



PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

9774/01

Paper 1 Introduction to Philosophy and Theology

May/June 2016

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 75

Published

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1 Critically examine Plato’s analogies of the Sun and the Cave.

Plato’s analogy of the sun is a metaphor by which he refers to the ‘illumination’ of the Form of the Good. Plato is analysing what he believes to be the nature of reality, and how one can be supposed to have knowledge of that reality. Plato suggests that the eye is unusual among the sense organs in that it needs light as a medium to work, and of course the sun is the greatest source of light. This offers a rather flawed concept of sense data, in so far as Plato clearly had no concept of the nature of sound or smell, for example. Plato stretches his analogy to include the illumination of / study of the forms. When considering the forms, reason operates properly; whereas its operation in the changing world of sense experience blunts its comprehension. The power of the sun in illuminating objects and in generation and growth is like the power of the Good to shed light on other forms. The sun is a visible object that makes other objects visible to the eye by providing light to the power of sight; the Good is an intelligible object that makes objects/forms intelligible to the soul through the power of reason/understanding by providing truth. The Good makes the application of our reason possible. Knowledge is obtained by the mind, not the senses. This is open to all sorts of epistemological objections concerning claims about innate knowledge and metaphysics.

The analogy of the Cave continues the analogy of the Sun: education moves the philosopher through the stages shown by the analogy of the Divided Line up to the stage of contemplation of the Form of the Good. The shackled world of the prisoners in the cave represents the lowest stage of the line – imagination. Following this, the released prisoner comprehends the real things of which the shadows are copies, and ascends to belief. On ascending to the world outside the cave, he finally reaches understanding by contemplating reality illuminated by the Form of the Good, just as the sun is the cause of what he sees in the world outside the cave. The world of changing things known by sense experience is not the fundamental nature of reality: reality at this level is the world of Ideas/Forms, and it is perceived through philosophical enlightenment, which forms the basis of Plato’s belief that only Philosopher Kings should rule. As with the analogy of the Sun, this is open to a variety of objections: that it is a metaphysical invention; that it is a perversion of the knowable material reality; and so on. Candidates might defend it in many ways, for example by suggesting that empiricism and induction are not the route to certain knowledge; that mathematics points to a higher reality that cannot be apprehended by sense experience, and so on.

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2 ‘The morally right action is the one that God commands.’ Critically assess this claim.

This can be answered solely in terms of an analysis of Divine Command Theory, or else by an analysis, dictated by the candidate, of what “the morally right action” might consist of if it does not consist of obedience to God’s commands. For the former, candidates might refer to the various arguments and counter-arguments stemming from: Plato’s articulation of the Euthyphro Dilemma; the metaphysical basis of the theory in relation to the existence of objective moral truths in relation to God; the desirability or otherwise of a moral system which includes rewards and punishments for obedience or non-compliance; the coherence or otherwise of assumptions about the existence of God and about God’s supposed moral nature, and so on. For the latter, candidates might argue that some other moral theory is preferable in so far as its recommendations for doing morally right actions rest on an alternative, more secure footing.

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3 Critically examine the role of both deduction and innate ideas in epistemology.

The role of deduction in epistemology is focussed on the deductive form of an argument which guarantees the truth of the conclusion: if the premises of the argument are true, then the conclusion cannot be false. By contrast, inductive arguments assert the probable truth of their conclusions. Deductive truth can be based on definition, logical entailment or mathematical necessity. Rationalist knowledge and justification are based in intellectual and deductive reason: some propositions can be known by intuition; others are deduced through valid arguments from intuited propositions. The radical interpretation of this is that reason is the only path to knowledge, although for many it is enough to say that reason takes precedence over other ways of acquiring knowledge. There is a range of claims to special intuitive/deductive knowledge, e.g. for the existence of God, of the soul, and of free will; for mathematics and for ethics, all of which are heavily disputed.

Adjunctive to claims about deduction/intuition, according to rationalist philosophy, at least some ideas are innate – inherent in the processes of cognition rather than arrived at through experience. Some assert, for example, that mathematical concepts such as $1+1=2$ are known innately. Where empirical confirmation of this requires experience of two instances of an object, Leibniz argued that to extend this to the claim that one plus another will *always* equal two requires innate knowledge, since that claim has not yet been empirically witnessed. Candidates are likely to give an overview of both rationalist and empiricist arguments concerning innate ideas, analysing the arguments advanced by Plato, Descartes, Locke, Chomsky, *et al.* The role of innate ideas in epistemology is thus to serve as a testing ground for two contrasting epistemologies: it is primarily concerned with the *sources* of knowledge. As a potential source of knowledge, then, innate ideas are set alongside other possible sources, such as perception, introspection, reason, memory and testimony.

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4 Assess the claim that all scripture is inspired by God.

Candidates are likely to start with the scriptural quotation to this effect given in 2 Timothy 3:16, that *all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, and training in righteousness*. The Greek for 'inspired' is *theopneustos*, literally 'God-breathed', which recalls Genesis 2:7, where God breathes life into man. All claims for the inspiration of scripture that are scripturally based are circular where the cited authority is scripture itself, so the claim is difficult to substantiate. Advocates of the propositional model of scripture offer it in a number of variants, which candidates are likely to analyse, the underlying theme being the inspiration of the speakers / authors / editors / redactors. Candidates are likely to argue, therefore, that the statement in the question is true or false depending on the model of inspiration chosen.

Others might take the non-propositional line that scripture's inspiration is in God's personal self-disclosure and not in any literalist or fundamentalist interpretation of some version of the text. This might be argued, for example, from text, literary and form critical analysis of the text, where such analysis reveals the degree of textual corruption, the volume of immoral recommendations and commands, scientific inaccuracy and so on. Some might conclude from this that what is important is the general thrust of scripture, in so far as scripture is developmental and not static. Others might conclude that scripture is a pious fabrication. Some might take a middle-of-the-road stance, and argue that some parts of scripture are inspired in a doctrinal, ethical or devotional sense, where others are clearly secular literature concerning which the question of inspiration is not relevant, for example the formal types such as proverbs, riddles, wisdom sayings, erotic poetry, funny stories and the like.

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