



## GENERAL COMMENTS

Generally speaking, students performed better in this year's examination than in any previous year. Many more students seemed to approach the examination with a thorough knowledge and understanding of the texts studied, and students and teachers had clearly taken note of comments in previous Assessment Reports. However, as noted below, many of the problems identified in previous reports resurfaced in 2005, but there were also extremely impressive performances among the highest achieving students.

In Section A, students performed especially well on Question 5 which was on Plato's *Republic*. In Section B, similar numbers of students selected Questions 1 (Plato), 2 (Aristotle), 3 (Epicurus) and 5 (Sartre). Question 3 was the most popular question in this section. Question 4 (Nietzsche) was chosen by a relatively small percentage of students. The average marks for students were relatively consistent across questions in Section B, although performance in Question 1 was a little lower than in other questions. In Section C, Question 1 was the most popular choice, followed by Question 2.

### Areas of strength and weakness

#### Strengths

- Good knowledge of the texts and relevant background information.
- Focus on the questions: a significant number of students were careful to address themselves precisely to the question asked.
- A good understanding of the demands of philosophical evaluation: strong students were not afraid to express their own views and were able to offer arguments in support of these views.

#### Weaknesses

- Poor knowledge of the texts: there were still many students who had only a generalised knowledge and very little understanding of the prescribed material. Teachers must ensure that students acquire at least a basic knowledge of all texts.
- Poor knowledge of the arguments in the texts: many students who appeared to know a good deal about the doctrines and backgrounds of the texts nevertheless demonstrated little understanding of their overall argument. This was revealed most clearly in Section B, Question 1 where students were asked to identify the decisive move in Socrates' argument. It is important that students know the logic of the texts studied.
- Analysis of arguments: there were still many students who confused the concept of an 'argument' with that of a 'contention' or 'point of view'.
- Answering too many questions in Section B: a significant percentage of students attempted all questions in Section B. Many of these students were clearly under-prepared for the examination and offered only fragmentary answers. Others offered relatively full answers to more than three questions and were clearly well-prepared. These students disadvantaged themselves by using time that could be better spent on other parts of the examination, particularly the essay.
- Essay writing skills: this remains a major area of concern. Students and teachers are referred to comments on this matter in previous Assessment reports.

## Section A – Short-answer questions

### Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	43	25	10	22	1.1

- knowledge/an adequate education
- affection/to be fond of others/to show friendship to others
- candour/speaking your mind/not letting a sense of propriety stand in the way/frankness/honesty

Alternative wordings were also accepted.

### Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	37	44	19	0.9

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'The finest work in the world' is the attempt to find answers to the questions: 'What sort of person should one be?' and 'What should a person do with his life?' Another way Socrates puts it is: 'What I ought to do with my life and how to achieve that objective.'

Students received two marks for any suitable explanation of the above. Fuller answers included some elaboration, such as 'How thoroughly should he devote himself to his chosen occupation, what should he be doing when he's young, and what should he be doing when he's older?'

Many students received only one mark for simply writing 'philosophy'. This was too general; there are many things that count as philosophy.

## Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	40	25	34	1.0

- Humans are naturally selfish.
- Human life has no external end point, goal or *telos*.

'There is no God' was an acceptable alternative to the second point above.

## Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	40	24	20	16	1.1

Art is a human product and virtues as well as talents are required of the artist (a good artist is brave, truthful, patient and humble). The arts (especially literature and painting) show that the concept of virtue is tied to the human condition.

Some students referred to Murdoch's claim that the good artist requires a range of human virtues (such as justice, accuracy, truthfulness, realism, humility and courage) as well as the ability to sustain a clear vision, love as attachment or even passion without sentiment or self.

Students received full marks for elaborating on either of these requirements of a good artist or for listing two of the requirements with little elaboration. Two marks were awarded if one point was given without elaboration, and one mark for an inaccurate answer that nonetheless revealed an understanding of Murdoch's position.

## Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	46	17	37	0.9

- Only science achieves intellectual consensus.
- Science has provided us with a method of deciding disputed questions.
- Despite the possibility of science being mistaken, what better authority can we have than such a consensus?

Students received one mark for an explanation similar to the first point above. Any further elaboration of that idea (such as the second two points) received the further mark.

Some students referred to Armstrong's claim that science has provided us with a 'raft of truths'. This was also awarded one mark.

## Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	36	17	20	27	1.4

- When I think, but my thoughts do not issue in any action, it seems as obvious as anything is obvious that there is something actually going on in me that constitutes my thought. Behaviourism denies this and so it is unsatisfactory as a theory of mind. Behaviourism fails to account for the first person case.
- Behaviourism is an unnatural account of mental processes. For example, if somebody speaks and acts in certain ways, it is natural to speak of this speech and action as the expression of this thought rather than being identical with this thought. A mental state should not be defined as behaviour but the inner cause of behaviour.

