

GCE 2004

June Series



Mark Scheme

Philosophy

AS Unit 1 – Theory of Knowledge (PLY1)

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Dr Michael Cresswell Director General

Candidates must answer **one** question

NB The following marking notes are not prescriptive and do not constitute ‘model answers’: they are intended as an ‘aide-memoire’ for Examiners. Marks should be awarded in accordance with the levels-of-response marking criteria.

1

Total for this question: 45 marks

(a) Briefly explain and illustrate what is meant by ‘ <i>a posteriori</i> ’ knowledge. (6 marks)
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Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of the term ‘*a posteriori* knowledge’ as that which is known from/through/after experience. Brief explanation/illustration could be rooted in references to classical empiricism and/or Locke, Berkeley and Hume **or** to further concepts such as contingent and/or synthetic statements **or** to an example of something known *a posteriori*. Answers which accurately define the term and contrast it with *a priori* knowledge should be placed at the bottom of this band.

1 – 3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding by accurately defining the term without further explanation or illustration or by providing a partial and confused explanation or illustration of *a posteriori* knowledge.

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

(b) Explain and illustrate two ways of justifying the beliefs we hold. (15 marks)
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Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of two ways in which we might justify the beliefs we hold. The notion of justification and/or reasonable grounds for our beliefs may be further explored (although this should not extend into an evaluative account of whether any of our beliefs are justified). The ways most likely to be selected are: the belief is certain (or, perhaps, basic) and requires no further justification (foundationalism), the belief coheres with/is consistent with other beliefs we hold (coherentism), the belief was generated through a reliable process (reliabilism) there are some who may argue that intuition is itself a reliable process. The last two may be linked to experience, probability, pragmatism.

- 1 – 3 Demonstrates basic knowledge or partial understanding probably through offering a confused account. Tangential responses, focusing more generally on an alleged distinction between knowledge (as certainty) and belief (as uncertainty) but displaying an understanding of justification should be rewarded in this band.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

Illustrations of at least one belief should be provided and related to two ways in which the belief might be justified. This might include beliefs derived from reliable sources such as authoritative texts and/or personnel or from traditional authorities **or** beliefs which cohere with other beliefs such as evidence provided by two or more senses **or** any other reasonable example (of which there are many).

- 7 – 9 Selects, or constructs, at least one relevant point or example and applies this to provide a clear illustration of two ways in which we might justify the beliefs we hold.
- 4 – 6 Selects, or constructs, at least one point or example to provide a partial illustration, lacking detail and precision, of two ways in which we might justify the beliefs we hold *or* one way is illustrated but a second way is omitted or confused. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition and brief illustration.
- 1 – 3 Selects at least one illustrative point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague account of two ways in which we might justify the beliefs we hold, e.g. it is not clear how the examples provided are relevant to types of justification **or** examples are provided but application to the question is tangential (e.g. accounts of why the belief might be mistaken).
- 0 No relevant philosophical points.

(c) Assess rationalism.	(24 marks)
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Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

It is possible, especially if foundationalism has been described in part (b), that knowledge and understanding may be implicit. However, candidates might describe rationalism as the view that reason, rather than sensory experience, is emphasised as the source of (at least some of) our concepts and/or knowledge; that certain concepts precede and structure experience or that certain propositions can be known without reference to sensory experience and that certain truths are analytic, necessary or ‘*a priori*’ truths; that some concepts and/or knowledge claims are innate and, possibly, are reached through the application of reason rather than derived from experience. Any one of these approaches is sufficient for full marks if it is well explained. There may also be an account of a particular rationalist approach such as that of Plato, Descartes or Kant.

- 4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of rationalism.
- 1 – 3 Demonstrates basic knowledge or partial understanding of rationalism.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

Depending on the approach taken, some of the following, or equivalent, points will be raised:

- Illustrations of concepts or aspects of our conceptual framework which, arguably, do not derive from experience. This might include the ability to grasp universals, the ability to use language, the concepts of self or of God, moral intuition, causation, eventless time or any other reasonable example. Illustrations of analytic propositions/necessary or *a priori* truths and/or illustrations of innate ideas. Discussions of certainty and whether only that which is certain can be regarded as knowledge.
- Illustrations of particular arguments employed by Plato (the forms, the divided line) or Descartes (the cogito) or, less likely, Kant (deduction of the categories, how we can know our moral duty).
- Any of these approaches *may* be contrasted with the failure of empiricism/experience to provide certain knowledge.

