



MARKSCHEME

November 2010

PHILOSOPHY

Higher Level

Paper 3

4 pages

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Note to examiners

This markscheme outlines what members of the paper setting team had in mind when they devised the question. The topics listed in the bullet points indicate possible areas candidates might cover in their answers. They are not compulsory points and not necessarily the best possible points. They are only a framework to help examiners in their assessment. Examiners should be responsive to any other valid points or any other valid approaches.

Using the assessment criteria

Answers on Paper 3 are assessed according to the assessment criteria set out in the Subject guide.

Unseen text – exploring philosophical activity

This paper consists of a response to an unseen text. The purpose of the exercise is to allow candidates to reflect upon and explore the nature, function, methodology and meaning of philosophical activity as presented in the text, relating this to the candidate’s experience of doing philosophy throughout the whole course. Responses might reflect this in very different ways, giving examples which draw from the candidate’s experience of exploring philosophical activity throughout the whole course. The following points – referring to the text extract – might be included in a response, but they are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.

Key Points

- Philosophy as possession *vs.* philosophy as activity
- Philosophy as the possession of a “substance” of beliefs *etc.*
- Reflection on others’ beliefs, attitudes and concepts as the activity of philosophy and the route to the possession of a philosophy
- Elementary or basic beliefs and the tendency to analysis *vs.* holistic possession of beliefs as in religion or other approaches and emphases in philosophy
- The relationship between basic beliefs and other beliefs which are formed
- Universality of people possessing beliefs
- Foundational and coherent approaches to belief acquisition; paradigms
- The issue of philosophical training *vs.* stream of consciousness or personal discovery
- Notion of the “whole person” – psychological approaches to knowledge *e.g.* Hume’s account of the mind, or Freud’s cultural and analytic critique or Nietzsche’s stream of consciousness
- Doing philosophy to render “beliefs and values systematic” as opposed to mere deliberation
- Use of beliefs to navigate the world; issue of possession of such beliefs; the relationship between unreflective and consciously explored belief
- “Daily bread” – the applicability of philosophy to mundane decisions and issues of living
- The desirability for the individual to give beliefs “careful thought and perhaps to replace or revise your beliefs”
- “Discovering alternatives” – the importance of consideration of counter-arguments
- The importance of rational support to deal with inconsistencies and internal conflicts

Discussion

- The issue of analysis as a route in philosophy
- Foundationalism in Western thought as opposed to the Eastern emphasis on the whole
- Different cultural attitudes to belief acquisition from the “scientific” emphasis in some Western approaches, to the more holistic, existential approach in some Eastern approaches
- Does the approach to philosophy, as encountered in the extract, take into account differing or contrasting notions of self, relation to others and to the world?
- Examples from the course of approaches to issues like “the life we desire and the values to which we aspire”
- Possible conflicts between, or overlaps within, philosophy and psychology
- The author’s claim for the need for beliefs to have a rational basis; alternative accounts *e.g.* fideism, ideology, gender, emotion
- Personal use of different topics and activities in the course to illustrate the possession and activity of philosophy
- Consistency of belief and conviction through philosophy; is this over-optimistic?
- Issues raised in the text in the light of doing philosophy throughout the whole course, *e.g.* philosophy as possession; philosophy as activity; our own and other’s beliefs