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- A mental state is not a tendency or liability to behave but a state of the person that ‘lies behind’ behaviour and brings it about.

Some students also mentioned the experience of ‘automatic driving’ – there is a difference between driving somewhere with attention and without, even though the outside behaviour is the same. A disturbing number of students attributed a behaviourist position to Armstrong.

Students received full marks for elaborating on either one of these points or for giving two of these points with a little elaboration. Two marks were awarded for giving one point without elaboration, and one mark for an inaccurate answer than nonetheless revealed an understanding of Armstrong’s position.

### Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	40	7	18	36	1.5

#### ai.

Thinking is a function of man’s immortal soul. God has given an immortal soul to every man and woman, but not to any other animal or to machines. Hence no animal or machine can think.

Alternatively and more simply, ‘Souls think and machines don’t have souls.’ This is fairly telegraphic but contains the essence of the argument.

#### aii.

God can do what he likes – why not give a machine a soul?

Students were not awarded any marks for simply stating that Turing does not accept this objection.

### Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	59	11	31	0.7

Versions of Lady Lovelace’s objection, with Turing’s response to each, include:

- machines can only do what we order them to perform. Turing’s response is that machines may in a sense have the property of a conditioned reflex, in that a machine could be programmed to mimic another
- machines can never do anything really new. Turing’s response is that even human work may not be original, but rather grows from what has gone before
- machines can never take us by surprise. Turing’s response is that they often do, and that the mind is not necessarily aware of all the consequences of a fact. In reply to the objection that the surprise is a creative mental act on his part, he says that this would lead us back to the argument from consciousness, which is already closed and, further, that this is the case with any surprise.

Unfortunately many students confused Lady Lovelace’s Objection with the argument from consciousness.

### Question 5a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	17	18	66	1.5

The human condition and, in particular, our lack of education on what is real – we have a mistaken view of reality just as the prisoners do.

Alternatively and more simply, ‘Ordinary, unreflective human existence in the realm of the senses’.

### Question 5b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	19	15	22	44	1.9

#### bi.

They should return to the cave to share their knowledge.



bii.

Any two of the following problems were awarded one mark each:

- they won't be believed
- they will find it hard to readjust
- they will find it hard to understand the significance of the sun
- they may have found it more interesting to be outside
- at first, they would have trouble seeing the shadows on the wall
- they would be considered mad
- they would have trouble interacting with the people in the cave; that is, playing their game
- they would be set upon and killed.

### Section B: Extended text response short-answer questions

This section required more depth of understanding than Section A, but full essay-length responses were not necessary. As noted in last year's Assessment Report, when questions were prefaced with a quotation, there was no expectation that students needed to refer to the quotation in their answers unless they were explicitly asked to do so. However, it was often wise to do so in order to maintain a manageable focus.

#### Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	24	26	23	27	1.5

'Good things aren't the same as pleasant things' is Socrates' conclusion to the following argument.

- Good and bad are opposites (like health and illness).
- Opposites cannot coexist.
- Pain and pleasure coexist (for example; thirst is a sort of pain. Quenching thirst is a pleasure that coexists with the pain. In fact, the pleasure in drinking lasts only as long as the thirst).
- Therefore pleasure and pain cannot be the good and bad respectively.

Alternatively students could take the following approach.

- Socrates is criticising Callicles' claim that a good and happy life is to do with a hedonistic indulgence in a pleasurable fulfilling of desires and, while this might be pleasant, it is nothing to do with good.
- For Callicles, the pleasant and the good are the same. Socrates distinguishes between good and bad pleasures (for example, a life of scratching an itch and the life of a catamite).

#### Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	27	18	43	12	1.4

Fools and cowards feel more pleasure under certain circumstances than the brave and the smart. If pleasure was the measure of good, then these people would be better than the brave and the smart. But they aren't. So some pleasure must be shameful (that is, bad).

It was not necessary for students to mention both fools and cowards in order to obtain full marks. Many students offered other examples, such as the catamite (male prostitute), scratching an itch or leaky jars. These answers received one mark if they merely mentioned the example, or two marks the example was elaborated on.

In order to answer questions of this type, it is important for students to develop knowledge of the logical flow of argument in the texts.

#### Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	23	8	8	12	15	34	2.9

Convention is imposed by the weak on the strong to curb their strength. It is precisely because nature demands dominance of the strong that convention is needed by the weak. Hence, convention is always opposed to nature and vice versa.

Some students elected to explain the distinction between nature and convention: nature (what happens in nature) and convention (man-made rules/laws/morals/values). This was a good approach but was not essential for full marks.