7 – 9 Selects, or constructs, relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear, detailed analysis of philosophical arguments about rationalism.

4 – 6 Selects, or constructs, some relevant points and examples to provide a partial analysis, either narrowly focused or lacking detail and precision, of philosophical arguments about rationalism.

1 – 3 Selects and applies some relevant points to provide a basic, sketchy and vague explanation of philosophical arguments about rationalism **or** some relevant points feature among many irrelevant points in a tangential approach to philosophical arguments about rationalism.

0 No relevant philosophical points.

Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)

A range of argumentation is possible:

- General criticisms of rationalism, including: whether there are any ‘foundational’ truths; whether God is required in certain rationalist approaches; whether one can proceed very far without any experiential input; disquiet concerning the extent of knowledge (how much did Plato or Descartes ‘know’?).
- There may be specific criticisms of particular arguments employed by, e.g. Plato or Descartes and/or of their use of particular concepts (such as ‘form’ or ‘I’).
- Empiricist scepticism about the validity of knowledge claims not defined in experiential terms (for example, claims about ethics, religion, universals and so on) and scepticism about the role of reason, intellect and intuition in gaining knowledge.
- It could be argued that experience is clearly important in the generation of knowledge *but* that it is less clear how experience justifies knowledge. This may be linked to a discussion of the role of reason in justifying knowledge claims and/or to degrees of certainty.

- Also, it might be argued that an adequate account of our conceptual framework cannot be given in purely experiential terms and/or that general principles which are not derived empirically underpin our experience.
 - It may be claimed that the notion of a wholly rationalist or empiricist approach is mistaken and the distinction drawn between them is an historical overstatement.
- 7 – 9 Demonstrates a critical appreciation of arguments concerning rationalism and advances a clear position.
- 4 – 6 Evaluation is present within an exposition of arguments concerning rationalism but is either implicit in a juxtaposition of points/theoretical approaches or asserted with limited supportive explanation.
- 1 – 3 Demonstrates a simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning rationalism in which a view is merely described, or points are listed or asserted without justification, or the argument is confused.
- 0 No relevant philosophical insights.

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2

Total for this question: 45 marks

(a) Identify **one** similarity and **one** difference between idealism and naïve realism. (6 marks)

Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of **one** similarity and **one** difference between idealism and naïve realism.

Differences include: naïve realism is the view of ‘the man in the street’, whereas idealism is a philosophical position; naïve realists claim that we perceive objects directly and/or there are no subjective intermediaries, whereas idealists claim that we perceive ideas/sense data and either that this is all that exists or all that can be known; realism and non-realism (or irrealism).

Similarities include: what we are directly aware of (ideas/objects) is what is real; naïve realists claim that objects really do have the properties they are perceived to have (under normal perceptual conditions) and idealists claim that the essential nature of what exists is what is perceived; both claim that the senses are generally reliable and/or reality is knowable.

At the lower end of the mark band explanations of either the difference or the similarity may lack clarity.

1 – 3 Demonstrates basic knowledge or partial understanding by giving an accurate account of a difference but not a similarity (or vice versa) or by giving two differences and no similarities (or vice versa) or by giving a confused account.

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

(b) Explain and illustrate **one** criticism of phenomenalism. (15 marks)

Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of **one** criticism of phenomenalism. For example: whether statements about actual or possible sense data entail statements about physical objects (and vice versa); whether the continued existence of physical objects consists of possible sensory experiences; the difficulty of translating statements about objects, observers and background conditions into statements about actual or possible sensory experiences; statements describing sensory experience under-determine reality; the problem of solipsism; whether sense data exist and/or the status of sense data. At the lower end of the mark band, explanations are likely to include more than one criticism and possibly list criticisms.

1 – 3 Demonstrates basic knowledge and partial understanding by offering a confused account of one criticism of phenomenalism or an account of a criticism which is not clearly a criticism of phenomenalism (e.g. it is indistinguishable from idealism).

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

The criticism could be illustrated through explanations of how a given statement about sensory experience does not entail the existence of an object or how the presence of an object does not entail that a perceiver will have a certain experience (this might involve examples drawing from sceptical arguments, e.g. lucid dreams, sensory deception); or through attempts to explain or describe a perceiver-independent continually existing reality (perhaps borrowing from direct realism); or through difficulties of translating self, time and/or place or number into sense data language (e.g. ‘In the 1940s Andover was a small market town’ or how a leopard has a specific number of spots whereas perceivers see only lots of spots); or how, e.g. ‘I see a seeming blue rectangle’ could mean there is a blue rectangle under white light or a white rectangle under blue light; or illustrations of solipsism, etc.

