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MARKSCHEME

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PHILOSOPHY

Higher and Standard Level

Paper 1

20 pages

SECTION A

Core Theme: What is a "human" being?

1. **(a) What philosophical issue does this cartoon suggest about personhood?**   *[3 marks]*

      • The self as activity versus the self as substance
      • Freedom, responsibility and authenticity
      • Freedom versus determinism
      • Nihilism and fatalism
      • Self-constituted meaning and value

    (b) Compare and contrast two different philosophical views that deal with the issue that you have identified in (a).   *[12 marks]*

    Different lines of answer can be followed, *e.g.* the candidate might demonstrate familiarity with one of the philosophical views favourable to deterministic approaches to personhood and with one of the views favourable to the operation of freedom, responsibility and choice in the constitution of personhood, or might identify two approaches to the issues set out in the question (*e.g.* existentialism, egoism, behaviourism, a personal morality, spirituality, nihilism, *etc.*).

    (c) "I know my self only when I encounter the other." Discuss and evaluate this claim.   *[15 marks]*

    The candidate might explore questions of personal identity, authenticity and interpersonal relations in the context of the human condition. The candidate might consider whether the human condition is characterised as a collection of isolated individuals or a community of interactive selves. The candidate might examine the dynamics of the encounter with the other (conceived of both as person and object) and the possibility of knowledge of the other.

      • The 'egocentric predicament': I, myself and others
      • Modes of interpersonal encounter: The challenge of self-disclosure
      • Isolation, integration and alienation as existential options
      • Is it possible to know oneself and to know the other?
      • How do we encounter and distinguish other selves?
      • Can we encounter and treat the other as object?
      • How does my encounter with the other challenge me to grow in my own authentic selfhood?
      • How do freedom and responsibility enter into interpersonal relationships?

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

- Reflection on ourselves as existential subjects
- Reflection on how we understand ourselves and our interaction with the world around us
- Subjectivity and intersubjectivity
- Language, communication, freedom, action and responsibility

(b)   **Compare and contrast two philosophical perspectives that deal with
the issue you have identified in (a).**   *[12 marks]*

Different lines of answer can be followed, *e.g.* the candidate might choose and
identify two philosophical approaches to the issues set out in the question
(*e.g.* existentialism, rationalism, egoism, behaviourism, a personal morality,
spirituality, nihilism *etc.*), or might demonstrate familiarity with the main themes of
each of the chosen philosophical perspectives.

(c)   **"The *mind* is indivisibly an *embodied mind.*" Discuss and evaluate
this statement.**   *[15 marks]*

This question will challenge the candidate to explore several aspects of the 'mind-body'
question in the wider context of questions of self-identity. The question allows the
candidate to consider as counterpositions some strictly dualistic and monistic
approaches to the 'mind-body' question. The following markscheme takes an
analytical, mind-body approach. An existentialist approach is also appropriate.

- Modes of relating mind to body to develop a coherent picture of myself as a person.
- What I am is constituted by what I know and what I do in a world of others.
- The self as isolated/alienated *vs.* the self as engaged/integrated
- What is the 'mind-body' question?
- What is the dualistic approach to the issue?
- What is the monistic approach to the issue?
- What can physicalism, immaterialism, epiphenominalism, or idealism contribute to our understanding?
- What does neuro and cognitive science contribute to the picture?
- What kind of philosophy could be built on the notion of an *embodied mind*?
- Would a philosophy of *embodied mind* help us understand intersubjectivity?
- Do advances in computer technology and in the field of Artificial Intelligence help us understand the nature of *mind* and its relation to *body*?

SECTION B

Optional Theme 1: Political Philosophy

3.   **"We can no longer call a political system a democracy when only a small minority of the population actually cast a vote." Critically discuss.**

The intention of this question is for candidates to analyse and reflect on the nature and changes of the democratic political system that resulted from social contract theories. The reality of the disinterest of voters in many industrialized nations is putting the future of this system in jeopardy. Candidates are expected to examine rights and obligations of citizens in maintaining or transforming the political system in which they live, as well as notions of sovereignty, power, and corruption.