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Students received full marks if they set out the argument clearly; four marks if they put forward the argument but it was clumsily expressed; three marks if they identified part of the argument with reasonable clarity; two marks for giving relevant material from the text that did not amount to an argument; and one mark for very unclear expression that mentioned a key word or two from the text.

## Question 1d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	25	14	14	18	30	2.1

King would acknowledge man as a sinner, as a transgressor of man-made and divine laws and morals, but would not be content, like Callicles, just to accept that this is the way things are and that human communities and nations **should** act like other creatures, in that the superior dominates the inferior. Rather, King argues that ‘Man has rational capacity; man has a mind; man can reason. This distinguishes him from the lower animals.’ Also, King asserts that man ‘is not guided merely by instinct. He has the ability to choose between alternatives, so he can choose the good or the evil.’ King asserts that man should be guided by God’s law not by Callicles’ natural law. Callicles would agree that we can choose, but that we should look to nature for our guide.

Students received full marks for a well-expressed, plausible answer; three marks for a plausible answer that lacked clarity; two marks for less clear answers; and one mark for responses that were unclear but along the right lines.

## Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	24	15	15	22	25	2.1

- A life of **pleasure** is a bovine existence, fit for beasts rather than men.
- **Honour** is too superficial – it depends on the bestower rather than the receiver, and the good should be something of one’s own and not easily taken away. Further, wise people seek honour in order to be assured of their virtue.
- **Virtue** is compatible with being asleep, with lifelong inactivity, or with great misfortune, but such lives are not happy.
- **Wealth** is a purely instrumental good; that is, it is sought for the sake of something else.

## Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	15	12	15	21	16	21	2.7

- If something has a function, its good consists in fulfilling it.
- Man must have a function, for (i) particular kinds of men such as carpenters and tanners do, and (ii) our parts such as eyes and hands do.
- Hence our good consists in fulfilling our function.
- Now our function must be peculiar to us, and so cannot be nutrition and growth (for plants share this), or perception (for all animals share it)
- Reason is peculiar to us.
- It must then be an activity of soul which follows or implies a rational principle (and thus exhibits excellence).

There were three parts to this question. Students needed to: outline the argument that the good life involved fulfilling our function (lines one to three above); identify our function (line four); and outline the argument for this particular function (lines three to six).

Many students gave excellent answers to one or two of these but did not address all three. With long, complex questions such as this one, students should check and make sure that they have answered the entire question.

Two marks were awarded for identifying the argument for the role of function, one mark for identifying the function and two marks for the argument that this is our function. However, students did not necessarily have to distinguish sharply between the arguments and not all steps had to be explained in detail; for example, lines three and five above could legitimately be omitted.

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## Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	18	9	12	13	8	13	26	3.3

Some possible criticisms include the following.

- Carpenters, etc. acquire their functions from social needs and interests. Does this apply to humans as such?
- Is what is true of all the parts of a thing necessarily true of the whole?
- Must our function be peculiar to us? A knife has the function of cutting, but so do other things.
- Is rationality, in fact, peculiar to us? And what if something else were instead; for example, gratuitous cruelty? Would that then be our function?

In evaluation questions, students should always elaborate on their answer. This elaboration could take a number of possible forms, but the most common and wisest is to explain the point using an example. Students should not give multiple examples unless the new example adds something new.

Students received one mark for the evaluation, one mark for clarity of expression and four marks for content. The content marks were awarded as follows: one fully elaborated point received four marks, as did multiple points that were partially (or fully) elaborated; students who identified one point with partial elaboration or several criticisms with minimal elaboration received three marks; students who identified one point with minimal elaboration or several points with no elaboration received two marks; students who merely mentioned a point of criticism received one mark.

## Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Average
%	12	8	8	6	6	6	10	7	7	9	10	11	5.6

### ai.

By 'happiness', Epicurus means pleasure; that is, the absence of pain in the body and trouble in the soul. Both these points were essential for two marks, although the wording could vary.

The reasons given include:

- when we are pained because of the absence of pleasure, then, and then only, do we feel the need for pleasure. Hence pleasure just is an absence of pain
- feeling is the rule by which we judge every good thing and therefore we will pass over some pleasures that result in annoyance. That is to say, we reject the pleasures that result in annoyance on the basis of the pain. Hence pleasure is the measure of good
- we sometimes choose pain over pleasure to get to a greater pleasure (which leads to the same conclusion as the preceding).

Epicurus' reasoning is based on observation of human behaviour.

Some students listed some of the ingredients of happiness. Although this is not, strictly speaking, the meaning of happiness, such answers were accepted. Students then needed to give reasons for each ingredient (simple fare, not fearing the gods or fate, not fearing death, or – following de Botton's account – good conversation/friends, freedom and reflection).