7 – 9 Selects, or constructs, relevant points or examples and applies these to provide a clear and precise illustration of **one** criticism of phenomenalism.

4 – 6 Selects, or constructs, an example to provide a partial illustration lacking detail and precision of **one** criticism of phenomenalism or uses an example or examples as a basis for listing critical points about phenomenalism. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition and brief illustration.

1 – 3 Selects at least one example or point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague illustration of **one** criticism of phenomenalism **or** a relevant example is given but application is tangential to phenomenalism.

0 No relevant philosophical points.

(c)	Assess idealism.
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(24 marks)

Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

4 – 6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of idealism. There may be an attempt to distinguish between different versions of idealism, e.g. between strong and weak idealism or between all that exists are minds and ideas and knowledge being minded-dependent or all that can be known are ideas. However, full marks can be earned for accounts of one position (probably Berkeley). Knowledge of ‘reality’ is gained through perceptual experience and this consists of having sensations and ideas. Sensations and ideas are what is real. To be is to be perceived.

1 – 3 Demonstrates basic knowledge of limited aspects of idealism or partial understanding of idealism through a confusing or general account of the problems of perception in which idealism is not clearly distinguished from other positions.

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding.

Selection and Application (9 marks)

Candidates are likely to select and apply some of the following or equivalent points:

- Idealism is a response to sceptical arguments and is compatible with the existence of illusory or deceptive experience – with the view that in such cases what we perceive is ‘wild’, lacking coherence.
- It is also a response to perceived weaknesses in other realist positions, e.g. representative realism and the primary-secondary quality distinction.

Critical points are likely to focus on:

- It is absurd (‘I refute it thus’ etc.).
- It is not the best explanation of our experience (difficulties of accounting for changes in our experience of ‘x’ when perceived at T1 and T2 but not perceived between T1 and T2).
- It may be the case that objects cannot be thought of outside of a mind but it does not follow that objects cannot exist outside of a mind.
- Solipsism. How can an idealist know that there are other minds/perceivers? Our experience arguably includes experience of being perceived (guilt, embarrassment, etc). Does this presuppose body?
- The role accorded to God and how God can be known.
- Does idealism lead to transcendental realism?

7 – 9 Selects, or constructs, relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear, detailed analysis of philosophical arguments about idealism.

4 – 6 Selects, or constructs, some relevant points and examples to provide a partial analysis, narrowly focused or lacking detail and precision, of philosophical arguments about idealism.

1 – 3 Selects and applies at least one relevant point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague analysis of philosophical arguments about idealism **or** some relevant points feature among many irrelevant points in a tangential approach to philosophical arguments about idealism.

0 No relevant philosophical points.

Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)

A range of argumentation is possible:

- An evaluative conclusion drawn from points selected for discussion.
- Arguments for realism (following a consideration of some criticisms of idealism). What we are directly aware of in perception is an object, perceptual errors do not require us to abandon this position in favour of extreme subjectivity. The fact that we know objects only through their appearances does not necessitate the view that we are aware of something other than the objects themselves. **Or** what we are directly aware of in perception is a representation **and** the hypothesis of an external world causing these representations is the best explanation. It might be argued that, in response to scepticism, it is better to construct a perceiver-independent language of perception rather than an object-independent language of perception.
- Arguments for idealism (following a consideration of some criticisms of idealism). What we are aware of in perception is an idea (sensation, sense-experience, impression, etc.). There is no access to reality other than what the mind provides us with and (some form of) idealism is true. It may not follow that all that exists are ideas but all that we can know are ideas and we cannot get from here to knowledge of a mind-independent objective reality.
- A middle-ground ‘utterly absurd and utterly irrefutable’ approach, although this should be argued (along the above lines) rather than merely asserted.

- 7 – 9 Demonstrates a critical appreciation of arguments concerning idealism and advances a clear position.
- 4 – 6 Evaluation is present within a clear exposition of arguments about idealism but is either implicit in a juxtaposition of points/theoretical approaches or asserted with limited supportive explanation.
- 1 – 3 Demonstrates a simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning idealism in which a view is merely described, points may be listed or asserted without justification, or the argument is confused.
- 0 No relevant philosophical insights.