

Philosophy
Higher level
Paper 3

Friday 6 November 2015 (morning)

1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions to candidates

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the text and write a response.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[30 marks]**.

In your response you are expected to:

- develop a response in an organized way using clear, precise language, which is appropriate to philosophy
- identify pertinent issues regarding the philosophical activity raised in the text
- take an independent position about the nature of philosophical activity in relation to the ideas developed in the text
- draw upon, and show a holistic appreciation of, the skills, material and ideas developed throughout the course.

Unseen text – exploring philosophical activity

Read the text below then write a response to it (of approximately 800 words). Your response is worth [30 marks]. In your response include:

- a concise description of philosophical activity as presented in the text
- an exploration of the pertinent issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text, relating this to your experience of doing philosophy throughout the whole course
- appropriate references to the text that illustrate your understanding of philosophical activity
- your personal evaluation of the issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text.

5 What philosophy is and how much it is worth are matters of controversy. One may expect it to yield extraordinary revelations or one may view it with indifference as a thinking in the void. One may look upon it with awe as the meaningful endeavour of exceptional people, or despise it as the superfluous broodings of dreamers. For the scientific-minded, the worst aspect of philosophy is that it produces no universally valid results; it provides nothing that we can know and thus possess. Nor is philosophical thought, like the sciences, characterized by progressive development.

10 It lies in the very nature of philosophy, as distinguished from the sciences, that in any of its forms it must dispense with the unanimous recognition of all. The certainty to which it aspires is not of the objective, scientific sort, which is the same for every mind; it is an inner certainty in which one's whole being participates. Whereas science always pertains to particular objects, the knowledge of which is by no means indispensable to all, philosophy deals with the whole of being which concerns humanity as humanity, with a truth which, wherever it is manifested, moves us more deeply than any scientific knowledge.

15 Philosophy is indeed bound up with the sciences. It always reckons with the most advanced scientific findings of its time. But essentially philosophy springs from a different source. It emerges before any science, wherever people achieve awareness.

20 The existence of such a philosophy without science is revealed in several striking ways. In philosophical matters almost everyone believes him/herself capable of judgment. Whereas it is recognized that in the sciences study, training and method are indispensable to understanding, in philosophy people generally assume that they are competent to form an opinion without preliminary study. Philosophical thought must always spring from free creation. Everybody must accomplish it for him/herself. Since we cannot avoid philosophy, it is always present: in the proverbs handed down by tradition, in popular philosophical phrases, in dominant convictions such as are embodied in the idiom of the "emancipated", in political opinions, but most of all, since the very beginnings of history, in myths. There is no escape from philosophy. The question is only whether a philosophy is conscious or not, whether it is good or bad, muddled or clear. Anyone who rejects philosophy is themselves unconsciously practising a philosophy.

What then is this philosophy, which manifests itself so universally and in such strange forms? The Greek word for philosopher (*philosophos*) connotes a distinction from sage (*sophos*). It signifies the lover of wisdom (knowledge) as distinguished from those who considers themselves wise in the possession of knowledge. This meaning of the word still endures: the essence of philosophy is not the possession of truth but the search for truth, regardless of how many philosophers may belie it with their dogmatism, that is, with a body of dogmatic principles claiming to be definitive and complete. Philosophy means to be on the way. Its questions are more essential than its answers, and every answer becomes a new question.

But this on-the-way-ness – humanity’s destiny in time – contains within it the possibility of deep satisfaction, and indeed, in exalted moments, of perfection. To be searchingly on the way – or to find peace and the fulfillment of the moment – these are no definitions of philosophy. There is nothing above or beside philosophy. It cannot be derived from something else. Every philosophy defines itself by its realization. We can determine the nature of philosophy only by actually experiencing it. Philosophy then becomes the realization of the living idea and the reflection upon this idea, action and discourse on action in one. Only by thus experiencing philosophy for ourselves can we understand previously formulated philosophical thought.

Must philosophy then justify itself? That is impossible. It cannot justify itself on the basis of a something else for which it is useful. It can only appeal to the forces in each of us which drive us towards philosophical thought. It is a disinterested pursuit, to which questions of utility or injuriousness have no relevance, an endeavour proper to humanity as humanity, and it will continue to fulfil this striving as long as there are people alive. Even those groups which are hostile to it cannot help harbouring their own peculiar ideas and bringing forth pragmatic systems which are a substitute for philosophy, though subservient to a desired end – such as Marxism or fascism. The existence of even these systems shows how indispensable philosophy is to humanity. Philosophy is always with us.

Philosophy cannot fight, it cannot prove its truth, but it can communicate itself. It offers no resistance where it is rejected; it does not triumph where it gains a hearing. It is a living expression of the basic universality of humankind, of the bond between all people.

[Source: Karl Jaspers, *Way to Wisdom*, 2nd edition (2003). © Yale University Press.]
