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**Philosophy  
Higher level  
Paper 3**

Thursday 9 May 2019 (morning)

1 hour 15 minutes

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**Instructions to candidates**

- Do not turn over this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the text and write a response.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[25 marks]**.

**Unseen text – exploring philosophical activity**

Compare and contrast the view(s) of philosophical activity presented in the text below, with your own experience and understanding of what is involved in doing philosophy [25 marks].

There is no shallow end in philosophy, and every novice philosopher has to struggle to keep their head above water.

It is not possible to explain in advance what philosophy is about. The best way to learn philosophy is to read the works of great philosophers. This book is meant to show the reader what topics have interested philosophers and what methods they have used to address them. By themselves, summaries of philosophical doctrines are of little use: a reader is cheated if merely told a philosopher's conclusion without an indication of the methods by which they were reached. For this reason I do my best to present, and criticize, the reasoning used by philosophers in support of their theses. I mean no disrespect by engaging thus in argument with the great minds of the past. That is the way to take a philosopher seriously: not to parrot his/her text but to battle with it, and learn from its strengths and weaknesses.

Philosophy is simultaneously the most exciting and most frustrating of subjects. Philosophy is exciting because it is the broadest of all disciplines, exploring the basic concepts which run through all our talking and thinking on any topic whatever. Moreover, it can be undertaken without any special preliminary training or instruction; anyone can do philosophy who is willing to think hard and follow a line of reasoning. But philosophy is also frustrating, because, unlike scientific or historical disciplines, it gives no new information about nature or society. Philosophy aims to provide not new knowledge, but understanding; and its history shows how difficult it has been, even for the very greatest minds, to develop a complete and coherent vision. It can be said without exaggeration that no human being has yet succeeded in reaching a complete and coherent understanding even of the language we use to think our simplest thoughts. It is no accident that the man whom many regard as the founder of philosophy as a self-conscious discipline, Socrates, claimed that the only wisdom he possessed was his knowledge of his own ignorance.

Philosophy is neither science nor religion, though historically it has been entwined with both. In many areas philosophical thought grew out of religious reflection and grew into empirical science. Many issues which were treated by great past philosophers would nowadays no longer count as philosophical...

It often happens that after a philosophical question has been clarified by the drawing of relevant distinctions, one of the new questions which emerge from the analysis turns out not to be a philosophical question at all, but a question to be solved by some other discipline.

Does that mean that at some time there will be nothing left for philosophy to do? Will all problem areas be sufficiently clarified to set up as independent sciences? I believe not: the theory of meaning, epistemology, philosophy of mind, ethics, and metaphysics will always remain philosophical. Whatever new non-philosophical problems will be generated by these disciplines, to be solved by non-philosophical methods, there will always remain an irreducible core amenable only to philosophy.

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