SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION
in the Honour Schools including Philosophy

ETHICS

TRINITY TERM 2019

Monday 03 June 2019, 9.30am – 12.30pm

This paper contains twenty questions.

Answer THREE questions.

The paper is split into two sections, section A and section B.

Candidates taking Philosophy paper 128, Practical Ethics, must not answer any question from Section B.

Candidates not taking 128 Practical Ethics may answer freely from both sections.

Do not turn over the page until told that you may do so.
SECTION A

1. EITHER
(a) Does moral realism predict that there should be more agreement about ethics than there is? What does your answer imply about the plausibility of moral realism?

OR
(b) ‘Morality is a useful fiction.’ Do you agree?

2. ‘There is no sensible account of what it is to be a natural property such that anything of great philosophical significance turns on whether moral properties are natural or non-natural.’ Do you agree?

3. Has the non-cognitivist anything plausible to say about what mental state is expressed by utterances of ‘If lying is wrong, then liars will be punished’?

4. What is the best objection to meta-ethical relativism? Does it succeed?

5. ‘The egoist believes that whether some future person will be me is crucial to whether I should care about that person’s well-being. But personal identity is not so important as all that.’ Discuss.

6. ‘Rationality merely requires the efficient satisfaction of whatever it is that we ultimately want.’ Is that so?

7. EITHER
(a) Is motivational externalism committed to viewing good and strong-willed people as in the grip of moral fetishism?

OR
(b) Could moral beliefs be intrinsically motivating?

8. EITHER
(a) ‘There exists no plausible theoretical account of how we could fail to be obligated to bring about the best available outcome whenever doing so is permissible. Therefore, the objection that consequentialism is too demanding is ineffective.’ Discuss.

OR
(b) ‘There exists no plausible theoretical account of how it could be wrong to harm others if we thereby bring about the best available outcome. Therefore, the objection that consequentialism is too permissive is ineffective.’ Discuss.
9. What does it mean to treat humanity always as an end in itself and never as a mere means? Is this a plausible moral requirement?

10. Does contractualism imply that we have no obligations to beings who do not understand what it means to enter into a contract? What does your answer imply about the plausibility of contractualism?

11. Are virtue ethicists committed to the view that those who find it easier to be good are more praiseworthy for being good? What does your answer imply about the plausibility of virtue ethics?

12. ‘Just as resources have diminishing marginal utility, so utility has diminishing marginal moral importance.’ (DEREK PARFIT) Does it?

13. ‘There is no need to postulate rights in addition to obligations.’ Is that correct?

14. Does welfare consist in desire satisfaction?

15. ‘If a neuroscientist implanted electrodes in my brain and thereby induced in me attitudes that deterministically led me to wholeheartedly perform a certain crime, then she, and not I, would be morally responsible for the crime.’ Do you agree? What does your answer imply about the plausibility of compatibilism?

16. ‘Why should it be inappropriate for me to blame you for doing something I have also done? What you did is no less wrong just because I did it too.’ Discuss.

17. Can the study of moral philosophy make you a moral expert? If not, what is the point?

SECTION B

Candidates taking paper 128, Practical Ethics, must not answer any question from this section.

18. ‘If animal suffering mattered in the way that animal rights theorists believe it does, then we would be obligated to alleviate wild animal suffering.’ Discuss.

19. ‘For any possible population containing billions of people, each with a very high quality of life, there is some much larger possible population of people whose lives are barely worth living, such that the existence of the latter population would be better, all else being equal.’ Do you agree?

20. Should there be a market in transplantable organs?