Key Points
- The reality of the disinterest and disengagement of the voting population toward the political life of their country: when only 40 % of the eligible voting population goes to the poles, and the elected officials narrowly win, what percentage of the population actually wants them in power?
- The transformation of democracy into an effective collusion of invisible forces behind a figure-head that caters to the irrational element of the population, for example the fear of terrorist attacks
- Should we not revisit our concept of democracy in the light of the power of how news media controls the electorate?
- Who is represented in a democratic government? Do we need to revisit social contract theories and adjust them to contemporary reality?
- Citizens' obligations and responsibilities in participating in the political life of their country
- Participation in *versus* apathy toward political life. Is apathy the result of being disenfranchised?
- Majority/minority issues
- Voting eligibility and the disenfranchising of targetted groups

Discussion
- Can democracy be a veil for a soft form of totalitarianism, the dictatorship of the economically powerful minority? Illusion of freedom of choice: after all, we are totally free to choose between dozens of pairs of jeans, but we all wear jeans! (Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*)
- The simplification of the political discourse, for example the discourse centered around the 'enemy', an enemy that evolves according to the needs of the political elite. The focus on the 'enemy' diverts the public attention from internal problems, and present the latter as petty issues in comparison to the defense of freedom and other ideologies.
- Forms of government: if not a democracy then what?

4. **A former head of state once commented: "If every man who had an extra-marital affair were to be barred from public office, there would be no one left to govern the world." Could such acts determine the legitimacy of political leadership?**

In answering this question candidates are expected to examine the issues surrounding the limitations of the leader, censorship (including self-censorship by the media regarding the private lives of public figures), personal liberties, and the denial of rights. In addition, the notions of moral integrity for political leader should be examined: does effective leadership require the leader to live his private life in accordance with stringent moral rules?

Key points
- The point is not the existence or absence of extra-marital affairs but the moral conduct of the political leader and the impact this can have, if any, on his/her leadership.
- What are the required qualities of a political leader?
- What criteria must we use to determine fitness to rule?
- Contemporary democracies, particularly in the first world, are characterized by multi-culturalism. What moral criteria will be used to determine moral fitness?

Discussion Points
- Is there a difference between the perpetration of different immoral acts? For example, is making deals with the Mafia the same thing as having a fling with a White House intern?
- The right to private life and the scrutiny of the media: how should the two interact to keep a democracy vibrant?
- The right of the public to information that can enable them to make enlightened decisions for the political life of their nation
- Plato denied the Philosopher King the opportunity to make mistakes in his personal life by depriving him of such a life. What other checks and balances can we put in place to protect our leaders from erring?
- In having the whole world scrutinize the private lives of public figures, are we not diverting their attention from other more pressing political concerns, of economical nature for example? Whose interests are served by this kind of scrutiny?
- Is this scrutiny another form of political maneuvering by the party in opposition in collusion with the media?

N.B. *The candidate's assessment of the importance of the issue can be expected to depend on his/her socio-political background.*

Optional Theme 2: Knowledge

5. **Is knowledge intrinsically valuable or is it always the servant of some vested interest?**

Candidates might explore the nature of knowledge and claims to knowledge from a variety of perspectives in light of the functions of knowledge.

Key points
- A working definition of 'intrinsically valuable'– anything which suggests the idea of being independent from outside influences.
- The relationship between knowledge, truth and reality
- The view of knowledge from the perspectives of empiricism and rationalism
- A pragmatic view of truth
- Theories of perception: causal theory, idealism, phenomenalism, perspectivism
- Theories of justification
- The influence of science on the conception of knowledge
- Manipulation of knowledge in the service of power

Discussion
- Do different theories of knowledge (empiricism and rationalism, for example) make different assumptions about the intrinsic value of knowledge?
- Are there different implications for the pursuit, use and status of knowledge, depending on whether it is thought of as intrinsic value or not?
- Does knowledge itself have its own ends? Or does it serve the ends defined by other interests or interest groups?
- Does knowledge contribute or detract from social equality?

6. **Is what a physicist claims to know about the nature of the universe as certain as what a philosopher claims to know about the nature of reality?**

The intention of this question is to allow candidates to enter into a discussion regarding the issues which arise as result of the claims made by science and philosophy.