Students received full marks for one point thoroughly elaborated or for two or more points less well elaborated and so forth.

### aii.

There are a range of possible evaluations, including the following.

- It seems false to say simply that we only feel the need for pleasure when we are in pain – unless we already accept that pain is just a lack of pleasure. Hence Epicurus' argument seems circular.
- Saying that feeling is the rule by which we judge everything seems to contradict Epicurus' later appeal to sober reasoning.
- Although it is true that we sometimes choose pain over pleasure in order to get to a greater pleasure, it is not clear that gaining a greater pleasure is always the reason (unless we are already committed to Epicurus' position). For example, let's say I forgo the last donut because I do not want to be thought a pig. It is not obvious that the pleasure of not being thought a pig really is greater than the pleasure of eating the donut.

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Further, maybe I forgo the donut just because I think it is polite or the right thing to do, not because of any pleasure I receive.

- If pleasure and pain are defined in relation to the person experiencing them, are they then just a matter of taste? If so, by what measure can we say that one pleasure is better than another?

Epicurus's reasoning is based on the observation of human behaviour, but the descriptive does not necessarily translate to the normative.

Students received one mark for attempting an evaluation and four marks for the quality of the evaluation as per the principles outlined under Question 2c. Students were assessed on the quality of the evaluation of the points that they raised in answer to part a., regardless of the quality of those points as an answer to part a.

### Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	7	20	27	40	2.9

Philosophy enables a person to identify the pleasures worth pursuing and can bring peace of mind; for example, via the arguments against fearing death or fate or the gods. It should be practised by the young and old. Alternatively and more simply, it should be practised by everyone.

Although the question did not ask students to say **why** each group should study it, many students did offer these reasons (namely, the young should practise so that they have no fear of things to come and the old so that they may be young in good things because of the grace of what has been).

### Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	12	12	18	25	33	2.5

#### ai.

Any two of the following were awarded one mark each.

- the **value** of morality has not been tested/examined with 'great love'
- to question/scrutinise convictions or settled beliefs
- the concept of truth
- for it to be understood that 'God is dead' is positive, not negative
- to understand the consequences of the death of God

A number of alternative ways of expressing these points were accepted.

#### aii.

It is 'our' task. In order to receive full marks, students needed to say something about who 'we' are. Nietzsche says that 'we' are the godless, unbelievers or immoralists; or, more precisely, 'we are all three in such an advanced stage'. Any one of these answers was accepted.

Some students suggested philosophers or 'free spirits' – this response also received the full two marks. Simply saying 'everyone' without elucidation received only one mark.

### Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	28	13	12	12	12	23	2.3

Both religion and science rest on faith, convictions and presuppositions. In the case of religion, this is clear. Science claims to live without convictions but it rests upon one basic conviction: that one ought not to be deceived. This is, in fact, a moral stance. It is certainly not a matter of prudence or experience, for experience tells us that 'nature and history are not moral' and that truthfulness is not always the best policy.

Like religion, faith in science can act as a crutch for those who suffer from weakness of will. Faith in science or in religion can act as an authority for those who need to be commanded. Believers are thus able to avoid facing reality, which, in Nietzsche's opinion, is that we are the creators of value.



Students could have chosen to explore either of these comparisons. There were a number of approaches that students could take to evaluate the claims; however, many failed to evaluate the comparison. Once again, as with Question 2b., it was important for students to check that all aspects of the question were addressed.

Two marks were awarded for providing an outline; one mark for attempting to evaluate; and two marks for the quality of the evaluation.

**Question 4c.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	6	13	13	13	18	13	24	3.6

There was plenty of scope for quite divergent answers to this question. Some examples of student responses are given below.

**Example 1**

*Murdoch provides a clearer and more attractive ideal. She exhorts us to be less selfish. Hence her philosophy provides a clear path to social responsibility. Her road to this selflessness is also attractive in itself, involving as it does immersion in accessible and appealing human activities, i.e., appreciation of beauty, art and other disciplines.*

*Nietzsche offers a rather more dour account of life and in some ways it is not clear that it is a guide to a good life. He closes off a number of paths to the good life but it is not entirely clear that he offers an alternative. Nietzsche was himself a rather solitary and tortured soul and I suspect that this is intimately tied to his bleak philosophy.*

**Example 2**

*I am a Christian and hence do not entirely agree with either philosopher. However Murdoch was more favourable to religious belief. Accordingly the good life that she commends looks more like Christian morality. She commends selflessness and exhorts people to follow a life that would lead to greater concern for other people. Nietzsche's philosophy seems to me based entirely on selfishness and hostility to faith. If people followed his rejection of faith they would lack all support and have no reason to be good to other another.*

One mark was awarded for making a judgement (that is, saying that either Nietzsche or Murdoch provides a better guide), and the further five marks were given for a well expressed view with at least one accurate point of comparison.

