

ENGLISH TRIPOS ELT2

Friday 10 June 2022: 12pm - Saturday 11 June 2022: 12pm

Part II Paper 15

THE ETHICAL IMAGINATION

Answer **three** questions.

No writer may be made the central subject of more than one answer. In questions where a quotation is attributed, candidates are not obliged to refer to that author in their answer unless specifically required to do so.

*Do **not** present the same material twice, **either** in this paper **or** in the examination as a whole.*

Irrelevant answers, or answers only tenuously related to the question, will be penalized.

In the case of handwritten scripts, illegible handwriting may place candidates at a disadvantage.

*Include your **number**, not your name, on submitted scripts.*

There will be a word-count range of 800-1200 per essay, which is intended to approximate to the amount that can be written by hand under normal examination conditions.

Examination responses should conform to the following presentation requirements: they should be in minimum 12pt type; should use a sans serif typeface (eg Arial or Calibri); should be 1.5 or double-spaced; and should be submitted as a word-processed document (in .docx or .rtf format).

1. 'I needed to rally my energies in such a way as to image myself as a fighter resisting rather than as a passive victim suffering.' (AUDRE LORDE)
Discuss how **one or more** writers you have studied for this paper have 'imaged' themselves.

2. '*Morality and style*. – A writer will find that the more precisely, conscientiously, appropriately he expresses himself, the more obscure the literary result is thought. ... Only what [people] do not need first to understand, they consider understandable; only the word coined by commerce, and really alienated, touches them as familiar.' (THEODOR ADORNO)
In the light of this remark, examine how **one or more** writers tackle the problem of 'morality and style'.

3. '*Callicles (to Socrates)*: If a person is ashamed and doesn't dare to say what he thinks, he's forced to contradict himself. This is in fact the clever trick you've thought of, with which you work mischiefs in your discussions.' (PLATO)
What role do trickery, mischief, **and/or** outright cheating play in Plato's writing?

4. 'In both Aristotle and [Henry] James ... one point of the emphasis on perception is to show the ethical crudeness of moralities based exclusively on general rules, and to demand for ethics a much finer responsiveness to the concrete.' (MARTHA NUSSBAUM)
Assess, with reference to Aristotle, Nussbaum, **and/or** any other writer(s), the merits of an ethical 'responsiveness to the concrete'.

5. 'The nature of the rational animal man [is so constituted] that he can attain nothing of his own proper goods unless he contributes something to the common interest. Hence it follows that it can no longer be regarded as unsocial for a man to do everything for his own sake.' (EPICTETUS)
In the light of Epictetus' claim, discuss **one or more** writers' analyses of the relationship between common- and self-interest.

6. '[God] hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.' (ST PAUL)
Evaluate some uses to which this distinction has been put, whether by Christian writers or others.

7. 'The evil will itself is not effective but defective. For to defect from him who is the Supreme Existence, to something of less reality, this is to begin to have an evil will. To try to discover the cause of such defection ... is like trying to see darkness or to hear silence.' (AUGUSTINE)
Examine the work of any writer(s) in relation to part or all of this claim.

8. 'It is an act within the power of charity, to translate a passion out of one breast into another, and to divide a sorrow almost out of it self; for an affliction like a dimension may be so divided, as if not indivisible, at least to become insensible.' (SIR THOMAS BROWNE)
What powers and limitations have you found in **one or more** accounts of charity **and/or** sympathy?

9. 'A *people* is a *single* entity, with a *single will*; you can attribute *an act* to it. None of this can be said of a *crowd*. ... In a *Democracy* and an *Aristocracy* the citizens are the *crowd*, but the *council* is the *people*; in a *Monarchy* the *subjects* are the *crowd*, and (paradoxically) the *King* is the *people*.' (THOMAS HOBBS)
Analyse how **one or more** political thinkers negotiate this distinction between the people and the crowd.

10. 'Sceptical doubt ... is a malady which can never be radically cured, but must return upon us every moment.' (DAVID HUME)
Do you agree? Discuss in relation to **one or more** writers.

11. 'It is impossible to understand "the Law of Nature" and hence to obey it without being a very great reasoner Which precisely means that in order to establish society, men must have employed an enlightenment which develops only with much difficulty and among very few people within society itself'. (JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU)
Consider, in the light of this criticism, **one or more** accounts of the origins and development of social living.

12. 'You once told me "It was our duty to make our reason conquer the sensibility of our heart." Yet, why? Is, then, apathy the perfection of our nature?' (MARY HAYS)
Consider **one or more** reflections on this question.