Key Points
- How do knowledge claims about things which cannot be directly observed, but about which science claims to have a certainty, differ from claims about things which also cannot be observed but about which philosophers claim certainty?
- Different theories of justification
- Naive realism and skepticism
- The methods of natural science versus those of philosophy
- Pragmatic implications of scientific and philosophical claims and methods

Discussion
- How can we know if reality has an intrinsic nature?
- If reality has an intrinsic nature, does either science or philosophy tell us about it?
- Do any theories of knowledge yield any special or privileged epistemic status?
- Should the benefits of different theories of knowledge (if any) be taken into consideration when deciding matters of truth?
- Should science serve as a paradigm in the search for knowledge?
- Russell's definition of philosophy: "Philosophy is what is not yet science". Rorty's: "[Lets] reject the suggestion that natural science should serve as a paradigm for the rest of culture, and in particular that philosophical progress consists in philosophers getting more scientific".

Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of Culture

7.   **Cultures are the diverse ways in which human beings process, interpret, develop and transmit information. Analyse and discuss.**

The aim of the question is to examine to what extent human cultures can be understood from the point of view of information. The notion of information can be interpreted in different ways.

Key Points
- An interpretation of the concept of information should be examined. It could refer to biological dimensions (*e.g.* genetic information, basic needs), to computational models, or to any other plausible conceptual frame.
- A basic observation is that the quantity of information transmitted over a channel depends on variation in a signal. In the simplest case, the variation would involve just two equally likely alternatives: on or off.
- Cultural activity may be described in many diverse ways *e.g.* as bodily-mental activity or as a system of symbolic interaction. Students should identify main features of a freely chosen conception of culture, and develop them, to the necessary extent, within the context of their argument.
- The shaping of human brains by culture has created human minds, which alone among animal minds can conceive of things distant and future, and formulate alternative goals. On the other hand, culture is a product of the interaction between human brains and their environments.
- The answer can consider the notion of 'meme' (unit of cultural evolution) but, of course, not necessarily. This notion provides a perspective from which to investigate the complex relationship between cultural and genetic heritage.

Discussion
- Different discussions are interwoven in the statement: *e.g.* unity/diversity of culture, nature/nurture, biological/non-biological.
- Whereas animals are rigidly controlled by their biology, human behavior is determined by culture, an autonomous system of symbols and values. Free from biological constraints, cultures can vary from one another arbitrarily and without limit. This freedom is not, however, without limits.
- Can every cultural aspect be reduced to information? Does the answer to this question only depend on the interpretation of 'information'? Or, is information mainly a conceptual tool by means of which we translate and understand any phenomena (*e.g.* a Turing machine)?
- The statement does not take seriously main features of the origin of culture, human action: individuality, radical contingency and historicity.
- Cultural transmission is an inadequate and uneconomical way of transmitting information. Main aspects of 'spiritual' culture (*e.g.* art, religion) are not good tools for it at all.

8.   Does it make sense to speak of "encounter of cultures" from a philosphical point of view?

The question asks about the "encounter of cultures". The term refers to the gamut and varieties of this phenomenon: the contact of cultures in space and time, their interactions; their dialogue, conflict, collision; the inheritance relations between them, *etc*. Elements of an answer are: analysis of the concept, assessment of (at least) one conception, a direct answer.

Key Points
- The history of mankind presents itself as a variegated picturesque panorama of encounters of cultures. Immediate reminiscences are: the Graeco-Roman invasion of the East; the incursion of barbarians into Europe; the Crusades; the discovery of the New World.
- Encounters of cultures resulted in great cultural epochs – Hellenistic culture in a vast area of the world; the European Middle Ages as a new type of culture; Arabian culture; the Renaissance culture, in which the European civilization encountered classical Antiquity; the new European culture; Latin American and North American cultures…
- Every culture comprises relevant inner structures and mechanisms responsible for the selection, transformation and adaptation of the phenomena from other cultures.

Discussion
- Any reflection upon 'other', 'alien' culture is possible always from the perspective of a definite culture: the other culture is seen as refracted through the prism of our culture, of our world-understanding.
- How is it possible to overcome this subjectivity of the reflection upon other cultures and reach a more objective approach?
- A 'universal' point of view: despite the great variety of particular, individual cultures there are common patterns in their structure and function, which make possible adequate translation and understanding of other cultures in the language of our culture.
- Other conceptions are concerned to reveal what makes every particular culture a unique whole, with its peculiar vision of the world, with its own classification of phenomena, meanings, values *etc*.
- A developed culture is a culture which has had its potentialities expanded, is an open culture. Only such a culture is able to enter into a dialogue with another culture.

