



RAFFLES INSTITUTION  
2021 Year 6 Term 3 Common Test  
Higher 2

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## Knowledge and Inquiry

**9759/02**

Paper 2

**28 June 2021**

**2 hours**

Additional Materials: Answer Paper

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### READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Do not turn this sheet over until you are told to do so.  
Write your name and CT group on all the work you hand in.  
Write in dark blue or black ink.  
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid/tape.  
Start each section on a fresh sheet of paper.

#### Section A

Answer **Question 1**.

#### Section B

Answer any **two** questions.

At the end of the examination, fasten your answers to each section separately. You will be asked to submit your answer to each section separately.

The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.

## Section A

You **must** answer question one.

- 1 What happens in cancel culture is that those offended by the comments of another party become denounced online by those who object to the behaviour. It is a form of social and cultural boycott driven by 'groupthink' meaning the intolerance of others with a point of view that diverges from group norms. Taken to an extreme, it is like excommunicating someone from the community. But is it right to target a person with whom you disagree and use the Internet to express your outrage, get people fired, or pushed out of certain circles?

Some argue that it is good practice, since taking others to task is part of the democratic process and simply a manifestation of free speech. It also enables those who are of low social status to challenge provocateurs who are traditionally powerful beyond reach, like Bill Cosby and Harvey Weinstein, who were considered untouchable in Hollywood before the #MeToo movement. However, others argue that cancelling someone is an attempt to stifle another person's free speech rights, and the very thing you might be calling him out for (bullying someone else, for example) is the very thing you are doing. There seems to be no way to decide who is right.

In fact, cancel culture shows us that ethical discourse is problematic. On the one hand, it seems subjective. Should we cancel everyone with whom we disagree? Where do we draw the line? Is it even possible to do so? If you go down this path, and if you succeed, the only person left at the end of the path will be you, since there is nobody else who is exactly like you in outlook or worldview. If you were the sole arbiter of all moral and non-moral conflict, morality would be reduced to something totally relative to you. Yet, that is contradictory to the starting position you took when you started cancelling others, since you would have had to assume that you are fully right and others wrong. But, if everyone took the same position, everyone's position would be equally right, and nobody would be wrong.

On the other hand, ethical discourse seems to be empty. With cancel culture, moral debate is won by the side that shouts the loudest or is able to achieve the intended outcome (like the resignation of high profile individuals, for example). The only reason why we intuitively think that cancel culture is a legitimate response is that those who participate in it or argue for it are extremely vocal and get their way, but this in no way guarantees that the majority are in favour. In the end, ethical discourse simply resembles a shouting match between people who shout, in the words of AJ Ayer, "boo ya!".

If either of these two analyses are right, then we will not be able to answer the question of what right and wrong really are. The best way forward, then, is to look at consequences. Examining cancel culture more closely, the negative consequences outweigh the positive when we take into account long-term, not just short-term effects. Cancel culture has divided whole countries into factions, and social media has become the new virtual war zone. People have abandoned civility for hatred, for those who engage in cancel culture seek to criticise without listening or understanding why someone said or did something. As it is, many people have joined cancelling groups for fear of being cancelled themselves; at this rate, all-out civil war is imminent, and we surely do not want that.

*Adapted from "Ethics and the Cancel Culture" by Steve Mintz*

*Critically evaluate the above argument with reference to the nature and construction of knowledge in ethics. Respond with your own critical comments to support or challenge the author's position. [30]*

**3**  
**Section B**

Answer any **two** questions.

- 2** Traditional capitalism advocates a “profit at all cost” paradigm, but this has resulted in many social, political and environmental problems that we are only now beginning to have to deal with. The drive to make the most bucks in the quickest time has led to environmental destruction, a marginalisation of people who are seen merely as a means to an end, and the rise of social elite who took the profit for themselves. Rising income inequality, political unrest, and growing unhappiness from the lower strata of society unable to cope with the changing and more demanding economy are recipes for disaster. The very survivability of mankind is at stake if we continue on this path, for our planet might soon not be liveable if we keep exploiting its resources.

