

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
M PHIL EXAMINATIONS 2005
for internal students

HUME

Candidates should answer **THREE** of the following questions. Please avoid overlap in your answers.

1. Hume described the problem he had himself raised about the missing shade of blue as 'so particular and singular, that 'tis scarce worth our observing, and does not merit that for it alone we should alter our system' (*Treatise*, I. i. 1). Should he have dismissed it so brusquely?
2. 'The sole end of logic is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas' (*Treatise*, Introduction). How did this account of the nature of logic influence Hume's account of probable reasoning?
3. A recent book on Hume's argument against miracles has the title 'Hume's Abject Failure'. Is this verdict justified?
4. How does Hume reconcile the thought that some objects are invisible to us with his claim that there are minimum visibilia?
5. What is Hume's considered view of the relation between ideas and objects by the end of *Treatise*, I. iv. 2?
6. 'In short there are two principles, which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz, that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences.' (*Treatise*, Appendix) What is the inconsistency Hume laments of here? Is this the fundamental problem with his account of personal identity?
7. How does Hume reconcile the claim that pride is a form of self love with his insistence that the passions are simple impressions?
8. Critically evaluate Hume's notion of sympathy.
9. Does Hume have a theory of the will?
10. 'Although Hume insists on a distinction between convention and promise, he is nonetheless a social contract theorist because all are bound by the conventions of property or allegiance conditionally through self-interest.' Discuss.

TURN OVER

11. 'From all this it follows, that we have no real or universal motive for observing the laws of equity, but the very equity and merit of that observance; and as no action can be equitable or meritorious, where it cannot arise from some separate motive, there is here an evident sophistry and reasoning in a circle.' (*Treatise*, III. ii. 1) What is the circle here, and how does Hume solve it in the case of artificial virtues?
12. 'In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an ought, or an ought not.' (*Treatise*, III. i. 1) What is the failing Hume supposes himself to find in all 'vulgar systems of morality'? Does his own theory avoid it; if so how?

END OF PAPER