Optional Theme 4: World Philosophies

9. **Explain and critically assess what a full commitment to *ahimsa* (non-violence) entails.**

The question is intended to stimulate a full discussion on the subject of 'non-violence' (*ahimsa*). Candidates might define what we understand as violence in this sense, while explaining why and how it may be considered that violence damages both the victim and the agent of the act. The candidate should probably also discuss concept of *karma* in relation to *ahimsa*.

Key points
- What is the meaning of *ahimsa*?
- We are completely responsible for the improvement or deterioration of our personal *karma*.
- An act of violence against another soul is not only the cause of suffering of this other soul; it is also the main cause of the (future) suffering that will be endured by the person who commits this violence.
- As Jain philosophy stresses, we could then consider that violence is the source of all evil that surrounds us. Hence 'non-violence' could be reasonably considered not only the best attitude towards other human beings, but also the best ideal in our relations towards the rest of the world (animals, plants, earth).
- Sometimes, an attitude of non-violence (and suffering violence) is more effective in achieving our social goals than an attitude of violence (Gandhi, Martin Luther King).

Discussion
- There are many ways in which violence might be exerted (acts, words, thoughts).
- Must we believe in a life after this one (or many lives: *karma*) in the context of a full commitment to *ahimsa*?
- Is it always an act of violence to defend oneself against the violence of another? *E.g.* 'legitimate self-defence' (*i.e.* self-defence that is not a negative moral act)?
- If somebody exerts violence not on me but on another person, would it be negative for me and my *karma* to defend this victim? What are the differences between this kind of defensive action and simple violence?
- If we define 'violence' in a broad way, as Jain philosophy does (*i.e.* including not only acts, but also words, thoughts, attitudes *etc*; and including not only people as the possible victims, but also animals, plants, *etc.*), how can we avoid violence at all? In some cases, should we have to choose between higher degrees of violence and lesser degrees of violence? How could these degrees be measured?

10. **Must we understand *Jihad* as a commandment to fight infidels by any means and convert them to Islam?**

Candidates should distinguish ways in which the concept of 'struggle' (*Jihad*) could be understood in the Islamic tradition. They might distinguish between external forms of fighting (against non-Islamic individuals) and more internal ways of struggle (against injustice present in Islamic societies, or against sinful items inside of each Muslim). Candidates will assess how the conceptions of *Jihad* have influenced the development of Islam, and will critically evaluate the value of the idea of *Jihad* from their own point of view.

Key points
- *Jihad* might be understood as an order to fight and spread the Islamic faith, or as an order to extend sovereign Muslim power by any means (including violent ones). *Jihad* could also be considered, in a more restricted way, to allow Muslims to defend Islam in case it is previously attacked by someone else. But these are not the only possible meanings of *Jihad*.
- A further possible way of understanding *Jihad*, unlike the others, does not refer to the struggle between Islam and other religious communities: thus, some mystic conceptions of Islam have considered that *Jihad* is only a name for the fight against the injustice present in society and in ourselves.
- In fact, given that (according to Islamic philosophy) faith must be accepted freely, it would be a contradiction to oblige by external means (such as violent fighting or political aggression) an adherence to the Islamic community.
- Nevertheless, the inseparability of religion and politics in Islamic philosophy might blur the difference between, on the one hand, a purely religious struggle against something regarded as unfair and, on the other hand, a political (and external) battle against this supposed injustice.