Students needed to write at least a little on both thinkers, even if their emphasis lay on showing why Nietzsche or Murdoch's views are good or bad. A number of students preferred Nietzsche's ideas on grounds that do not actually distinguish him from Murdoch, or vice versa. For example, some said that they preferred Nietzsche because he does not rest his morality on belief in God. This is not a reason to prefer Nietzsche.

**Question 5a.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	11	8	13	20	13	15	19	3.4

The essential point was that the origin of value is with man, God does not exist to create them (and even if He did, it would still be with man).

Further points of elaboration include:

- for even if man took an omen, he would interpret it himself
- value is conferred by the act of choice, not before.

Students could use examples from Sartre or offer their own. Examples from Sartre include:

- the young man choosing between mother and Free Forces – the act defined the value of the feeling
- the Jesuit taking his failures as a sign from God, but he had to interpret the sign himself
- Abraham would also be an acceptable example, although it is more indirect.

Students received three marks for their answer to the question and three marks for their use of the example. In order to gain the second three marks, students needed not only to give an example, but also to explain how it is illustrative.

**Question 5b.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	13	11	15	19	18	25	2.9

There are a number of possible approaches to this question. Three of these are given below.





No, it is not meaningful to consider the nature of the good life because existence precedes essence. We first are and then we create value. We cannot determine the right way to be in advance (consider the example of the young man deciding whether to join the Resistance or to stay with his mother). We can't choose something because it is better, as the value is created after the action.

Yes, it is meaningful to consider the nature of the good life because, even given his claims about the origin of value, Sartre does offer some constraints on our actions. He says that we are responsible for all man but really one should always ask himself, 'What would happen if everybody looked at things that way?' This suggests that there is room for the study of the good life. That is, we need to think through the consequences of universalising our actions.

Yes, it is meaningful to consider the nature of the good life because, as Sartre himself suggests, even though there is no human nature, there is a universality of human condition which means that it is still valuable to explore different responses to the problems of living well.

Students received one mark for simply stating (implicitly or explicitly) 'yes' or 'no'. The remaining four marks were awarded for the quality of the reason (including an accurate understanding of what Sartre is saying).

**Question 5c.**

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	21	15	24	15	24	2.1

Sartre's basic argument for this contention is that even if God did exist and did 'speak' to us (through Abraham or the Jesuit example), there could be no proof that what we hear comes from God. Hence, we would still be responsible for interpreting the signs ourselves.

An alternative approach was to argue that the values (supposedly) given by God are likely to be too vague or too broad for specific cases, so we are left to trust our own instincts or interpretations. Either of these answers needed to be elaborated on (with explanation and/or an example) for full marks.

Many students who attempted this question seemed to have little knowledge of this key point.

**Section C – Essay**

Question chosen	none	1	2	3
%	5	48	33	14

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	8	4	5	6	6	9	7	8	12	9	7	5	5	5	2	2	6.8

A philosophy essay is still an essay and must be structured as such. Satisfactory essays rarely consist of a series of one-sentence paragraphs, nor should they be one long paragraph.

What follows are a series of possible solution pathways for the essays. It is not possible to anticipate all possible acceptable responses to these questions. All essays were assessed on the same basic criteria as follows.

**Expression**

- Did the student present the argument in an organised way?
- How clear and precise was the language used by the student?
- To what extent was the language appropriate to philosophy?

**Achievement Level**

- 0 The student had not reached level 1.
- 1 The student expressed some basic ideas but it was not always clear what the argument was trying to convey. The use of language was not appropriate to philosophy.
- 2 The student presented some ideas in an organised manner. There was some clarity of expression, but the argument could not always be followed. The use of language was not always appropriate to philosophy.
- 3 The student presented ideas in an organised way and the development of the argument could be easily followed. The use of language was appropriate to philosophy.
- 4 The student presented ideas in a clear and coherent way and insights were clearly articulated. The use of language was effective and appropriate to philosophy.



- 5 The student presented ideas in a coherent and incisive way, insights were clearly articulated and the argument was focused and sustained. The use of language was precise and fully appropriate to philosophy.

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

- To what extent did the student demonstrate knowledge of philosophical issues?
- How well had the student understood philosophical arguments and concepts?

