Exercise walk-through

2.2
Optional theme: epistemology

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Philosophy · SL

Ethics

- **The trolley cases three ways.** A utilitarian pulls the lever *and* pushes the man: five lives outweigh one.
- A Kantian may pull the lever (the death is a side effect) but not push (that uses the man only as a means).
- A virtue ethicist asks what a good person could live with, and may say that pushing someone to his death is something a decent person would not do.
- An essay that compares all three, and then judges which explains our intuitions best, shows the analysis examiners reward.

Epistemology

- **Epistemology** asks what **knowledge** is and how we get it.
- A traditional answer: **knowledge** is **justified true belief** .
- In 1963 Edmund Gettier showed cases where a person has a **justified true belief** that is true only by luck.
- A simple example (from Bertrand Russell): you look at a clock that says 3:00 and believe it is 3:00.

Paper 2 questions

- (a) The best ruler acts through **non-action** : he interferes as little as possible, so that people hardly notice him (chapter 17). More laws create more crime (chapter 57), and governing a large state is like cooking a small fish: stir it too much and it falls apart (chapter 60).
- (b) For the claim: the text seems to trust that people left alone will live simply and peacefully; Hobbes, who thought life without a strong state would be "nasty, brutish, and short", would disagree. Against the claim: the text does not say people are good, only that heavy government creates the desires and conflicts it then tries to control. Judgement: the view is less naive than it looks, but it fits small, simple communities better than large modern states.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State the **three** conditions of the justified-true-belief account of knowledge. [2]

2.2 Explain how the **stopped-clock** case is a **Gettier case**. [3]



stopped

but shows 3:00 at 3:00

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State the **three** conditions of the justified-true-belief account of knowledge. [2]

2.1

P is true; S believes P; S is justified in believing P

2.2 Explain how the **stopped-clock** case is a **Gettier case**. [3]



stopped

but shows 3:00 at 3:00

2.2

the belief "it is 3 o'clock" is true, because it happens to be 3 o'clock; it is justified: the clock has always been reliable; but it is true by luck, since the clock has stopped, so it is not knowledge: JTB is not enough

Exercises 2.3·2.4

2.3 Explain **two** stages of Descartes' **method of doubt**. [4]

2.4 Classify each statement as **a priori** or **a posteriori**, and give a reason: (a) "A bachelor is an unmarried man." (b) "Water boils at 100 °C at sea level." (c) "7 + 5 = 12." Then explain **one** reason why the empiricist finds (c) a hard case. [6]

Exercises 2.3·2.4

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2.3

any two, explained: the senses sometimes deceive, e.g. a stick looks bent in water, so they cannot give certainty; dreams: there is no sure sign to tell waking from dreaming, so the whole world might be a dream; the evil demon: a powerful being might deceive even about mathematics; the cogito: even if deceived, I must exist to be deceived

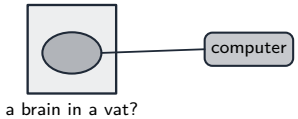
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2.4

(a) a priori: true by the meaning of the words; (b) a posteriori: known by observation and experiment; (c) a priori: known by reason without experiment; reasons given for each; hard case: it seems necessary and certain, yet not learned by experience; empiricists must explain it as relations of ideas (Hume) or as learned by counting (Mill)

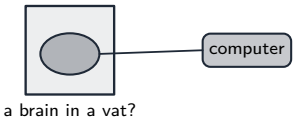
Exercise 3.1

3.1 *(Optional theme style.)* "We cannot know anything for certain." Evaluate this claim. [15]



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3.1

Mark with the markbands: [13-15] clearly focused on the question, clear explanation of the philosophical issue, relevant philosophers and arguments used accurately, counter-arguments evaluated, well-developed critical analysis, different perspectives evaluated, a reasoned conclusion; [10-12] focused, mostly accurate knowledge, analysis with some evaluation; [7-9] some focus, relevant knowledge, mostly narrative or description with limited analysis; [4-6] little focus, limited knowledge, mostly narrative; [1-3] little understanding of the question. Points that may be included: explains the claim and the meaning of certainty; sceptical arguments: illusions, dreams, the evil demon or the brain in a vat; Descartes' cogito as one certain truth; objection: the cogito shows only that thinking happens, not a lasting self; a priori truths such as logic and mathematics; empiricist reply: knowledge without certainty: probable, fallible knowledge is still knowledge; Moore's "here is one hand" reply; contextualism or the JTB debate (Gettier); evaluation: whether knowledge needs certainty; a reasoned conclusion