Discussion
- What virtues does *Jihad* favour in a world view, like Islam? Which benefits may be expected from such a notion? Might we approve some terms related to the notion of *Jihad* (like discipline, integrity, sacrifice, solidarity…) because they are valuable both in the 'external' and the 'internal' level of *Jihad*?
- What are the negative consequences for Islam of underlining the concept of 'struggle' in such a way as *Jihad* does? Although there might be very peaceful ways of taking the meaning of this word, is it not prone to be dangerously understood in more violent terms? After thinking of other synonyms for the peaceful meanings of this word (like 'solidarity between Muslims', 'development of just social relations' or 'self-perfection'), could we not judge them preferable?
- Is Islam the only world view that has recurred to violence in order to enlarge the area of its cultural influence? Which are the features that a philosophy must have if we want it to be less likely to use violence in order to achieve its goals? The candidate may compare the concept of *Jihad* with other concepts studied in this theme, like *ahimsa*.
- Fundamentalist views of Islam may emphasize the external, bellicose meanings of the word *Jihad*. Others, who have a strong feeling against Islam, may stress these meanings in order to increase the antipathy against this world view.
- What is the place of sincerity in taking up a faith? Can we oblige or persuade others to accept a determinate faith? What appropriate means might be used to foster conversion?

Optional Theme 5: Nature, Work and Technology

11. Is there a reasonable relationship among profit, labour and the use of natural resources? Discuss.

Candidates are asked to explore concepts related to the human being's relationship to work (profit, labour, and the transformation of nature) and are invited to enter into a discussion evaluating the relationship between nature and human beings in the context of profit-oriented work.

Key Points
- The (intrinsic?) value of nature as opposed to the (instrumental?) value of natural resources
- The difference between short and long term profit
- The concept of sustainability: the use of renewable versus non-renewable natural resources
- The relationship between nature and human beings: dependence, stewardship, domination
- Nature as an object of exploitation versus a more integrated view of the natural world (Deep Ecology)
- The relation between profit and environmental destruction
- The role of profit in the concept of labour
- What does it mean to speak of a 'reasonable relationship' in the context of this question?

Discussion
- Does nature have a value other than as a resource for human consumption?
- Is work that does not result in profit actually work?
- What makes labour meaningful? Is it compatible with profit or the destruction of nature?
- In what way can the destruction/preservation of nature be thought of as profitable?
- Is nature ours to use however we choose?
- Would a 'reasonable relationship' be one that is satisfactorily measured against ethical criteria? What would these criteria be?

12. **In his article, *The Rise of Robots*, Hans Moravac predicts that robots will free humans from much of the work we do today. Future human generations, he claims, "will probably occupy their days with a variety of social, recreational and artistic pursuits, not unlike today's comfortable retirees or the wealthy leisure classes." Critically discuss the desirablity of this state of affairs.**

Candidates are asked to explore concepts related to the value and conditions of work, and are invited to enter into a discussion about how we conceive of work and its relation to technology.

Key Points
- A definition of 'work'
- The rewards of work aside from monetary compensation
- The role of work in relation to self-definition, self-worth, and the fabric of society
- The influence of technology on labour: labour saving devices and its effect on the work force
- The notion of a work-free utopia: a first-world preoccupation, an impossibility for many developing nations

Discussion
- What is work?
- Is work correctly contrasted with 'social, recreational and artistic pursuits'?
- Is work something from which it is appropriate to speak of being 'freed'?
- If robots 'freed' us from what we think of now as work, would other tasks (such as 'social, recreational and artistic pursuits') take its place as those which we would rather not do?
- Have our experiences with computers not shown us that 'time-saving devices' really just create other forms of work and new forms of time consuming activities (e-mail)?
- Are we really better off with less work?
- Examples from the history of philosophy: Aristotle and Marx

Optional Theme 6: Philosophy of The Arts

13.   **"The very subject matter of art is nudity." Analyse and discuss.**

This statement asks for an analysis about a possible qualitative feature of art and not a quantitative interpretation, *e.g.* "All works of art are related to the naked human body." While maintaining the focus of the question, answers may discuss what art is. Examples in different arts, painting, literature, photography, film, would be appropriate.

Key Points
- Nakedness is to be without clothes, nakedness implies some embarrassment a person could feel in that situation. The word 'nude' does not carry, in educated use, any uncomfortable overtone.
- The very process that made us human consists of developing the biological dimensions within a cultural environment.
- In different countries and times the naked human body was the central object of art. In important ages of painting and sculpture the nude inspired great works of art.
- It is widely supposed that the naked human body is in itself an object upon which the eye dwells with pleasure.
- There are important branches of human experiences of which the naked body provides a vivid reminder: harmony, energy, ecstasy, humility, pathos.