#### **Achievement Level**

- 0 The student had not reached level 1.
- 1 The student demonstrated a superficial knowledge of philosophical issues but there was only limited understanding of the concepts used.
- 2 The student demonstrated some knowledge of philosophical issues and there was a basic understanding of the concepts used.
- 3 The student demonstrated a secure knowledge of philosophical issues, and concepts were generally understood.
- 4 The student demonstrated a wide-ranging knowledge of philosophical issues, which were used effectively to support arguments. Philosophical arguments and concepts were largely understood.
- 5 The student demonstrated knowledge which was comprehensive and in-depth, and was used incisively to support arguments. Philosophical arguments and concepts were fully understood.

#### **Identification and analysis of relevant material**

- How well had the student understood the specific demands of the question?
- To what extent did the student provide relevant supporting material?
- To what extent did the student provide appropriate examples?
- How effectively did the student analyse the supporting material?

#### **Achievement Level**

- 0 The student had not reached level 1.
- 1–2 The student showed little awareness of the specific demands of the question and identified relevant material in only a limited way. There was little analysis and few or no examples were given.
- 3–4 The student showed some awareness of the specific demands of the question and identified and analysed some relevant material. Some appropriate examples were used.
- 5–6 The student showed a good understanding of the specific demands of the question and identified material which was nearly always relevant. There was a sound analysis of this material. Examples were appropriate and gave support to the argument.
- 7–8 The student showed a clear understanding of the specific demands of the question and identified relevant material which was analysed in a thoughtful way. Examples directly supported the overall argument in a persuasive manner. Some counter-arguments were presented.
- 9–10 The student showed a full understanding of the specific demands of the question and identified material which was always relevant. The implications of this material were drawn out in a detailed analysis. Examples were well-chosen and compelling in their support of the argument. Counter-arguments were presented in a convincing way.

#### **Development and evaluation**

- Did the student develop the argument in a coherent way?
- How well did the student test ideas and arguments?
- To what extent did the student express a relevant, personal response?

#### **Achievement Level**

- 0 The student had not reached level 1.
- 1–2 The student developed ideas and arguments in a basic way but there was little or no evaluation.
- 3–4 The student developed some ideas and arguments but the development was simple, or was asserted without support or reference. There may have been some basic evaluation of the ideas and arguments.
- 5–6 The student developed ideas and arguments in a sound way and there was a consistent attempt to evaluate them, even if this was not fully developed.
- 7–8 The student developed ideas and arguments from a consistently held perspective. Evaluation of the ideas and arguments was thoughtful and convincing.
- 9–10 The student developed ideas and arguments from a consistently held and well-justified perspective. Evaluation of the ideas and arguments was compelling or subtle with strong evidence of personal reflection.



### Question 1

The question asked students to outline and **critically compare** the two chosen philosophers. Hence, students who simply juxtaposed two outlines did not answer the question. There were a number of ways to carry out this instruction. An acceptable, but inferior, option was to outline the two answers and then critically compare them. However, this approach ran a serious risk of producing a disjointed essay. It was better if the student's outlining of the second philosopher flowed from a critique of the weaknesses of the first.

### Plato (*Phaedo*)

In *Phaedo*, Plato offers the following argument.

- The soul is that which makes the body alive; when it possesses a body, it 'brings living with it'.
- It cannot 'admit the opposite' of this, and so it is 'un-dying'; that is, Immortal.
- Our souls survive our bodies and exist in the next world, where their education and conduct in this life determine whether they are accepted by others and happy in the next.

### Plato and Descartes

#### Agreements

- There is a real distinction between soul and body.
- There is immortality of the soul.

#### Differences

- For Plato, mind (*nous*) is part of the soul; for Descartes, it is the soul – he uses the terms interchangeably.
- As a consequence of this, in Descartes the soul is not the life principle. Indeed, Descartes seems to deny that other animals have souls.
- For Descartes, the soul is specifically created by God; there is no suggestion of this in Plato.
- As a consequence of these, Descartes' argument for immortality of the soul is rather different (see below).

### Plato and Turing

#### Agreements

- In a sense, Turing perhaps implies that the mind is in some way distinct from the body (it is like a program that the body/brain is running).
- This may lead to the possibility of a science fiction sort of immortality by running your mind in different hardware.
- Clearly these are a stretch. Turing and Plato disagree quite radically.

#### Disagreements

- Turing is not concerned with souls (he is fairly dismissive of the 'Theological Objection').
- Clearly for Turing, a mind (or soul) is not that which brings life to a body. Indeed, he argues that a thing that is not alive can think

There is perhaps insufficient overlap between these thinkers to develop a substantial critical comparison.

### Plato and Armstrong

- Armstrong provides the most direct attack on Platonic (and Cartesian) dualism. He offers a purely physico-chemical account of the mind.
- Consequently, he clearly presupposes a purely physico-chemical account of life.
- If there is such an account, we have no need of the idea of a soul to explain life or thought.
- And if the mind is just those brain states apt to produce certain behaviour, then when the brain stops being in those brain states, there is no mind.

