

GEOGRAPHY ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

SPECIMEN PAPER

SECTION 1: Text booklet

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Some words and phrases are shaded in the texts as they are referred to in some questions.

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Task 1

Read the two abstracts below, which give summaries of two academic articles relating to e-democracy.

ABSTRACT ONE

Understanding E-Democracy *Julie Freeman and Sharna Quirke*

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) offer opportunities for greater civic participation in democratic reform. Government ICT use has, however, predominantly been associated with e-government applications that focus on one-way information provision and service delivery. This article distinguishes between e-government and processes of actual e-democracy, which facilitate active civic engagement through two-way, ongoing dialogue. It draws from participation initiatives undertaken in two case studies. The first highlights efforts to increase youth political engagement in the local government area of Milton Keynes in the United Kingdom. The second is Iceland's constitutional crowdsourcing, an initiative intended to increase civic input into constitutional reform. These examples illustrate that, in order to maintain legitimacy in the networked environment, a shift in governmental culture is required to enable open and responsive e-democracy practices. When coupled with traditional participation methods, processes of e-democracy facilitate widespread opportunities for civic involvement and indicate that digital practices should not be separated from the everyday operations of government. While online democratic engagement is a slowly evolving process, initial steps are being undertaken by governments that enable e-participation to shape democratic reform.

ABSTRACT TWO

Models of E-Democracy *Tero Pääväranta and Øystein Sæbø*

Several theories of E-Democracy have been presented, and implementations of and experiments in E-Democracy have emerged. However, existing literature on the subject appears rather non-comprehensive, lacking an integrated basis, and therefore unlikely to provide a suitable framework for securing knowledge in the future. After an analysis of theories of E-Democracy versus implementations reported in related literature, we address the need for a model generally absent from contemporary theoretical literature: the Partisan model of E-Democracy. We aim to simplify the current "jungle" of E-Democracy models into four idealised models: the Liberal, the Deliberative, the Partisan, and the Direct. We aim to illustrate how current theories of E-Democracy, in addition to reported implementations, may be covered by these models. We also suggest, in light of this analysis, that E-Democracy researchers could be more specific about their standard of democracy, in order to avoid artificial comparisons or criticisms of contemporary E-Democracy which offer an assessment as to how democratic it really is without an explicit framework of criteria. Finally, we discuss the possible effects of unifying the ideals from different models of E-Democracy. We suggest that any context of E-Democracy may in fact require elements from all four models to stay dynamic over time.

Task 2

Read the four texts below, which give the views of four academic writers on animal morality.

A Mark Rowlands

The scepticism of philosophers towards the idea that animals can behave morally is subtly different from that of scientists. Scientists question whether there is enough evidence to support the claim that animals can be motivated by emotions such as kindness or compassion, or by negative counterparts such as malice or cruelty. Philosophers argue that, even if animals were to be motivated by these sorts of states, this is still not moral motivation. When they occur in animals, these states are not moral ones. If an animal acts through compassion, it is still not acting morally.

In a nutshell, this is the philosopher's worry: moral action seems to imply moral responsibility. If I act morally, then I am, it seems, morally responsible for what I do. But do we really want to hold animals responsible for what they do? During the medieval era, it was not uncommon for courts of law to try (and often execute) animals for perceived indiscretions. Clearly no one wants to go back to those days, and underlying this reluctance is the thought that, whatever else is true of animals, they are not really responsible for what they do.

B Helene Guldberg

If one reduces everything to its simplest form then one can find parallels between humans and the rest of the animal kingdom. But this kind of philistinism does not deepen our understanding of human beings and human society or indeed of animal behaviour.

In his new book *The Moral Lives of Animals*, Dale Petersen describes empathy as having two different but related forms, contagious and cognitive. Contagious empathy is 'the process in which a single bird, startled by some sudden movement, takes off in alarm and is instantly joined by the entire flock'. Cognitive empathy 'is contagious empathy pressed through a cognitive filter: a brain or mind'. In other words, these two types of empathy are just different forms of the same thing.

But there is a world of difference between an instinctual connection between organisms – including some of our instinctual responses, such as yawning when others yawn – and human empathy involving a Theory of Mind, that is, the ability to recognise that one's own perspectives and beliefs can be different from someone else's. Human beings, unlike other animals, are able to reflect on and make judgements about our own and others' actions, and as a result we are able to make considered moral choices.

C Paul J. Overburg

What is distinctive about humanity such that humans are thought to have moral status and non-humans do not? Providing an answer to this question has become increasingly important among philosophers. Some argue that there is an answer that can distinguish humans from the rest of the natural world. Many of those who accept this are interested in justifying certain human practices towards non-humans – practices that cause pain, discomfort, and death.

This group expect that in answering the question in a particular way, humans will be justified in granting moral consideration to other humans that is neither required nor justified when considering non-human animals. In contrast to this view, many philosophers have argued that while humans are different in a variety of ways from each other and other animals, these differences do not provide a philosophical defence for denying non-human animals moral consideration. What the basis of moral consideration is and what it amounts to has been the source of much disagreement.

