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MARKSCHEME

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PHILOSOPHY

Higher and Standard Level

Paper 1

11 pages

SECTION A

Core Theme: What is a 'human' being?

1.   **(a)**   **What does this passage suggest about the human condition?**   *[3 marks]*

      (b)   **Can we only know who we are if we know the origin of human existence? Compare and contrast your view with another account of who we are.**   *[12 marks]*

      (c)   **Imperfection is an essential characteristic of the human condition. Discuss.**   *[15 marks]*

            Key points
- Origin of human life, as individuals and as societies.
- Possibility of developing intelligence and knowledge as a possible essential feature of the human being.
- Does being crafty and cheating show the unavoidable conflicting character of interpersonal relationships?
- Failing, making errors as inseparable elements of human nature.

            Discussion
- Is it really necessary to answer these questions? Do they become redundant if we abandon the religious point of view?
- Does narration about our origin constitute an essential feature of our human condition?

2.   **(a)**   **What *philosophical* ideas about the nature of the self are suggested by this cartoon?**   *[3 marks]*

      (b)   **Selecting from the ideas outlined in 2(a), compare and contrast critical elements of *two* theories on the nature of the self.**   *[12 marks]*

      (c)   **"E-mail and the Internet pose a danger to human relationships. Essential moral relationships cannot be established without the physical presence of others." Discuss.**   *[15 marks]*

            Key Points
- Essential self – a fact or chimera?
- Self as a construct, for others and *by others*, or **just** by others?
- The self as a self aware entity.
- The genesis and role of moral relationships with others.

            Discussion
- Can the Internet actually enhance personal relationships with others?
- If the self is a construction, then do the roles we play – friend, student, son/daughter. *etc.*-qualify as what we call 'self', so that there is no *essential* self?
- Does the existential concept of Other still leave the nature of the self unexplained?
- What, if any, are **the** essential moral relationships we have with others?
- Is self-knowledge a necessary prerequisite for moral relationships with others?
- Would face-to-face conversation pose the same difficulties as more remote means of communication such as the telephone?

SECTION B

Optional Theme 1: Political Philosophy

3. **"Fear of serious injury cannot alone justify suppression of free speech and assembly. Men feared witches and burned women." Analyse this statement and discuss it in the light of liberty and citizens' duties.**

   Key Points
   - What qualifies as serious injury? Can free speech be partially limited?
   - Men feared witches and burned women: the need to find a scapegoat that can be destroyed to get rid of what is feared: arbitrariness of power?
   - Citizens' duties: to protect peace and harmony in the city; to promote mutual support; to contribute to collective development and growth of the community. Can free speech be suppressed if it were to be believed to harm public good? Examples?
   - What counts as speech? Are witchcraft spells speech? Is flag burning speech?

   Discussion Points
   - Women and women's sexuality as historically being a source of unspeakable fears.
   - If fear of serious injury cannot justify the suppression of free speech and assembly, then can anything else justify it?
   - Duties and rights: do we have to fulfil our duties to be granted rights?
   - The need for citizens to be responsible for their duties and self-censor when required.
   - Distinction between what causes an action (*e.g.* fear) and what justifies it (*e.g.* religious interpretations).

4. **"The problem of democracy is rule by majority. It would be preferable to have a benevolent dictator in charge. He would not have to face re-election and so does not have to pander to the prejudices of the masses."**

   Is the speaker correct in her analysis of democracy? If so, does this justify her conclusions? If not, why?

   Key Points
   - Populism as democracy.
   - What are the limits of civil authority?
   - Benevolent dictator – contradiction or possibility?
   - Are there other alternatives of governance?

   Discussion
   - Does democracy necessarily mean having to accommodate the lowest common denominator in a society?
   - Does economic benevolence equate with moral benevolence in the political sphere?
   - If democratic government means listening (reacting) to the people, then is 'leadership' in democracy a hollow term?
   - Does the assumption implicit above that justice and truth lie with the majority make sense?

Optional Theme 2: Knowledge

5.   **When we know, for instance in daily life, in sciences or in our opinions and beliefs, we use concepts. Is it possible to justify objectively the concepts that we use?**

Key Points
• Analysis of the notions of concept and belief.
• Discussion over what could be understood by 'objectively'.
• The distinction between origin and justification of concepts: justifying concepts versus justifying beliefs.
• Maybe concepts are arbitrary but, once chosen, the beliefs we form from them are either true or false.
• What would it mean to justify concepts? To show that they correspond to the way the world is organized? To show that they are useful to us?

Discussion
• Is objectivity based on some kind of state of affairs that is independent of human influence?
• Is objectivity a social convention?
• Can the distinction between origin and justification be accepted without discussion?
• If we do not admit some kind of objectivity, we can not found any moral judgements.