### Descartes

- Reason is unique to humans. It cannot be shared by machines for, although a machine could utter words and maybe give verbal responses to certain prompts, it could not conceivably give meaningful responses to whatever is said in its presence, 'as the dumbest of men can do'. Reason cannot be shared by beasts for, if it were, they would be able to make themselves understood to us, either verbally or by signs; speech does not require much reason, and they have many organs corresponding to ours.
- The rational soul cannot be derived from matter, but must be specially created. It must be very intimately connected with the body to allow us to have not only movement but feelings and appetites, but its nature is 'entirely independent of the body' and so it is not bound to die with the latter. Since we can't see any other causes which destroy it, we conclude that it is immortal.



## Descartes and Turing

### Agreements

- We impute mentality on the basis of behaviour. Certain behaviours are signs of thought.
- At least some of these behaviours are linguistic.
- Simple automata (or, in Turing's parlance, discrete state machines) are not capable of such behaviours and hence cannot think (are not rational).

### Disagreements

- Turing believes in the possibility of 'universal machines'; Descartes did not have an idea of the possibility of such machines.
- Descartes does not think that we could ever find rational behaviours in machines; as a consequence of the previous point, Turing is sure that we will.

## Descartes and Armstrong

What is written above about Plato and Armstrong also applies to Descartes and Armstrong.

- Armstrong agrees with Descartes that we attribute mentality on the basis of behaviour; however, he believes that even rational behaviour has a physico-chemical basis.
- He believes this on the grounds that science is rapidly developing a physico-chemical explanation of human cognitive behaviour.
- We don't need to invoke 'souls' in order to explain such behaviour. Armstrong's faith in science quite simply leads him to be a materialist and hence to reject any form of dualism as unscientific.
- Armstrong could be said to be implying a critique of Descartes claims about the mentality of animals.

## Turing

- Having a mind amounts to having certain capacities, which a machine could have (and probably will, he thinks, by the year 2000).
- An appropriate test for a machine's ability to think is its success in the 'imitation game' (now known as the Turing Test), in which an 'interrogator' communicates with two unseen parties (another person and a computer) and tries to determine which is which.
- The current limitations on computers' ability to succeed are merely practical (for example, restricted by the programming allowed by their storage capacity).
- Some human minds are 'supercritical' – an idea presented to them may give rise to many others. A supercritical machine is possible.
- The functions of the mind may be like the skins of an onion. Some may think that beneath these (mechanically explainable) functions there is the 'real' mind – but, as we peel away these functions, is there any such mind to be found underneath? If not, the whole mind is mechanical.

## Armstrong

- A person is 'nothing but a physico-chemical mechanism'. This is the view favoured by modern science, which has more authority than philosophy or religion because it achieves a much greater consensus.
- One version of this view is Behaviourism, which defines the mind or mental states in terms of outward physical behaviour. A crude version of Behaviourism says that mental states (for example, anger) are just the outward behaviour, but an obvious objection is that one may be angry without giving any outward sign of it. A more sophisticated version says that mental states are dispositions to behave in certain ways, just as the brittleness of glass is its disposition or tendency to break easily, even if a given piece never actually breaks. An objection can still be raised that, when I am in a certain mental state, I am not merely liable to behave in a certain way; there is something actually going on in me now.
- Mental states should rather be defined as inner states which are apt to cause (depending on the circumstances) certain behaviour.
- What is the nature of these inner causes? Dualists such as Descartes say that they are states of a spiritual substance, but modern science favours the view that they are purely physical states of the central nervous system.
- Dispositions, in fact, should be understood as states having such causal powers – though the Behaviourists did not want their account of the mind to go behind outward behaviour to inner states.
- How can the physicalist account for self-consciousness (when in a given mental state, we are usually aware of it; an exception is the case of the 'automatic' driver)? Self-consciousness is a kind of perception of the state of one's own mind, and can be understood as the scanning of one part of the central nervous system by another.



## Turing and Armstrong

- Both are materialist (although Turing is a little more cautious in this; for example, God might create souls for machines, or his remarks about ESP).
- Certain behaviours are the sign of mentality.
- This behaviour is the result of inner states of the brain or machine.
- Armstrong goes beyond the latter claim to **identify** the mental states with the brain states apt to produce rational behaviour. Turing's views are quite consistent with this view.

One potential difficulty does arise. If a mental state is a brain state, then it might seem that machines cannot have mental states. For machines do not have brain states and hence cannot have mental states. However, Armstrong is very careful to say that mental states are **inner states** that are apt to produce certain behaviour. If a computer can be in a state apt to produce the relevant behaviour (or range of behaviours), then Armstrong would presumably be happy to attribute mentality to the machine. This is a position of modern day Functionalists.

