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**PHILOSOPHY  
HIGHER LEVEL  
PAPER 3**

Wednesday 5 May 2010 (morning)

1 hour 30 minutes

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the text and write a response.

*In your response you are expected to:*

- *develop a philosophical response in an organized way*
- *use clear, precise and appropriate language*
- *identify what doing philosophy means in the text*
- *take an independent position about the nature of philosophical activity in relation to the ideas developed in the text*
- *draw upon, and show a holistic appreciation of, the skills, material and ideas developed throughout the course.*

### **Unseen text – exploring philosophical activity**

*Read the text below then write a response to it (of approximately 800 words). Your response is worth [30 marks]. In your response include:*

- *a concise description of philosophical activity as presented in the text*
- *an exploration of the pertinent issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text, relating this to your experience of doing philosophy throughout the whole course*
- *appropriate references to the text that illustrate your understanding of philosophical activity*
- *your personal evaluation of the issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text.*

There is a pleasure in philosophy, and the lure even in the mirages of metaphysics which every student feels until the coarse necessities of physical existence drag him from the heights of thought into the mainstream of economic life and gain. Most of us have known good times like this.

There were happy days in life when philosophy was in fact what Plato calls “the dear delight”; when love of a modestly elusive truth seemed more glorious, incomparably, than the lust for the ways of the flesh and the dross of the world. And there is some wistful remnant in us of that early wooing of wisdom.

So much of our lives is meaningless; we strive with the chaos about us within; but we would believe all the while that there is something vital and significant in us, were we able to decipher our own souls. We want to understand; we want to seize the value and perspective of passing things, and so to pull ourselves up out of the whirlwind of daily circumstances. We want to know that the little things are little and the big things big before it is too late; we want to see things now as they will seem forever. We want to learn to laugh in the face of the inevitable, to smile even at the looming of death. We want to be whole to coordinate our energies by criticizing and harmonizing our desires; for coordinated energy is the last word in ethics and politics and perhaps in logic and metaphysics too. “To be a philosopher”, said Thoreau, “is not merely to have subtle thoughts nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live, according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, generosity, and trust”. We may be sure that if we can find wisdom all other things will be added to us. Truth will not make us rich but it will make us free.

Some will think philosophy is as useless as chess, as obscure as ignorance, stagnant because it makes no progress and is a waste of time. Doubtless some philosophers have had all sorts of wisdom except common sense; and many philosophic flights have been due to the elevated power of thin air. But is philosophy stagnant and a waste of time? Science seems always to advance while philosophy seems always to lose ground. Yet this is only because philosophy accepts the hard and difficult task of dealing with problems not yet open to methods of science, problems like good and evil, beauty and ugliness, order and freedom, life and death; so soon as a field of inquiry yields knowledge susceptible of exact formulation, it is called science. Every science begins as philosophy and ends as art; it arises in hypothesis and flows into achievement. Philosophy is a hypothetical interpretation of the unknown or of the inexactly known; it is the front trench of the siege of truth. Science is the captured territory and behind it are those secure regions in which knowledge and art build our imperfect and marvellous world. Philosophy seems to stand still; but only because she leaves the fruits of victory (the results of her enquiries) to her daughters the sciences, while philosophy, herself, moves on to uncertainty and the unexplored. Science wishes to resolve the whole into parts, the organisms into organs, the obscure into the known. It does not inquire into values and ideal possibilities of things, nor into their total and final significance; it is content to show their present actuality and operations as they are. The scientist is impartial; he is as interested in the leg of a flea as in the creative throes of genius. But the philosopher is not content to describe the fact, he wishes to ascertain its relationship to experience in general, and thereby to get at its meaning and its worth; he combines things in an interpretative synthesis; he tries to put together better than before, that great universe-watch which the inquisitive scientist has taken apart. Science tells us how to heal and how to kill; it reduces the death rate in retail and then kills us wholesale in war; but only wisdom – desired coordination in the light of all experience – can tell us when to heal and when to kill. To observe processes and to construct means is science. To criticize and coordinate ends is philosophy. A fact is nothing except in relation to desire and ends; it is not complete except in relation to a purpose and a whole. Science without philosophy, facts without perspective and valuation cannot save us from havoc and despair. Science gives us knowledge but only philosophy gives us wisdom. The seeking of wisdom is true pleasure.

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