Capitalism needs to evolve into a model of economy wherein corporations ensure that communitarian and people-oriented business models are embraced so that profit is not the only criterion or reason why they are in business – sometimes called compassionate capitalism. Justice and fairness are at the heart of this move – it surely is unfair for only those in high-ranking positions to enjoy the benefits of capitalism while those lower down the ladder are left high and dry. It is only fair to insist that companies that pollute the environment in pursuit of profit must be made to pay for its clean up, even those that did not know of the consequences of environmental pollution years ago. Besides, a more compassionate way of doing business will lead to a more compassionate society, leading to less socio-political turmoil.

Bill and Melinda Gates lead the way in showing us how compassionate capitalism works. As beneficiaries of traditional capitalism, they have done more to uplift the poor, eradicate polio, and stem the spread of viruses than many governments have ever done. If they can do it, surely the rest of the world can too.

*Critically assess the reasoning in this argument, explaining why you do or do not accept its conclusion(s).*  
[15]

- 3** While sports funding has increased over the years – most recently with a \$50 million injection into the High Performance Sports system and a new One Team Singapore matching grant, local athletes still say, often, that it is insufficient. Many claim that if they do not have full-time jobs, it would be impossible to pursue their sporting dreams. Joseph Schooling had the financial support of his parents but not every athlete has that luxury. But ex-athletes and veterans argue that the younger ones are not appreciative of what they currently have and all the improvements made. Athletes now receive free medical support, sports science support, including physiology, nutrition, psychology, strengthening and conditioning, and even facility support.

But the real conversation we ought to be having is not just about how much money we should invest in our athletes and when, but how much flexibility we have to make bets on potential athletes, and how much latitude we are given for failed bets. Even top investors do not pick the right stock in the market the majority of the time, but there is still value in doing so. Investors gain experience, and when the right stock comes along, the profit earned can cover the losses made from failed picks. As an affluent nation that claims to be serious about being a sporting nation too, the whole village needs to get behind the athlete in substantive ways. There is only so much the government can do. When there is an over-reliance on one party to do everything, the value of bringing people together is lost. Besides, oftentimes what actually propels athletes to continue pursuing their dreams is not financial support but moral support from their community. When we have a culture that prioritises sport only when investment in it can guarantee results, nobody will ever want to make a bet that fails. We need to accept that we will sometimes make failed bets, but it is part of the process that leads to success.

*Critically assess the reasoning in this argument, explaining why you do or do not accept its conclusion(s).*  
[15]

- 4 There are currently no regulations mandating minimum paternity leave periods, unlike those for mothers. Maternity leave has medical origins, since it safeguards the health of mother and child. People argue that since the mother needs to stay home, and both parents cannot be away from the workforce at the same time, paternity leave does not make sense. They also claim that clear gender roles need to be established in order for happy families to thrive.

However, just because there are no biological reasons for mandating paternity leave does not mean that there are no sociological or economic reasons for doing so. Paid paternity leave is critically important for working families; changing who changes the diapers in those critical early weeks in the life of a newborn promotes parent-child bonding, improves outcomes for children, and even increases gender equity at the workplace. Loyalty and productivity also increases when fathers know that the company supports them supporting their families.

Mandating paternity leave can also correct for the over-enthusiastic embrace of paid maternity leave that has ironically fortified the glass ceiling for women instead. Companies that anticipated that women would disappear for long periods of time – one year, in some cases – became reluctant to hire women into senior positions, and resulted in women being shunted into lower-paying sectors.

Beyond socio-economic reasons, there also exist principled reasons for mandatory paid paternity leave. If we grant maternity leave to adoptive mothers, then the same logic should be extended to biological fathers on the basis that not giving birth to a child does not invalidate the need to spend intimate time with a small, vulnerable person who has just joined the family. In addition, making fathers share the duty of care giving, especially at the most vulnerable stage of the baby's life, sends a strong signal that fathers have an equal responsibility in parenting. Setting these standards early makes them more likely to become the norm. After all, studies have shown that the majority of incarcerated persons have absent fathers.

*Critically assess the reasoning in this argument, explaining why you do or do not accept its conclusion(s).*  
[15]

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**END OF PAPER**