## Question 2

Arguments to distinguish science from pseudo-science include the following.

- Certain theories (notably, Einstein's General Relativity) can be subjected to empirical testing; other disciplines appear to be irrefutable.
- These theories are compatible with any possible empirical observations; for example, it looks as though any human behaviour can be explained in the light of psychoanalysis.
- They are couched in such vague terms that they appear to have enormous explanatory power.
- Often, confirming evidence is sought for these theories in hindsight rather than in the context of a prediction – we go backwards from the evidence to the theory.
- Certain other theories make reasonably precise predictions, such that particular observations would be incompatible with the theory.
- The theory is therefore refutable under certain circumstances.
- These theories should be considered scientific because they provide a clear basis upon which rejection can occur. They also provide a way to distinguish themselves from other theories. Acceptance may not be possible, but the more they are able to withstand attempts to falsify them, the more they can claim to be stronger than other theories.
- In fact, the only genuine test of such a theory is one in which it faces the risk of falsification.
- The first group of theories is not scientific (that is, is pseudo-scientific) because there is no way to distinguish between competing theories. For example, Adler and Freud can equally explain the same events; neither is able to be refuted and therefore we are not in a position to pick the 'best' or 'worst' theory.

## Evaluation

- Is this the way science is really done in practice? A lot of what is considered to be good science would be rejected under application of Popper's criteria. (At this point, it would be appropriate to use Kuhn's views as an evaluative tool.)
- What is wrong with adjusting theories in the light of observation? Without this, we would have rejected many good theories.
- We may have a basis upon which to reject a theory, but we are no closer to being able to accept a theory. So, for the purposes of practical application, we are back to choosing the one with the most confirming evidence, although in Popper's sense of the word, this means the one that has withstood the strongest attempts to falsify it. Are we really just getting closer to the inductivism that Popper wants to reject?

## Superiority

- How do we interpret 'superior'? Do we mean more truthful, more meaningful, better...? Students needed to explicitly interpret this term for the purposes of the essay.
- Popper himself denied the claim that science is uniquely able to achieve the truth, recognising that science can often err and pseudo-science stumble on the truth. Therefore, some pseudo-science could end up being as, or more, meaningful or significant than science. The question is, how do we know?
- Both science and pseudo-science would claim evidence to back them up, but is Popper's confirming evidence better? If the goal is to be able to reject some theories and accept others, then Popper's would lead us further down this path than some of the pseudo-sciences.
- On the other hand, if the goal of science is to solve problems, then pseudo-science may potentially have at least as much success as science.



### Question 3

#### Nature of Kuhn's view

- A community that shares a paradigm would view successful creative work within that paradigm as progress. They could do nothing else.
- For Kuhn, the focus in science is on problem-solving – if problems defined by paradigms are being solved, then progress is being made.
- Science is concerned with solving the problems of nature and providing detailed and refined understanding of nature.
- Scientists are like a single community with shared premises.
- A lack of competing theories makes progress appear more obvious.
- A paradigm shift results in a community associated with the new paradigm that would hail the shift as progress and ignore any losses incurred.
- Usually, new paradigms preserve parts of the previous paradigm.
- Changes in paradigms do not necessarily get us closer to the truth; we are not necessarily progressing towards something.
- There is not necessarily one objective, true account of nature.
- Rather, progress could be interpreted as evolutionary in the sense that science becomes more complex and specialised but without a specific goal.
- Even science by proof is compatible with this evolutionary goal.
- Nevertheless, we call this scientific knowledge.

#### Plato's possible responses

- The image of the divided line arranges progress from opinion to knowledge of the Form of the Good – the final principle. For Kuhn, there is no goal and no progress in the sense of a straight line towards something.
- The end goal for Plato is not one true, objective view of nature but a truth beyond sensory experience to what lies behind fundamental assertions.
- Kuhn's community of scientists would be in the first subdivision of the intelligible realm, leading to an endpoint, and also in subdivision B of opinion. They are not aiming to go beyond these subdivisions.
- Scientists are concerned with thinking rather than knowing – they are in an intermediate state.
- A paradigm shift would be a shift from one thinking state to another, rather than progress to Plato's conception of knowledge.
- Even science by proof is not what Plato has in mind, as it stops short of questioning fundamental maxims as Plato conceives them.
- A move from subdivision B of opinion to first level of intelligible realm would be seen as progress by both Kuhn and Plato.
- Both would agree that any dissenter to the current view would encounter difficulties (for example, Plato's caveman who stumbles back into the cave from the outside).
- Ironically, it could be argued that Plato's views are just another paradigm.