

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

577 0030

MA Examination
for Internal Students

PHILOSOPHY

Ethics

Friday 22 May 2009 : 10.00 – 1.00 pm

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions. Avoid overlap in your answers.

1. To what extent does Hume regard reason as motivationally impotent? Present and assess his arguments.
2. 'Hume's naturalistic approach to morality allows him to explain but not vindicate the virtues.' Discuss.
3. Explain and assess Kant's view that all actions of moral worth are motivated by duty.
4. 'Kant misses the point: what's wrong with cruelty is that it is *cruel*, not that it is rationally contradictory.' Discuss.
5. Critically assess Mill's account of utility.
6. What type of grounding does Mill attempt to give to the Principle of Utility? Are his arguments on this matter persuasive?
7. Does the end always justify the means?
8. '[I]f utilitarianism is true... then it is better that people should not believe in utilitarianism. If, on the other hand, it is false, then it is certainly better that people should not believe in it. So, either way, it is better that people should not believe in it' (Williams). Explain and assess this argument.
9. EITHER
 - (a) Can I have a reason to perform an action that will not serve any existing end of mine?OR
 - (b) Can a desire-based theory of reasons successfully account for normative reasons?
10. Discuss the relationship between a desire for x and the judgment that x is good.
11. In what circumstances, if any, is moral relativism true?
12. Discuss the relationship between ethical deliberation and self-knowledge.
13. Can there be moral experts?

14. EITHER

(a) If morality is not 'part of the fabric of the world' must it be 'invented'?

OR

(b) Why does Mackie think we need an 'error theory'? Is he right?

15. 'Sometimes compassion *just is* a necessitated response to a perception of the meaning of the suffering one is confronted by.' Discuss.

16. Should it matter to moral philosophy to distinguish between sentimentality as a cause and sentimentality as a form of the false?

17. Is it defensible to maintain that there is such a thing as 'option moral luck' but no such thing as 'brute moral luck'?

18. Is one blameworthy for what one has done only if one could have done otherwise?

END OF PAPER