Discussion
- One can argue that there are subtle erotic overtones in most nude art, but they are balanced by the search for a kind of perfection we do not find in everyday life, for formal beauty of line and contour, and the attempt to embody abstract spiritual values in physical, human form.
- Some hints which could serve to support the thesis: (a) art depends on the boundary between art and obscenity; (b) censorship is mainly practiced on sexuality.
- Diverse approaches about the different meanings that the human body can carry *e.g.* Freudian, Foucaultian, gender philosophy, can be followed.
- To agree with the statement does not mean that nudity is a main feature of art, it could only represent a secondary function, and just in some cases.

14. **"An image regardless of the means it was created, is worth a thousand words." Do some branches of the arts say more than others?**

The question invites reflection on the fact that there are different branches of art. It also implies some discussion on the very concept of art. The first part directly refers to a comparison between visual and narrative art, but it could be answered including in the comparison other forms such as music and dance.

Key points
- Images are expressing something that cannot be said with words. Pictures are presentational, words are part of a language. Pictures are not discursive, they have no formal grammar. Images do not have common elements similar to the alphabet of a written language.
- A language is defined by its vocabulary and its grammatical rules. On the other hand, photography neither has a vocabulary nor do images have a recognized syntax.
- We live in a visually intensive society, which shows an overwhelming abundance and heterogeneity of visual paradigms. In this context visual and textual overlap, constructing new forms of expression (*e.g.* advertising, video clips) which cannot easily be included in the received art branches.
- All arts are produced and appreciated within the context of a particular society and historical period, a set of different personal experiences and even within the context of the particular biological capabilities and limitations of the human species.

Discussion
- Branches of art and classifications of arts might not be seen as genuine products, results of exigencies which are external to art itself. On the other hand, branches of art could be considered as the result of the artist's need of expression, which is diverse not only in content but in form.
- The distinction between image and word is too artificial. Can there be any words without images? Does every image evoke words?
- Do the various arts have the same functions (to depict the 'reality', to teach or uplift the mind, to express emotion, to create beauty, to bind a community together or to praise a spiritual power)? Should we really expect one main function?
- Words have a hold over literate societies because they have a long history of understood meaning. Words are economical and easily combined symbols.
- Different branches of art are not commensurable. Can expressions in one form of art find a satisfactory translation into another?

Optional Theme: Philosophy of Religion

15. **"If God's existence is possible to demonstrate rationally and if we are rational beings, then surely atheism becomes irrational." Evaluate this statement.**

This question invites reflection on the paradoxical position of believing in God yet, at the same time, facing the impossiblity of providing an unshakeable rational proof of His existence. The question requires the candidate to engage in discussing this paradox. Should a candidate deny this paradox without addressing it, by simply professing his/her faith, this would not constitute a satisfactory answer. Conversely, if rational arguments are so compelling, why do only some individuals choose atheism?

Key Points
- An exposition of some of the rational proofs of God's existence: the ontological proof, the Five Ways, Pascal's Wager, *etc.*
- An examination of the limitation of the convincing power of these proofs for the non-believer.
- The powerful counter-argument offered by the existence of forms of evils, that the omnipotent, omniscient and all-loving God fails to control and/or prevent.
- Believing as a prerequisite to experiencing the presence of God, an incommunicable, irrational, life-transforming event: 'leap of faith'. The absence of this experience leaves people without faith. Additionally, there are compelling scientific arguments that prove that the world may just have accidentally happened, without any Godlike intervention, and certainly without any teleology.
- Atheism as a rational position: the positive choice of being atheist.

Discussion
- Regardless of the nature of the proof for God's existence, we often find that people believe in God because their society is organized around the life of a religious community.
- Interestingly, the explosion of scientific discoveries seems to have generated a disengagement from Christian churches, while not detrimentally affecting Muslims nor Hindus. How can we explain this?
- The dysfunctionality of one on the one hand needing the 'oceanic feeling' provided by faith with the incongruous reality of it not making any sense. At the end of the day, perhaps the only solution is to accept the belief because, as Williams James said, 'it works'.
- Can religious/faith issues be resolved by the rigours of logic? (James: the limits of reason)

16. **Whenever we visit great religious sites, we are awed by the incredible display of wealth. How might this accumulation of wealth be reconciled with religions professing, for example, vows of poverty and the demand that faithful followers not covet such riches?**

This question focuses on the ethical commands that religions issue their followers as opposed to the organizations' own behaviours. The Churches' behaviours could appear contradictory to their moral directives. This paradox perplexes some believers and may become a challenge to their faith.

