

BA EXAMINATION 2008

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

PHILOSOPHY

3.(a) Ethics

Thursday, 8 May 2008:14.30-17.30

Answer THREE questions, at least ONE from EACH section. Candidates taking optional paper (n) Philosophy of Kant may NOT attempt question 17, marked with an asterisk. Avoid overlap in your answers.

SECTION A

1. 'All affirmative first order moral judgements are false, since they include, by virtue of the very meaning of their terms, unwarranted claims to objectivity' (Mackie). Discuss.
2. EITHER (a) 'The consequentialist relies upon a concept of "the best state of affairs" that makes no sense.' Discuss.

OR (b) How does consequentialism threaten to 'alienate' moral agents? Can the objection be met?
3. Is there a morally relevant distinction to be drawn between doing something *in order* to bring about an evil, and doing something *because* an evil will occur but not in order to bring it about?
4. What, if anything, is added by describing someone's responsibility as 'moral'?
5. In what sense, if any, are moral dilemmas genuine dilemmas?
6. How, if at all, might someone's making a promise to do something ever put him or her under an obligation to do it?
7. Can one defensibly maintain that moral properties are like secondary properties?
8. Are there any genuine moral principles or are all moral judgments particular?

9. What end, if any, do the virtues aim at?
10. Does moral relativism undermine the authority of moral claims?
11. Does luck have any place in morality?
12. Is having a practical reason a matter of having a motivation?
13. 'A moral psychology, enriched by evolutionary theory, will explain the origins of morality and also give us reason to reassess our understanding of its nature and content.' Discuss.

SECTION B

14. EITHER (a) Is Plato's account of the social structure of the ideal state consistent with a defensible view of justice?

OR (b) Can Plato allow that an agent can knowingly act wrongly?
15. EITHER (a) Is Aristotle justified in holding, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that the life of practical virtue is less happy than the life of contemplation?

OR (b) Does Aristotle successfully explain weakness of will (*akrasia*)?
16. EITHER (a) What is Aquinas' conception of law, and does it have anything to offer ethical theory?

OR (b) Evaluate Scotus' account of the moral virtues.

OR (c) Why, in Ockham's view, should we obey God? Is his view defensible?
- 17.* EITHER (a) In what respects, for Kant, does acting contrary to one's duty involve contradiction?

OR (b) Is Kant's Formula of Humanity equivalent to his Formula of Universal Law?
18. EITHER (a) 'Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compar'd to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind...' (Hume). What does Hume mean by this claim, and is it defensible?

OR (b) 'Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them' (Hume). Discuss.

19. EITHER (a) Is Mill's full conception of happiness consistent with his claim that by 'happiness' he means 'pleasure, and the absence of pain'?
- OR (b) 'Each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of persons' (Mill).
Discuss.

END OF PAPER