D Frans de Waal

We live in an age that celebrates the cerebral. Strangely enough, this also applies to my field of study, animal behaviour, where just a couple of decades ago, the words 'animal' and 'cognition' couldn't be mentioned in the same sentence. With this fight behind us – at least on most days – emotions have become the new taboo. Anyone suggesting that a dog can be 'jealous', 'loving' or 'mean' had better watch out: this kind of language doesn't belong in science.

This is unfortunate, because emotions nudge an organism towards rapid decisions based on millions of years of development, and so provide a window on adaptation. This even holds for human morality, the domain that Kant tried to give an exclusively rational twist to. If it is true that morality is reasoned from abstract principles, why do our judgements often come instantly? In one study, psychologist Jonathan Haidt from the University of Virginia presented people with stories of odd behaviour, which they immediately disapproved of. He challenged every last argument they came up with until they ran out and reached a state of 'moral dumbfounding', stubbornly insisting that this behaviour was wrong yet unable to articulate why. Clearly, we often make snap moral judgements that seem to come from the 'gut'.

Task 3

Read the text below, which is an adapted extract from the first chapter of a book by the philosopher Bernard Williams.

Chapter One**The Liberation of Antiquity**

- 1 We are now used to thinking of the ancient Greeks as an exotic people. In 1951, in the preface to *The Greeks and the Irrational*, E.R. Dodds apologised, or rather declined to apologise, for using anthropological material in interpreting an “aspect of the mental world of ancient Greece.” Since then, we have become familiar with the activity of applying to the societies of ancient Greece methods similar to those of cultural anthropology. Much has been achieved in these ways, and efforts, in particular, to uncover structures of myth and ritual in such terms have yielded some of the most illuminating work of recent times.

- 2 These methods define certain differences between ourselves and the Greeks. Cultural anthropologists, in their well-known role of observers living in a traditional society, may come very close to the people with whom they are living, but they are committed to thinking of that life as different; the point of their visit is to understand and describe another form of human life. The kind of work I have mentioned helps us to understand the Greeks by first making them seem strange – more strange, that is to say, than they seem when their life is too benignly assimilated to modern conceptions. We cannot live with the ancient Greeks or to any substantial degree imagine ourselves doing so. Much of their life is hidden from us, and just because of that, it is important for us to keep a sense of their otherness, a sense which the methods of cultural anthropology help us to sustain.

- 3 This study does not use those methods. I want to ask a different sort of question about the ancient world, one that places it in a different relation to our own. I do not want to deny the otherness of the Greek world, but I shall stress some unacknowledged similarities between Greek conceptions and our own. Cultural anthropology of course also invokes similarities, or it could not make the societies it studies intelligible to us. Some of the similarities are very obvious: human beings everywhere need a cultural framework to deal with reproduction, eating, death, violence. Some of the similarities may be unobvious, because unconscious; theorists have claimed to make sense of Greek myths and rituals and their reflections in literature by appeal to structures of imagery that at some level we share. Nothing I say will be in conflict with such inquiries, but the similarities I shall stress are at a different level and concern the concepts that we use in interpreting our own and other people’s feelings and actions. If these similarities between our own ways of thought and those of the ancient Greeks are, in some cases, unobvious, this is not because they arise from a

structure hidden in the unconscious, but because they are, for cultural and historical reasons, unacknowledged.

4 Cultural anthropologists in the field are not committed to any particular evaluation of the life they are studying, compared with the life back home – what might be called the life of modernity. They have many reasons for not feeling superior to the people they study, but those reasons circle a little warily, perhaps, round the basic asymmetry between the parties, created by the fact that one of them does indeed study the other and brings to their relations a theoretical apparatus that has studied others before. With our relations to the ancient Greeks, **the situation is different**. They are among our cultural ancestors, and our view of them is intimately connected with our view of ourselves. That has always been the particular point of studying their world. It is not just a matter, as it may be in studying other societies, of our getting to know about human diversity, other social or cultural achievements, or, again, what has been spoiled or set aside by the history of European domination. To learn those things is itself an important aid to self-understanding, but to learn about the Greeks is more immediately part of self-understanding. It will continue to be so even though the modern world stretches round the earth and draws into itself other traditions as well. Those other traditions will give it new and different configurations, but they will not cancel the fact that the Greek past is specially the past of modernity.

5 The process by which modernity takes in other traditions will not undo the fact that the modern world was a European creation presided over by the Greek past. It might, however, make that fact no longer interesting. Perhaps it might prove more helpful, more productive of a new life to forget about that fact, at least at any level that claims to be history. It is too late to assume that the Greek past must be interesting just because it is “ours”. We need a reason, not so much for saying that the historical study of the Greeks bears a special relation to the ways in which modern societies can understand themselves – so much is obvious enough – but rather that this dimension of self-understanding should be important. I believe that there is such a reason, one that was compactly expressed by Nietzsche: “I cannot imagine what would be the meaning of classical philology¹ in our own age, if it is not to be **untimely** – that is, to act against the age, and by so doing, to have an effect on the age, and, let us hope, to the benefit of a future age.” We, now, should try to understand how our ideas are related to the Greeks because, if we do so, this can specially help us to see ways in which our ideas may be wrong.

¹ the study of languages and classical texts

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