Key Points
- Is this wealth a vestige of a naïve past that survives in the present?
- Are religious institutions indeed rich? What do we really know of their possessions: intellectual, artistic, architectural? The secrecy that shrouds public scrutiny of religious institutions' possessions.
- Most great religious leaders advocate poverty. Why is it so? The possessions of material goods being regarded as a distraction from higher duties, in the same spirit as the philosopher-kings in Plato will not be allowed personal possessions.

Discussion
- What is the worth of this wealth, assuming the wealth is true, if it yields no political power?
- Is this money in the hands of the religious communities for distribution to the poor?
- Religious institutions as rich organizations who hold (or once held) a tight control over society. By means of collection, religious institutions were in a position to amass large sums of money that they made grow.
- What is the meaning of poverty? Can one be rich but nevertheless dedicated to poverty?

Optional Theme 8: Theories and Problems of Ethics

17. **Person A: "Do not lie, it is a wrongful deed".**
    Person B: "Do not buy any strawberry ice-cream for me, I do not like it".

    Are these two statements just expressions of personal preference? Explain and critically assess.

Candidates will explore the differences and similarities between the two statements The question can be explored from a variety of perspectives *(e.g.* emotivism, non-cognitivism, utilitarianism and deontology). A good essay will show that moral rules have characteristics which personal preferences have not.

Key points
- There are several differences between making a moral statement and making a statement about our feelings or preferences: A moral statement has a certain generality that the expression of preferences lacks.
- A moral statement usually contains, implicitly or explicitly, a *norm*. Uttering a personal preference does not have this normative status, but more an *informative* or *expressive* one that does not command anything.
- Stating a moral norm implies a certain degree of engagement, but expressing personal preferences does not.
- Someone holding a totally subjective conception of morals is asserting that these differences are not so important, or that they are not even real. How would this person address the generality of the intersubjective aspects of moral norms and the sense of engagement embodied in them?

Discussion
- What would be the consequences for our societies if we should hold the belief that a moral norm is not anything more than the expression of a preference? Could we establish a standard of morality in the public scene? Do we need general moral principles in our communities or should no one feel obliged by any common moral rule?
- Is not sharing our moral norms the same as not sharing our likings or preferences? How do we argue in order to convince others about the rightness of our moral norms, or how might we argue the legitimacy of our personal preferences?
- We apply the word 'good' (or 'right') for two different kind of items: we speak of 'good moral actions' (*e.g.* not lying), but we also speak of 'good feelings' (*e.g.* the feeling of tasting ice-cream in our mouth). Do we have here an example of two synonymous terms, two analogical terms or two equivocal terms?
- Is our contemporary society especially prone to make the kind of equivalence between moral norms and personal preferences that we are discussing here?

18. A patient requests a course of treatment which, in the doctor's professional opinion, is not in his/her best interest. Assess the possible moral issues arising from this situation.

Candidates should discuss the concept of liberty or autonomy of the patient, paying attention to the rights and duties of the two main agents involved (doctor and patient). Candidates may mention possible implications for a third party also concerned by this biomedical relation: the society at large. A good essay will raise related issues and apply moral theories to their possible resolution.

Key points
- Quality of life versus preservation of life
- Competing/conflicting interests: patient, medical staff, society at large
- Autonomy versus principle of non-harm versus justice
- Access to information and informed decision making
- Free will versus incapacitation
- Requesting treatment versus refusing treatment
- Professional responsibility of medical practionners

Discussion
- How would different moral theories produce differing assessments of the issues raised?
- Could a patient ever lose the right to self-determination?
- Medicine is not an exact science. This uncertainty refutes any single party's exclusive right to decision making.
- What are the implications of setting other values above the principle of autonomy?
- Are euthanasia and abortion two cases of 'therapy' or should we include them under another qualification?
- Who should decide whether or not to share information with the patient, and which criteria should be applied in order to make a proper decision?