

## HUL 253 Moral Literacy Moral Choices

1 hr

Minor 1

Marks 10

- 1) Here is a thought experiment proposed by the moral philosopher Philippa Foot. This is called a Trolley problem. Imagine that a trolley is coming down the tracks. The hill is steep and the driver has lost control. You are standing beside the tracks and can see the trolley coming down. Further down from where you are standing you notice that five men are doing some construction work on the track without noticing the trolley coming down. The trolley, on its way down could kill all these five people. However, you notice that there is a side-track, off to the right and there is a lever in front of you that you can pull. If you pull the lever you can switch the track and send the trolley off onto the side-track and divert it from its path towards the workmen on the main track below. The lives of the five workmen will be spared. Unfortunately, you notice that further down the side-track, there is another man at work oblivious of the trolley. If you direct the trolley to the side track it will run over and kill this man. (a) Will you pull the lever and save five people at the cost of the life of one man?

Consider another scenario. You are on a bridge overlooking the tracks and have spotted the runaway trolley bearing down on the five workers. Now the only way to stop the trolley is to throw a heavy object in its path. And the only heavy object within reach is a fat man standing next to you. (b) Should you throw the man off the bridge?

How do you justify your response to (a) and (b)? Do you see any difference between your responses? If yes, then how do you account for this difference? If no, then bring out your conception of morality which gives coherence to your responses. You may also argue that your responses differ but there is no coherent conception of morality which can account for this difference.

*(Explore if the views of the thinkers we have discussed can help you in answering this question. You need to justify your claims. Try to imagine possible criticisms of the views under discussion. Respond to such criticisms.)*

- 2) Imagine a young person who has cleared JEE but does not want to study Engineering. Her/his parents are insisting that she/he should pursue engineering. Do you think that Virtue ethics can help her/him to respond to this situation? How?/Why?

(6)

(4)