin on spatial versions of the design argument was often referred to and some attempted a critical discussion of this via Behe before concluding that Darwin's research was fatal to Paley. Some responses did not include any references to more modern temporal versions of the argument, and those that did tended to focus on Polkinghorne, although Tennant also featured. Although this question was generally well answered, some candidates tried to cover too much and responses became largely descriptive.

Question 9

This was the less popular of the two essay questions and generally less well answered. The majority of candidates demonstrated understanding of Hume's arguments in section X of the Enquiry, aided by Hume's illustration of them in terms of firstly…, secondly…, etc. Many candidates criticised that Hume defines miracles out of existence or that he argues that miraculous events are impossible, rather than explaining why, according to Hume, it would never be reasonable for 'a wise man' to believe that a miracle has occurred. An objection frequently raised against Hume was that his argument largely depended on a fallacious (ad hominem) strategy of attacking the character and motives of those who claim to have witnessed miraculous events. Some candidates attempted to preserve miracles by offering an alternative definition, usually via Holland, but rarely related this back to Hume's approach.

Topic 4 New Testament: The Four Gospels

Section A

Question 10

(a)   Most candidates saw one significant aspect of the passage to be that of confirming historical accounts through similarities with other gospels (e.g. Mark), although clear differences between the four gospels were also noted and linked to different audiences. Some commented on the testimony of the women and on the fact that they were respected, and how this may demonstrate an alteration in the value of women and differences between Jesus' new ministry and conventional Judaism. Most candidates mentioned the physicality of the resurrected Jesus (via the taking hold of his feet), and similarly, most referred to the imagery employed in the passage (the earthquake, the angel) as portraying a dramatic and apocalyptic event, heralding the Kingdom of God and confirming Christological status.

(b)   Many candidates noted that narratives of Jesus' resurrection were difficult to interpret, partly due to historical differences and partly to the difficulties of interpreting their religious or spiritual purposes. It was noted that while all four gospels claim resurrection, refer to an empty tomb and to visions of

Jesus, accounts of those surrounding the tomb differ and in each case there are a small number of witnesses (disciples and women close to Jesus). Thus, it was pointed out that accounts of Jesus' resurrection could be concocted. Moreover, gospel accounts based on different sources and/or altered for different audiences couldn't be regarded as proof of resurrection. A common suggestion was that these narratives reflect attempts by the early church to solidify Jesus' Christological status.

Question 11

This question allowed candidates to adopt a clear position with regard to the claim that Jesus' miracles are about fact, not faith, and a number of good responses did so. For example, some began by denying the claim and by distinguishing between 'fact' (i.e. that Jesus performed miracles) and 'faith' (i.e. belief in Jesus as the Messiah possessing the power to perform miracles). Support for the latter was occasionally linked to passages from John, indicating that miracles were a sign leading to faith. This was occasionally supported by references to miraculous events (e.g. the calming of the waters, curing leprosy) prior to which disciples and others had been rebuked for their fears and/or lack of faith. Further discussion along the same lines involved claims that the 'facts' concerning certain events were reinterpreted through the faith of the early Church. Some candidates argued that we do not need to choose between fact and faith as both are present in miracle narratives.

Question 12

Most candidates began their response by claiming that discipleship involves learning from Jesus' teaching and absolute commitment in preparation for God's Kingdom. The view that Jesus called 12 to follow him – referred to in all four gospels – was seen to be historically accurate through multiple attestations. It was also seen to evidence that Jesus saw himself as a Messianic figure who also called many to follow him. The main focus of responses was on teaching and learning. Some candidates claimed that Jesus saw himself as an outsider and linked his teachings to concerns for other outsiders – the outcast and oppressed, the poor, the crippled, women – supporting this with biblical references. There was some discussion about what Jesus called his disciples to believe: whether his teaching was eschatological – 'vindication is coming' and status will be reversed – or whether the Kingdom had already arrived. However, most discussions focused on the moral and political dimensions of learning: the importance of a simple lifestyle, love and mercy. As a teacher, Jesus was seen as an idealist, a social revolutionary committed to radical change.