6.   **Discuss the idea that truths are only metaphors which, through their use, become evident and compelling for a society.**

Key Points
• The three standard theories of truth.
• Analysis of the concept of metaphor. Discussion over the capacity of metaphors to supply knowledge.
• The concept of evidence and its possible conjunction to the one of metaphor.
• Does the claim that truths originate as metaphors undermine the claim that they are objective?
• Doesn't the notion of metaphorical truth presuppose the notion of literal truth?

Discussion
• Is this a pragmatic, or a 'fictional' theory of truth, or both?
• Is the power of fiction over human life so important?
• Is evidence a socially constructed conviction?
• What is the social importance of having acquired truth?
• Isn't the idea of truths as metaphors more compelling in some fields, *e.g.* ethics, than in others, *e.g.* theoretical physics?

Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of Culture

7.   **Can human culture, seen as a whole, be described as the process of progressive self-liberation of human beings?**

Key Points
• What constitutes a culture? Possible characterisations of what is to be understood by culture.
• Interpretation of the concept of self-liberation. Liberation from what? For what?
• Reasons why a culture cannot be described as stated. Indication of theoretical prospectives to answer the stated, *e.g.* conception of human history.
• Does the expression 'progressive' necessarily imply either a basic common origin or a finality? Or both?

Discussion
• Can we really consider culture as a whole or does culture have so many sides that we cannot consider it as a whole?
• Progress, decline or neither?
• Culture is simply the collective sum of our actions that sustains us in the world. We should not look for any other finality beyond that.

8.   **Discuss the possible meaning and implications of the statement that culture is the basic and essential distinction between the 'same' and the 'different'.**

Key Points
• What constitutes a culture? Possible characterisation of what is to be understood by culture?
• Models of cultures, specific examples.
• Possible interpretations of the 'same' and the 'different'.
• Possible applications of this scheme to diverse situations: different generations, races, sexes, religions.

Discussion
• We are constituted in such a way through our cultural patterns, that we are not able to see them as an object under scrutiny.
• The statement exaggerates a feature of cultural belonging: identification with its specific values.
• The main point is not if this distinction really exists, but how its implications impact on our behaviours and moral judgement.

Optional Theme 4: World Philosophies

9.   **Discuss the role of free will in Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.**

Key Points
Islam
• In the Ash'ante tradition, free will plays a middle role between fatalism and free will – because God created everything, including human actions – but God also created free will in human beings. So human beings are free to choose what right actions they elect.

Hinduism and Buddhism
• Because Buddhism is an offspring of Hinduism, it is incorporated in the Hindu view of free will.
• Essentiallity of free will in the fulfilment of one's dharma – though all are born with a karma, it is through the free choosing of our dharma that we will achieve samsara (release for Transmigration): you have to pull yourself by your own bootstraps.

Discussion
• This is a characteristic of South East Asian philosophies contrasting with Islam = no predestination – free will consists in choosing the Good.
• Is the Islamic concept of free will really free? Parallel with Descartes and Kant.
• The social usefulness of free will in Hindu caste system: it imposes the entire responsibility for one's station in life upon the individual.
• No social responsibilities beyond the ones prescribed by religion.
• It buys in a social acceptance of one's lot regardless of one's desperate condition: "I have deserved it."

10.   **Compare the nature of the ethical command of non-violence for Buddhists and Hindus with that of the Jihad for Muslims. Can we claim that the ultimate goal is identical, though the means are different?**

Key Points
• Nature and importance of the Hindu practice of non-violence, particularly the Jainist influence.
• Adaptation of the Hindu view by Buddhism. Highlights of the differences.
• Nature of Jihad: The Holy War against what exactly?
• Similarities and differences, particularly as they impact on the afterlife.

Discussion
• Contemporary renewal and globalization of the ethics of non-violence as incarnated by Gandhi and Martin Luther King.
• Modern interpretation of Jihad and its representation in the media.
• Is there any value in teaching non-violence in this day and age? Why?
• Is there any value in teaching war against one's demons? Can this be combined with a non-violent approach to life? How?

Optional Theme 5: Nature, Work and Technology

11.   **Is the social structure founded on the division of labour? If so, to what extent? If not, why not?**

Key Points
• Characterisation of the notion of division of work.
• What can be understood by social structure?
• The social organisation of work. Human beings always work within patterns of social interactions.
• Reasons why the division of work is necessary or convenient.
• Criteria through which the division of work is established. Technical criteria, social differences, others.
• Different social and economic systems.

Discussion
• The division of work is not the only basic factor that constitutes the social structure.
• The possibility of fulfilment of individual goals depends on social and economic systems.
• The division of labour results from human action; similarly human actions result from the division of labour. Therefore, it must be possible to modify either or both of them.

