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**PHILOSOPHY
HIGHER LEVEL
PAPER 3**

Thursday 8 May 2014 (morning)

1 hour 30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the text and write a response.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is *[30 marks]*.

In your response you are expected to:

- *develop a response in an organized way using clear, precise language, which is appropriate to philosophy*
- *identify pertinent issues regarding the philosophical activity raised 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.*

“Why philosophize?” “What’s in philosophy for me besides the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake?” There is a practical response. A critical involvement with philosophy can change our fundamental beliefs, including both our general view of the world and our system of values. A change of these can change our personal happiness and our goal within a chosen profession or simply our general lifestyle. However, such benefits are generally by-products, and not the specific goal of philosophical investigation.

The lure of philosophy involves becoming sensitized to matters we just had not thought about before. The desire to become philosophically involved is often stimulated by a confrontation with an assertion that seems flatly mistaken. For instance, many of us would be deeply troubled by an unsupported statement such as, “one should not be held responsible for his or her actions”. Even those who have no inherent interest in general philosophical theories can become interested in one or more philosophical problems when they seem relevant to our daily life. In principle a primary purpose of doing philosophy is to survey representative philosophical problems or theories that are often complex and strangely worded but likely to stimulate an interest because of their relevance. At best one can see how these theories are responsible responses to legitimate philosophical problems on issues that confound us today.

In addition, philosophizing involves four psychological traits that improve effective communication. They are: the courage to challenge one’s cherished beliefs critically; a willingness to advance tentative hypotheses and to take steps in reacting to the philosophical claim no matter how foolish that reaction might seem; a desire to place the search for truth above the satisfaction of winning or losing the debate; and lastly the ability to separate one’s personality from the content that is being discussed. Philosophizing is a skill that can be developed with practice. It is more like the abilities of a surgeon or a racing car driver than those of a computer programmer. Philosophical problems are often diverse and slippery. Just as the racing car driver must apply

25 a general knowledge of mechanics to shifting conditions during a particular race, the philosopher uses
methods sensitively with the awareness of the peculiarities and interconnections of specific issues.

Philosophy is doing as well as studying. This should not be confused with maybe doing
research or appealing to authorities. The real authorities, the great philosophers, must be examined
to sift out the enduring truths of their views. In doing philosophy one does not just consult one's
30 personal opinion. However, personal attitudes might serve as a stimulus to critical enquiry, yet they
should never be a standard to choose between different arguments and theories. "I like this view"
is never a good reason in philosophy. The important question is rather why I think that this is the
best position.

Productive philosophizing should not be confused with doing psychology. A common
35 example of this confusion is the attempt to criticize a person's philosophical belief by attributing it
to a cause in the person's past; to childhood training, social pressure, neuroses and so forth. This is
called the "genetic fallacy", and is particularly evident in discussions about religion and morality.
Philosophers are concerned not with causes, but with reasons that can be given for or against certain
belief positions. It is the philosopher's job not to psychoanalyse but to determine the theoretical
40 justifications for a particular view.

Philosophy has two sides, one critical and the other constructive. In the first place we must
generally learn to analyse other people's philosophical viewpoints critically before we can engage
in a theoretical speculation on our own account. We thereby avoid repeating the mistakes of others.
In the second place criticism can itself be constructive in exposing the weaknesses of other theories.
45 Then from this criticism an outline of a new and better view emerges. Of course there is no substitute
for creative insight, but in philosophy such insights tend to emerge only after it has been nurtured
by disciplined critical analysis. Moreover, when evaluating philosophical claims it is essential to
gauge the relative strength of criticisms. A very strong criticism is, for example, that a theory is
self-contradictory. In contrast a very weak criticism is simply the need to have more evidence to build
50 a convincing argument for a particular position. However it is important to note that philosophy is
seldom an all or nothing proposition. To be blunt, in doing philosophy an understatement is better
than an overstatement as it may be necessary later to eat one's own words. For example,
understatement, "It appears that there might be three problems with theory X" is safer than
overstatement, "I conclude that there is no hope in theory X".

55 It should be emphasized that philosophy is an intellectual passion, not merely the abstract
application of technique. Philosophy is not about winning points or arguments or being clever.
It is caring about the truth and a love of wisdom.

[Source: From Woodhouse. *A Preface to Philosophy*, 9E. © 2013 Wadsworth, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc.
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