Cambridge Assessment
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PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

Paper 9774/03
Topics and Key Texts in Philosophy
and Theology 2

Key messages

- To score full marks for the part **(a)** questions, candidates needed to evidence wider reading and/or understanding that went beyond the material contained within the passage itself.
- Critical analysis is not required for **(a)** part responses.
- Conversely, **(b)** part responses *do* require critical engagement and responses that describe or 'juxtapose' alternative positions would benefit from critically engaging with, rather than just explaining, the material selected for discussion.
- To perform well in the *Section B* essay questions, candidates also need to demonstrate critical engagement.

General comments

Overall, the full range of the mark scheme was accessed.

Part **(a)** responses were generally of a high standard with a significant majority of candidates reaching Level 3 or above. Those that made it into the top band often did so by evidencing a wider understanding of arguments and positions not contained within, but assisting an understanding of those points raised in the passage itself.

Part **(b)** and essay based questions were very well answered, offering detailed critical analyses, evidencing wider reading/understanding/synopticity and advancing positions that were often insightful, convincing and supported by points raised for discussion. There were also some responses which were clear and accurate, but largely descriptive with evaluative points either asserted, or implicit within a juxtaposition of competing positions. These would have benefitted from greater critical engagement.

Less successful responses tended to be general, brief and undeveloped, unphilosophical, fragmentary, tangential and/or inaccurate with occasional isolated key points being made. Very few bottom band responses were seen.

Some responses were coming in at more than 20 pages and could have attracted full-marks without covering this amount of material. Many responses attracted mid-range marks as a result of covering too much material, at times losing sight of the question.

Comments on specific questions

Topic 1 Philosophy of Mind

Section A

Question 1

(a) Candidates demonstrated a wide range of levels of understanding of Parfit's views, and most were able to explain the broad meaning and significance of Teletransportation. The best responses were able to connect the teletransporter example coherently to the ideas that personal identity might ultimately not be 'what matters', and that personal identity should be given a 'reductive' account according to which it might be an 'empty question' in some cases. Top level responses often appealed to thought experiments and arguments that appeared later on in the chapter in order to

shed light on Parfit's position, although good marks were still achieved without so doing. A number of candidates switched round the concepts of 'connectedness' and 'continuity', although understanding of the distinction was credited even where this was implicit.

(b) There were some excellent responses to this question, and the best ones focused on the request to 'assess' Parfit's view. Some answers were predominantly descriptive rather than evaluative, but where assessment/evaluation could be held to be implicit in the detailed account of Parfit's own arguments for survival, Series-Persons and 'relation R + Uniqueness', credit could still be given. The strongest responses invariably evaluated these arguments, usually concluding that, since psychological continuity breached the law of transitivity (usually via Reid), survival must be 'what mattered'.

Section B

Question 2

Many candidates seemed to have difficulties understanding what functionalism actually is beyond general references to the human eye or mousetraps, although they could still access good marks without doing so on the basis of good handling of evaluative material – usually Searle's Chinese Room and 'Blockhead' type arguments. Stronger responses developed a position by responding to these criticisms (the 'systems' response and the success of Searle's reply, etc.) often in order to defend functionalism. Many responses contextualised functionalism in order to argue a case, for example arguing that it overcame the problems of stoicism and successful pretence (behaviourism), multiple realisability of mental states and 'carbon chauvinism' (MBIT), and the problems of location and interaction (substance dualism). Other candidates merely listed alternative positions/models of mind, and therefore evaluation was implicit.

Question 3

This question was less popular than **Question 2,** although a full range of responses was seen. Stronger responses often made sophisticated use of the Private Language Argument, although there were a range of interpretations of its significance. The key differentiator here was not the choice of material used, but rather the detail and sophistication with which it was explained, e.g. exactly how Mill's argument from analogy works. In some responses, Mill's position became blurred with behaviourism and therefore it was difficult to tell whether a candidate had fully understood the thrust of Mill's argument.

