

BACCALAURÉATS GÉNÉRAL ET TECHNOLOGIQUE

SESSION 2019

ÉPREUVE SPÉCIFIQUE MENTION « SECTION EUROPÉENNE OU DE LANGUE ORIENTALE »

Académies de Paris – Créteil – Versailles

Binôme : Anglais / Philosophie

Sujet n° 16

Notions : Morals, Ethics, Environment

Question : Should we consider nature as community of equals?

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in that community, but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for).

5 The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. [...]

In short, a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.

Aldo LEOPOLD, *A Sand County Almanac*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1949

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Sujet n° 17

Notions : Nature, Morals.

Question : **Is it man's duty to make Nature better?**

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 The scheme of Nature, regarded in its whole extent, cannot have had, for its sole or even principal object, the good of human or other sentient beings. What good it brings to them is mostly the result of their own exertions. Whatsoever, in nature, gives indication of beneficent design proves this beneficence to be armed only with limited power; and the duty of man is to cooperate with the beneficent powers, not by imitating, but by perpetually striving to amend, the course of nature - and bringing that part of it over which we can exercise control more nearly into conformity with a high standard of justice and goodness.

J.S. MILL, *On Nature*

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Sujet n° 18

Notions : Nature, Knowledge.

Question : Is it possible to completely control Nature?

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 Man is but the servant and interpreter of nature: what he does and what he knows is only what he has observed of nature's order in fact or in thought; beyond this he knows nothing and can do nothing. For the chain of causes cannot by any force be loosed or broken, nor can nature be commanded except by being obeyed. And so those twin objects, human knowledge and human power, do really meet in one; and it is from ignorance of causes that operation [on Nature] fails.

BACON, *Novum Organum*

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Sujet n° 19

Notions : Art, Fiction

Question : Why do we enjoy art?

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

Poetry in general seems to have sprung from two causes, each of them lying deep in our nature. First, the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated. We have evidence of this in the facts of experience. 5 Objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity: such as the forms of the most ignoble animals and of dead bodies. The cause of this again is, that to learn gives the liveliest pleasure, not only to philosophers but to men in general; whose capacity, however, of learning is more limited. 10 Thus the reason why men enjoy seeing a likeness is, that in contemplating it they find themselves learning or inferring, and saying perhaps, 'Ah, that is he.' For if you happen not to have seen the original, the pleasure will be due not to the imitation as such, but to the execution, the colouring, or some such other cause.

ARISTOTLE, *Poetics*, IV, 1448b

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Sujet n° 20

Notions : Art, Morals

Question : Can art be a medicine?

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 It is evident that all harmonies are to be used; but not for all purposes; but the most
moral in education: but to please the ear, when others play, the most active and
enthusiastic; for that passion which is to be found very strong in some souls is to be met
with also in all; but the difference in different persons consists in its being in a less or
10 greater degree, as pity, fear, and enthusiasm also; which latter is so powerful in some as
to overpower the soul: and yet we see those persons, by the application of sacred music to
soothe their mind, rendered as sedate¹ and composed as if they had employed the art of
the physician: and this must necessarily happen to the compassionate, the fearful, and all
those who are subdued² by their passions: nay, all persons, as far as they are affected
with those passions, admit of the same cure, and are restored to tranquillity with pleasure.
In the same manner, all music which has the power of purifying the soul affords a
harmless pleasure to man.

ARISTOTLE, *Politics*, IV, 7

¹ Sedate= serene

² Subdued = dominated

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Sujet n° 21

Notions : Art, Morals

Question : Must a work of art fit morality to be enjoyable?

5 But where the ideas of morality and decency alter from one age to another, and
where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of
blame and disapprobation; this must be allowed to disfigure the poem, and to be a real
deformity. I cannot, nor is it proper I should, enter into such sentiments; and however I
10 may excuse the poet, on account of the manners in his age, I never can relish¹ the
composition. The want of humanity and of decency, so conspicuous² in the characters
drawn by several of the ancient poets, even sometimes by HOMER and the GREEK
tragedians, diminishes considerably the merit of their noble performances, and gives
modern authors an advantage over them. We are not interested in the fortunes and
sentiments of such rough heroes: We are displeased to find the limits of vice and virtue so
much confounded: And whatever indulgence we may give to the writer on account of his
prejudices, we cannot prevail on ourself to enter into his sentiments, or bear an affection to
characters, which we plainly discover to be blameable.

HUME, *Of The Standard of Taste*, §32

¹ Relish = appreciate

² Conspicuous = obvious

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Sujet n° 22

Notions : Art, Morals

Question : Should art educate the viewer?

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 Narrative art does not necessarily serve ulterior purposes like moral education. Nevertheless, this does not preclude¹ that there may be moral learning with respect to narrative artworks. For in many instances the moral learning issues from following the narrative, in a nonaccidental fashion, but rather like a regularly recurring side reaction, as the author seeks to absorb readers of the narrative by addressing, exercising, and sometimes deepening our moral understandings and emotions. This need not be what the author has in the forefront of his intention, but it happens quite frequently in narratives of human affairs where it is our moral interest in the work and our moral activity in response to the work that keeps us attentive to the object.

Noël CARROLL, *Beyond Aesthetics, Philosophical Essays*, Part IV, "Moderate Autonomism", Cambridge University Press, 2001.

