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PROCESSING LABEL HERE

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Write your **student number** in the boxes above.

Letter

Philosophy

Question and Answer Book

VCE Examination – Thursday 14 November 2024

- Reading time is **15 minutes**: 2.00 pm to 2.15 pm
- Writing time is **2 hours**: 2.15 pm to 4.15 pm

Materials supplied

- Question and Answer Book of 24 pages

Instructions

- Use the additional space at the end of this book if you need extra space to complete an answer.

Students are **not** permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

Contents	pages
Section A (5 questions, 30 marks) _____	2–9
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Section A

Instructions

- Answer **all** questions in the spaces provided.
- Write your responses in English.

Question 1 (8 marks)

- a. Explain how observing melting wax leads Descartes to a conclusion about how we know reality. 2 marks

- b. 'But surely sensations can't be brain states, because someone can describe their sensations without knowing anything about neuroscience.'
How might Smart defend his theory that sensations are brain states, in light of this objection? 2 marks

Do not write in this area.

c. How might Descartes respond to Smart's view that sensations are brain states? 2 marks

d. Which view of the relationship between mind and body do you prefer – Descartes's or Smart's? Give a reason for your response. 2 marks

Do not write in this area.

Question 2 (7 marks)

Michaels imagines a thought experiment in which you are told that you will be physically tortured by Dr Nefarious, but your memories will be erased before the torture occurs.

- a. Michaels believes that your likely response to her Dr Nefarious thought experiment shows that the body is important to personal identity.

Why does she believe this?

2 marks

- b. How might Hume respond to the view that the body has a role in establishing personal identity?

2 marks

Do not write in this area.

Question 4 (7 marks)

a. Callicles believes that the good life and desire are connected. Why does he think this? 2 marks

b. What does Wolf believe is the connection between the good life and desire? 2 marks

Do not write in this area.

Question 5 (5 marks)

- a. When considering the good life for a human being, why does Nietzsche believe that decreasing suffering is harmful, while increasing suffering is helpful?

2 marks

- b. To what extent do you agree with Nietzsche on the role of suffering in the good life? Justify your response.

3 marks

Do not write in this area.

Question 2 (10 marks)

As Arthur sits in the dock, now frail and elderly, the prosecutor presents an aged photograph of him holding his young daughter.

‘Yes, that is me,’ he proclaims proudly, remembering the wonderful years of her childhood.

But when the focus turns to the even older archive photographs of atrocious actions during the war, his mood changes.

‘It looks like me, yes. But I don’t remember any of this!’

They show him the records of his time during the war with his signature at the bottom – all before the birth of his daughter and the brain damaging car accident he suffered the day she was born. They show him the medals he won for valour, usually displayed proudly in his home despite his lack of memory of the deeds that earned them. Then they show him photographs taken in the aftermath of the actions he is alleged to have done – including one with him standing over a victim.

‘I don’t remember any of this. But I can’t deny that man is me in my younger years.’ Arthur’s voice shakes.

The prosecutor asks if his lack of memory even matters with so much physical evidence. Arthur pauses, his world crashing down around him. He has just seen the evidence with his own eyes: he was responsible for reprehensible things. No one else can be blamed. He asks for a recess and speaks quietly to his lawyer.

‘I would like to change my plea to guilty,’ he says, bowing his head sadly.

As they lead him away, he thinks of his wife and daughter, and the love and happiness his family has enjoyed all these years. He will be punished for heinous crimes of which he has no memory, but has to admit that he must have done. He hangs his head in deepest shame. He must have been a monster all along.

Are we responsible for things we do not remember?

In answering this question, you should:

- consider the argument presented in the passage above through the thoughts of ‘Arthur’
- consider Locke’s discussion of personal identity
- consider Hume’s discussion of personal identity
- give your own justified response to this question.

Do not write in this area.

Section C

Instructions

- Write an essay in response to **one** of the following questions.
- Write your response in English.
- Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 23.

Question 1 (20 marks)

A Manifesto for the Future of Humanity

1. We should use technology to re-engineer our brains and bodies so that our descendants will be a superior race of supremely enhanced superhumans.
2. We should use technologies to colonise the rest of the universe, allowing ourselves access to a huge quantity of exploitable resources.
3. We should prioritise the realisation of our vast and glorious potential to ensure that the universe becomes filled with massive numbers of technologically enhanced digital posthumans living in computer simulations. To take but one example: we should prioritise the rich over the poor, because the rich are more likely to pave the way for the realisation of our potential.

Critically discuss this perspective on the interplay between technological development and the good life. In your response, draw on viewpoints and arguments from **either** Plato's *Gorgias* **or** Nietzsche. You may also draw on other philosophical concepts and sources.

OR

Question 2 (20 marks)

So, have you heard about the new trend? 'Dumbphones' are now cool. Young people are increasingly choosing to ditch their smartphones in favour of old-school, feature-free flip-phones.

This new digital minimalism makes a lot of sense. Deep down, we all want to live a life that is about more than momentary pleasures. And yet, our addiction to handheld technology enslaves us to clicking on what is new and popular, rather than to pursuing activities that offer lasting value.

Our lives are dominated by social media, Google searching and trivial entertainment. Meanwhile, we are losing genuine connections with family and friends. We kid ourselves that we are reasonable people, so of course we can choose to disconnect from our smartphones at any time, but that's not how habits work. We have lost all sense of moderation and balance when it comes to the technology in our lives, scrolling and tapping away our creativity, intelligence and social skills. We spend hours looking into altered images instead of real faces, and reading cheap gossip instead of books.

The online world does not promote genuine social connection. We lie to each other by only presenting carefully crafted online selves, and the virtues we celebrate are all about appearances. Looking for love online turns other people into disposable commodities that can simply be swiped away.

My friends and I have had enough: happiness is a binned smartphone.

Critically discuss this perspective on the interplay between technological development and the good life. In your response, draw on viewpoints and arguments from **either** Aristotle **or** Wolf. You may also draw on other philosophical concepts and sources.

Assessment criteria for Section C

The essay in Section C will be assessed against the following criteria:

- knowledge and understanding of philosophical concepts, viewpoints, arguments and debates relevant to the topic
 - critical evaluation of ideas and arguments relevant to the topic
 - selection and use of relevant material and appropriate examples to support the response
 - development of a coherent and well-reasoned response that addresses the specific demands of the topic
 - use of clear and precise language appropriate to philosophy
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