12.   **Does technology limit or expand our relationship with nature?**

Key Points
• The concept of technology. The use of tools.
• What can be understood by nature? Possible perspectives.
• Humankind is part of nature too, at least as far as living beings are concerned.
• The fact of setting goals as a human characteristic.
• Consideration and analysis of examples of different kinds, for instance, different societies or different times.

Discussion
• Can we talk of limiting or expanding factors without introducing values?
• Is it possible to guide the development of technology in order to achieve personal and social values?
• Is the impact of technology on nature negative?

Optional Theme 6: Philosophy of The Arts

13.   **"Art can only be judged by its social and political impact, its ability to provoke dissent and to criticise events. Critically examine and assess this claim.**

Key Points
- What items are artistic objects?
- If pieces are political, does it necessarily mean they cannot be beautiful?
- What, if any, are the social political responsibilities of an artist? *e.g.* Picasso and Pablo Casals during the Civil War in Spain.
- The role(s) of art – political, utilitarian, aesthetic, other, or a combination of all of these?

Discussion
- *Must* art have a political function or is an aesthetic role enough?
- If it were shown that art had a utilitarian function over and above an aesthetic one, then what role, if any, does beauty play in a society?

14.   **What is the value, if any, of ugliness in Art?**

Key Points
- Ugliness in Art: is this strictly a contemporary phenomenon? What about Bosch's grotesque characters in his paintings?
- Role of Art: to please, to enlighten, or to shock?
- The importance of authenticity in Art, even at the cost of beauty.
- What criteria must be met for an ugly object, or sound, to be given an aesthetic value?

Discussion
- We often hear that there is snobbery and elitism in Art. Is contemporary ugly art a joke played on those snobs?
- The largest Art Gallery in Canada displayed a decaying beef carcass in 1980s to bring greater awareness to the plight of the hungry. Other examples of ugly art and discussion of their value, if any.
- Discussion on the difference between art and beauty.
- If ugly art turns people away, does it have any values left save for the self-indulgent satisfaction of its creator?

Optional Theme 7: Philosophy of Religion

15. **"The universe is better with some evil in it than it could be if there were no evil." Some believers used this argument as a defence for God's existence when confronted with the presence of evil in the world. Does it successfully eliminate the claim that God cannot exist if evil does?**

    Key Point
    • The problem of evil and why it challenges belief in God.
    • The Paradox of Omnipotence (God is omnipotent yet s/he allows evil to exist. Why?)
    • The problem of evil as theists' Waterloo!
    • How does the existence of evil allow for a coherent proof of the existence of God?
    • Is it the case that the universe is better with the presence of some evil in it?

    Discussion
    • Mackie proposes that only a restricted omnipotence is possible for a God faced with evil.
    • In what ways can anyone logically claim that evil is good? Or does the qualitative 'some' make a significant difference? Some type of evil is desirable while another type of evil is not?
    • Plantinga's free will defence.

16. **Criticisms of religion point out that religions are based on unprovable suppositions and basic beliefs. Should we therefore conclude that any rational analysis of religion is useless?**

    Key Points
    • Analysis of the concepts of religion and religious belief.
    • What should we understand by 'unprovable'? Criteria to differentiate types of proofs.
    • Examination of criticisms of religion.
    • Consideration of some rational argumentations about religions.

    Discussion
    • Criticism of religion is different from this, because it is rational and based on evidences (*e.g.* William James and Kierkegaard).
    • Rational analysis can be applied to every object and to matter. Can it successfully be applied to non-material? (See Proposition 7 in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.)
    • The difficulty of discussing religious matters rationally depends on our cultural environment.

Optional Theme 8: Theories of Ethics

17. **"Moral relativism is the only type of morality that seems justified in a pluralist democratic society. The consequence of this position, however, is that any concept of universal human rights is meaningless." Discuss.**

    Key Points
    • Moral relativism / moral subjectivism / transcendent moral values.
    • Morality and duty.
    • Moral relativism and virtue.
    • Does relativism mean a denial of 'timeless' moral truths?
    • Can pluralism not entail relativism?

    Discussion
    • Is moral relativism and the concept of universal human rights mutually exclusive?
    • Is moral relativism culturally determined under a utilitarian framework, or do shared 'innate' feelings determine good and bad?
    • If there are no universal moral values, does this mean there is no universal concept of human reason?
    • Does moral relativism mean we cannot pass judgement on others?

18. **Should an ethical commitment to a worthwhile cause prevail over the laws of the land which makes a particular action in support of that cause illegal?**

    With the help of an example, in Applied Ethics discuss the nature of ethical commitment.

    Key Points
    • The nature of commitment? Moral commitment?
    • What supports the strength of moral commitment?
    • The frequency of moral choices in medical ethics and the difficulties in establishing clear and universal guidelines.

    Discussion
    • If someone's 'commitment' is so strong as to be ready to break the law to fulfil it, what does this tell us?
    • Should we honour or condemn those who commit illegal acts for the sake of committing themselves to do the good?