



VICTORIA JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2023
HIGHER 1

GENERAL PAPER

8807/02

Paper 2

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your C.T. group, index number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction tape.

Answer **all** questions.

Note that up to **15** marks out of **50** will be awarded for your use of language.

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

This document consists of **10** printed pages.

[Turn over

- 1 When we look back at the beliefs and practices of our ancestors, we are often shocked at what they found morally acceptable: the public torture of criminals, the trading of slaves, and the subjugation of women. The history of moral change – change in what is, and is not, considered morally acceptable – encourages greater scepticism about our current moral beliefs and practices. We might like to think we have arrived at a state of great moral enlightenment, but there is reason to believe that further moral revolutions await. Taking this possibility seriously leads to two inquiries. First, we should investigate the mechanisms of moral change and revolution. Second, we must consider the ramifications of future moral revolutions for those of us alive today. 5
- 2 So why did historical moral revolutions take place? And what might cause them to occur again? The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre describes the relatively simple morality of the Homeric epics*, where goodness and virtue were associated with performing a set role in a hierarchical warrior culture. But situations can change dramatically. Denizens of the seafaring, trade-dependent Greek city-states which were culturally diverse were much less certain about moral concepts and ideas and had to reshape their moral practices to accommodate new social realities. MacIntyre's comparison of moralities is consistent with the finding that geological, ecological, and economic realities often shape our moral practices. Indeed, the history of ethics is one of revolutions caused by changes in how open and closed societies have been to other ways of life. 10 15
- 3 Technology also plays a key role in changing moral beliefs and practices. Technologies give us new powers and choices, altering the weighing of costs and benefits as we make decisions. This can have profound moral consequences. A prime example of this is the impact effective contraceptives have had on attitudes toward extra-marital (particularly pre-marital) sex. Research estimates that in the year 1900 fewer than 6 percent of unmarried women in the US had sex; by 2002 approximately 75 percent of unmarried women had sex. This technology-induced shift in moral beliefs and practices prevails over the countervailing effect of traditional moral institutions, such as religion and law. 20 25
- 4 This is just one example among many. Medical and digital technologies have had other significant and disruptive effects on our moral beliefs and practices. For example, research has shown how the invention of mechanical ventilators disrupted moral practices associated with death and dying. With this technology, it became possible to keep someone's body alive after their brain had ceased to function. This led to a new definition of what it meant to die and required the resolution of a new set of moral questions. Is it permissible to switch off the ventilation machine after brain death? Would this be equivalent to killing someone? Can we keep people artificially alive to harvest organs for the purposes of donation? 30 35
- 5 There are no formal estimates of the rate at which society undergoes moral revolutions. Indeed, the term "revolution" can be slightly misleading. Some revolutions may be more akin to evolutions, occurring slowly and gradually and only becoming apparent in retrospect. Others may be sudden and stark. Nevertheless, the fact that moral disruption tends to be associated with more open societies and greater technological innovation suggests that we might expect to see more of it in the future than we did in the past. 40

* *The Homeric epics are poems written by the poet and philosopher Homer.*

- 6 This brings us to the other inquiry prompted by the fact of moral change. What are the ramifications of future moral revolutions for those of us alive right now? Most of us care about the world we are leaving to our children. This idea has found a home among proponents of “longtermism”, which maintains that positively influencing the long-term future of humanity is a key moral priority for our present era. If we concede this, we should also agree that what matters is not just the physical world they will inhabit, but the moral world too. If their moral framework will be radically different from our own, we need to factor that into how we plan for the future and which actions to take now. 45
- 7 There are two clear ways of doing this. The first is to take a progressivist view of the future, to assume that future generations will inhabit a better moral world than our own. They will be more enlightened, tolerant and egalitarian. Our job, in the present, is to accelerate the transition to this more progressive future. A typical progressivist argument might focus on the need to expand the moral circle – the set of individuals or animals to which we owe moral duties and whose existence we treat as a matter of moral concern. The history of morality can, to some extent, be told as a tale of continual outward expansions of the circle of moral concern, from family to nation and, eventually, to all of humanity. Some progressivists argue that we should continue this outward expansion, including sentient machines. 50 55
- 8 Another option is to take a conservative approach, to assume that future morality is likely to be worse than present morality. Proponents of this view can justify their caution by pointing to historical examples in which societies, in the name of progress, got things terribly wrong. For example, the 20th century’s dalliance with authoritarian communism resulted in moral catastrophes like mass imprisonment and draconian thought control. Why risk repeating those mistakes? 60
- 9 The conservative perspective is tempting: there seem to be more ways to get values wrong than right. Those worried about the risks of superintelligent AI argue that the set of value systems that are “friendly” to humans is narrow and fragile. It is all too easy to fall outside that range of values and do things that are contrary to human flourishing. Given the history of moral error and the fragility of values, our job should be to preserve the existing moral order as much as possible, instead of seeking progressive change. Present-day regulation of emerging technologies is often guided by this precautionary ethos. We have our current system of values — freedom, dignity, equality, and so on — and we need to ensure that these values are not undermined by morally disruptive technologies. 65 70
- 10 Progressivism and conservatism are not mutually exclusive, at least not across the full range of moral concerns. We might take a progressive attitude toward certain values, thinking that we need to expand them or cast them off, and a conservative approach to others that seem too precious to risk any loss. But both progressivism and conservatism tend to imply a great deal of certainty about future morality. They assume that we can predict whether the future will get things right or wrong. Such certainty is not warranted. If morality does change radically over time, perhaps we should be humbler about our present moral beliefs and attitudes. 75 80
- 11 One way of embracing this uncertainty is to adopt a stance of open-mindedness toward the future. We can approach the moral future with a degree of curiosity and excitement, neither as zealots promoting change nor reactionaries opposing it, but as tourists willing to experiment with it. There are, of course, limits to what we should experiment with. The Nazis were moral revolutionaries, but not in a good way. We cannot be so open-minded that we lose all sense of right and wrong. There are, perhaps, some values that should remain foundational, but there is a balance to be struck between the extremes of progressivism and conservatism. 85

Candidate's Name: _____

Candidate's Civics Class: _____

Content	/35
Language	/15
Total	/50

Paper 2 (50 marks)

Read the passages in the insert and then answer **all** the questions which follow. Note that up to fifteen marks will be given for the quality and accuracy of your use of English throughout this Paper.

Note: When a question asks for an answer IN YOUR OWN WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE and you select the appropriate material from the passages for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it. Little credit can be given to answers which only copy words or phrases from the passages.

- 1 Why are people today shocked by the 'beliefs and practices of our ancestors' (line 1)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

- 2 Explain the phrase 'greater scepticism' (line 4) and what it suggests about our current morals and beliefs.

[2]

- 3 How does the example of the Greek city-states show that morality is 'much less certain' (line 14)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

- 4 How does technology change 'moral beliefs and practices' (line 20)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

- 5 Suggest **two** reasons for the author's use of the series of questions in paragraph 4.

[2]

- 6 From lines 36-37, explain **two** ways in which the author indicates that there is uncertainty surrounding moral revolutions.

[2]

- 7 What **two** contrasts does the author make between revolutions and evolutions in paragraph 5? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[2]

- Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**, not counting the opening words which are printed below. **Use your own words as far as possible.**

The progressive approach to the future

[illegible]

- 9 What does the author's use of the words 'zealots', 'reactionaries' and 'tourists' (line 83) suggest about the different approaches to morality? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

[3]

10 Danaher discusses moral change in society.

How far do you agree or disagree with the author's observations? Illustrate your arguments with examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society.

[illegible]

[illegible]

End of Paper