Topic 2 Ethics questions

Section A

Question 4

(a) This question was generally well addressed, with the best responses demonstrating a broad understanding of Sartre's position, and knowledge of the text as a whole. They also engaged deeply with the reasons why a choice for oneself is a choice 'for' all men. Most candidates were able to give reasonable accounts of what Sartre means by saying our existence precedes our essence and to link this to the idea that we must create ourselves and also to the idea that in making choices we choose what we regard as valuable for mankind as a whole. Better responses also linked these ideas to further-related Sartrean notions, such as abandonment and the non-existence of God, anguish and despair, and bad faith. This was usually done through examples from elsewhere in the text. Stronger responses were also able to explain why Sartre was not saying exactly the same thing as Kant. Other responses were often clear and accurate, but kept mainly to the points raised in the passage so that the question was responded to 'specifically'. There were some candidates who did not refer to the passage at all, and other less successful responses misconstrued the phrase as meaning that our choices have practical consequences for other people's quality of life, with a small minority arguing that 'resignation' referred to someone choosing to resign from a Communist trade union.

(b) There was some excellent evaluative material for this question and the best responses often dealt with the seeming contradiction in an ethics of freedom forbidding people to make a range of allegedly 'inauthentic' choices even if they wanted to. There was also some good discussion of how Sartre's position differs from Kant's first formulation of the CI. A few seemed to have misinterpreted the term 'unconvincing' and subsequently discussed the psychology of those who would be convinced by Sartre: they might talk quite generally about whether people in post-war France might

be convinced because of the traumatic experiences of the occupation, whether Christians could be convinced by an atheistic philosophy and about how Sartre's approach may feel liberating as well as daunting and so might convince/not convince people of different temperaments. Better responses were more philosophical and focused on tensions within Sartre's ethics. Some merely described Sartre's responses to the 'charges' laid against 'existentialism', rather than reaching judgements about whether these arguments were themselves convincing. Some candidates argued that Sartre merely assumed the non-existence of God and that, given this formed the foundation of his ethic, his account was unconvincing. Kierkegaard's Christian existentialism was often appealed to as a more suitable alternative on this front. It needs noting that Sartre argues that God's existence would not affect his existentialism since a choice to believe in God is still a choice, albeit an inauthentic one.

Section B

Question 5

The best responses displayed a detailed understanding of exactly what it means to will that a maxim should become a universal law. The majority were able to explain a few decent, albeit standard critical points (usually via 'honest shopkeepers' and 'axe-men'). Most candidates tried to retain focus on the issue of rigidity rather than simply offer a general critique of Kant's ethics. Some stronger answers were able to support nuanced conclusions which did not just say that his ethics were or were not too rigid. For example, they said that there is value in having rights that trump considerations of utility, or that Kant's ethics underpins certain valuable legal rights which helps to prevent abuses of government power, while at the same time recognising that the Kantian approach may well be too rigid when it comes to personal morality and individual decision making. Some weaker responses drifted into discussion of other ethical theories and therefore lost focus. There also seemed to be some over-reliance on assertion and controversial intuitions to generate counter-examples to Kant.

Question 6

This question was not as popular as **Question 5** and it attracted a mixed range of responses. Stronger answers not only considered a range of positions on the topic, but also advanced convincing critical arguments to arrive at a verdict directed towards the question as a whole. Less successful responses just examined what different normative theories might say about killing people without seeming to have much knowledge of JWT. Many would list the *jus in bello* (etc.) conditions, but not then do anything critically with them. Kant's ethics were often used to argue that any war is unjust as it involves using civilians or soldiers as means to an end, but without awareness of Kant's own discussion of war.

Topic 3 Old Testament: Prophecy

Too few responses were received for these questions to comment on.