¹ Preclude = exclude

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Sujet n° 23

Notions : Art, Morals

Question : **Can a work of art be immoral?**

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 A given artwork may legitimately traffic in¹ aesthetic, moral, cognitive, and political
value. But these various levels are independent or autonomous. An artwork may be
aesthetically valuable and morally defective, or vice versa. But these different levels of
value do not mix, so to speak. An aesthetically defective artwork is not bad because it is
10 morally defective and that provides a large part of the story about why a work can be
aesthetically valuable, but evil. Let us call this view moderate autonomism because,
though it allows that the moral discussion and evaluation of artworks, or at least some
artworks, is coherent and appropriate, it remains committed to the view that the aesthetic
dimension of the artwork is autonomous from other dimensions, such as the moral
dimension

Noël CARROLL, *Beyond Aesthetics, Philosophical Essays*, Part IV, "Moderate
Autonomism", Cambridge University Press, 2001.

¹ Traffic in = have

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Sujet n° 24

Notions : Art, Morals

Question : Is it legitimate to condemn artworks that shock us?

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 Adopting even in imagination a moral view that I reject in reality, allowing myself to think and feel in imagination as though my convictions were different from what they actually are, might change my moral orientation; it might in this sense “pervert the sentiments of my heart”, even if it doesn’t change my convictions. The more confident I am of my convictions, the more strenuously I will resist anything that might pry¹ my moral orientation away from them.

10 Works of art may evoke imaginings which can affect one’s orientation. If they threaten to induce an orientation that conflicts with what we believe concerning some matter we take to be important, we object. (We sometimes object to metaphor for similar reasons).

Kendall WALTON, “Morals in Fiction and Fictional Morality”, in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. 68, 1994.

¹ Pry = force

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Sujet n° 25

Notions : Politics, Freedom, Morals

Question : **Can the State be perfectly neutral?**

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 In modern communities in which membership is understood only or primarily in terms of reciprocal self-interest, only two resources are generally available when destructive conflicts of interest threaten such reciprocity. One is the arbitrary imposition of some solution by force; the other is appeal to the neutral, impartial and impersonal standards of liberal morality. The importance of this resource is scarcely¹ to be
10 underrated²; but how much of a resource is it? The problem is that some motivation has to be provided for allegiance to the standards of impartiality and impersonality which both has rational justification and can outweigh the considerations provided by interest. Since any large need for such allegiance arises precisely and only when and insofar as the possibility of appeals to reciprocity in interests has broken down, such reciprocity can no longer provide the relevant kind of motivation.

A. MACINTYRE, *The Lindley Lecture*, "Is Patriotism a Virtue?"

¹ Scarcely = rarely

² Underrated = underestimated

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Sujet n° 26

Notions : Politics, Freedom, Morals

Question : **Can morality exist without a community?**

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 It is in general only within a community that individuals become capable of morality, are sustained in their morality and are constituted as moral agents by the way in which other people regard them and what is owed to and by them as well as by the way in which they regard themselves. In requiring much from me morally the other members of my community express a kind of respect for me that has nothing to do with expectations of benefit; and those of whom nothing or little is required in respect of morality are treated with a lack of respect which is, if repeated often enough, damaging to the moral capacities of those individuals.

A. MACINTYRE, *The Lindley Lecture*, "Is Patriotism a Virtue?"

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Sujet n° 27

Notions : Politics, Freedom

Question : **Why do we want freedom?**

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 Liberals do not say that we should have the freedom to select our projects for its own sake, because freedom is the most valuable thing in the world. Rather, our projects and tasks are the most important things in our lives, and it is because they are so important that we should be free to revise them, should we come to believe that they are not worthwhile. Our projects are the most important things in our lives, but since our lives have to be led from the inside, in accordance with our beliefs about value, we should be free to form, revise, and act on our plans of life. Freedom of choice is not pursued for its own sake, but as a precondition for pursuing those projects that are valued for their own sake.

Will KYMLICKA, *Contemporary Political Philosophy. An Introduction*. CH, 6.

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Sujet n° 28

Notions : Politics, Freedom

Question : Should the State impose a certain vision of good on its citizens?

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 I have said that it is important to give the freest scope¹ possible to uncustomary things, in order that it may in time appear which of these are fit to be converted into customs. But independence of action, and disregard of custom are not solely deserving of encouragement for the chance they afford that better modes of action, and customs more
10 worthy of general adoption, may be struck out; nor is it only persons of decided mental superiority who have a just claim to carry on their lives in their own way. There is no reason that all human existences should be constructed on some one, or some small number of patterns. If a person possesses any tolerable amount of common-sense and experience, his own mode of laying out his existence is the best, not because it is the best in itself, but because it is his own mode.

J.S. MILL, *On Liberty*, CH.III

¹ Scope = extent

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Sujet n° 29

Notions : Politics, Happiness

Question : Should the State make its citizens happy?

Use the text(s) and your knowledge in philosophy to answer the question above in a personal and organized way.

5 But of all political ideals, that of making the people happy is perhaps the most dangerous one. It leads invariably to the attempt to impose our scale of 'higher' values upon others, in order to make them realize what seems to us of greatest importance for their happiness; in order, as it were, to save their souls. It leads to Utopianism and Romanticism. We all feel certain that everybody would be happy in the beautiful, the perfect community of our dreams. And no doubt, there would be heaven on earth if we could all love one another. But, as I have said before (in Chapter 9 [Vol 1]), the attempt to make heaven on earth invariably produces hell. It leads to intolerance. It leads to religious wars, and to the saving of souls through the Inquisition.

K. POPPER, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, ch.25