13. 'All respect for a person is properly only respect for the law (of honesty, etc.) of which the person provides an example. Since we regard the development of our talents as a duty, we think of a man of talent as being a kind of example of the law ... and that is what constitutes our respect for him.' (IMMANUEL KANT)
Evaluate the role of respect in the work of Kant **and/or** any other writer(s).

14. 'Consideration of what human beings actually need and want is not a bad place to begin a consideration of their duties ... even though to say a man needs shelter is not quite like saying that he needs Shakespeare.' (IRIS MURDOCH)
Make this comment about utilitarianism the starting point for a discussion about where best to 'begin a consideration of duties'.

15. 'The goal of world history is that Spirit come to a knowledge of what it truly is, that it give this knowledge objective expression, realise it in a world which lies before it, in short, produce itself as an object for itself.' (G.W.F. HEGEL)
Offer an explanation and an assessment of this claim.
16. 'The depreciation of the human world progresses in direct proportion to the increase in value of the world of things. Labour does not only produce commodities; it produces itself and the labourer as a commodity.' (KARL MARX)
Examine the durability of Marx's idea of alienation.
17. 'How is it ... that philosophers today do not even try to refute Nietzsche, and seem to feel morality as firm as ever under their feet? Why do we not argue with him as we argue with other philosophers of the past?' (PHILIPPA FOOT)
Consider Foot's questions.
18. 'That the present social separation and acute race-sensitiveness must eventually yield to the influences of culture, as the South grows civilized, is clear.' (W.E.B. DU BOIS)
Is it?
(You need not focus on the USA but you should answer in relation to specific texts.)
19. 'We can present society with a blunt calculation that what is described as its morality calls for a bigger sacrifice than it is worth and that its proceedings are not based on honesty.' (SIGMUND FREUD)
Do, then, psychoanalytic reflections offer something more honest and more worthwhile?
20. 'The "ending" we have in view when we speak of death, does not signify Dasein's Being-at-an-end, but rather a *Being-towards-the-end* of this entity. Death is a way to be, which Dasein takes over as soon as it is.' (MARTIN HEIDEGGER)
To what extent have **one or more** writers persuaded you that death is 'a way to be'?
21. 'Man is abandoned on earth, ... his acts are definitive, absolute engagements. He bears the responsibility for a world which is not the work of a strange power, but of himself. ... It is up to man to make it important to be a man.' (SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR)
Consider how successfully **one or more** writers can or have substantiated this existentialist claim.

22. 'The ironist spends her time worrying about the possibility that she has been initiated into the wrong tribe, taught to play the wrong language game. ... But she cannot give a criterion of wrongness.' (RICHARD RORTY)
Consider, in this light, the ethical implications of the Wittgensteinian notion of language games.
23. 'Do we not rightly measure the extent of freedom in any given community by the free scope it grants to apparently nonpolitical activities, free economic enterprise or freedom of teaching, of religion, of cultural and intellectual activities? Is it not true ... that politics is compatible with freedom only because and insofar as it guarantees a possible freedom *from* politics?' (HANNAH ARENDT)
Discuss Arendt's answer **and/or** that of any other writer(s).
24. 'I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths ... to objective appraisal.' (MARTIN LUTHER KING)
Evaluate the handling of violence **and/or** tension in **one or more** writers' work.
25. 'The obligation to confess is now relayed through so many different points, is so deeply ingrained in us, that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains us; on the contrary, it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, "demands" only to surface.' (MICHEL FOUCAULT)
Examine the significance of this claim.
26. 'Ethics is ... being at a loss yet exploring various routes, different ways towards the good enough justice, which recognises the intrinsic and the contingent limitations in its exercise.' (GILLIAN ROSE)
Do you agree?
27. 'Gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed.' (JUDITH BUTLER)
Evaluate this claim in relation to **one or more** writers.
28. 'Persons *are* relational and interdependent. We can and should value autonomy, but it must be developed and sustained within a framework of relations of trust.'
(VIRGINIA HELD)
Explore the link between conceptions of personhood and ethical perspective in **one or more** texts.

29. 'Evaluating stories together is one of the central human ways of learning to align our responses to the world. And that alignment of responses is, in turn, one of the ways we maintain the social fabric, the texture of our relationships.' (KWAME APPIAH)
Discuss.
30. 'It's only fact. Truth is quite another thing and is the work of the imagination.'
(Oscar Wilde', as scripted by TOM STOPPARD)
Is it?

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