

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

577 0030

MA Examination
for Internal Students

PHILOSOPHY

Ethics

Friday 30 May 2008: 2.30 – 5.30pm

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions. Questions should be chosen from **AT LEAST TWO** sections. Avoid overlap in your answers.

1. **Either** (a) Is a person blameworthy for what she has done only if she could have done otherwise?
Or (b) Can luck make a difference to one's degree of blameworthiness?
2. **Either** (a) Is Mill right to move from the recognition that 'each person's happiness is a good to that person' to the claim that 'the general happiness therefore [is] a good to the aggregate of all persons'?
Or (b) 'Some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others' (Mill). Can a hedonist consistently endorse this claim?
3. **Either** (a) Can utilitarianism give weight to justice, or fairness, in the distribution of goods?
Or (b) 'There is a limit to what any plausible moral theory can demand of us. Utilitarianism surpasses this limit.' Discuss.
4. **Either** (a) Is the idea of good states of affairs any more problematic than, say, the idea of good shoes or good manners?
Or (b) If consequentialism is true, ought we to believe it is false?
5. What is a virtue? Should virtue be the fundamental category of moral theory?
6. Can there be external reasons for action?
7. 'To be necessitated to act by a full understanding of what it means for a person to suffer - that *is* compassion.' Discuss.
8. Must one, under some description, desire to do what one does intentionally?
9. Why does John Mackie think moral philosophy requires an 'error theory'? Is such an error theory tenable?
10. If one has a negative moral attitude towards what a person proposes to do, is one thereby committed to judging that they ought not do it?
11. Are sentimentality or pathos sometimes forms rather than causes of error? If they are, does this have implications for moral philosophy?

12. Why does Hume say that reason alone can never motivate action? Assess his arguments.
13. **Either** (a) What, in Hume's view, transforms a spontaneous sentimental response into a moral judgement? Is he right?
- Or** (b) In Hume's view, can moral judgements be objective?
14. **Either** (a) What is it, on Kant's view, to treat others as ends in themselves? Why should we?
- Or** (b) 'The categorical imperative does not help us fix our ends; it merely constrains our actions. So it is no positive moral guide.' Discuss.
15. Explain and assess Kant's conception of morally good action as autonomous action.

END OF PAPER