

HUL 256: CRITICAL THINKING

[Major Examination]

Friday, 30 April 2010

Time: Two Hours

Marks:35

1. If you are an **incompatibilist** about free will, you are either of the view that **(A)** there is *no* free action or free agency, or of the view that **(B)** there are at least *some* actions which the agent freely does.

(a) What are the reasons cited by the respective upholders of positions **A** and **B**?

(b) How would you criticize both these reasons if you were to adopt the **compatibilist** standpoint on the issue of free will?

(Answer in approximately 100 words) 3+5=8 marks

2. If you are a **compatibilist**, you believe that being *free to act* means *being able to do what you will (or want) to do* (**F_w**). If, on the other hand, you are a **libertarian**, you would insist that being *really* a free agent means *being able to will to will to do something* (**F_s**).

(a) What, according to you, is the crucial difference between **F_w** and **F_s**?

(b) Given this difference, what would be your own, argumentatively defended, position on this matter?

(Answer in approximately 150 words) 4+4=8 marks

3. In Deontology or Kantian ethics, for what reason is the following moral imperative

(M) *Do not (i.e. you ought not to) torture an innocent person*

said to be a **categorical** rather than a **hypothetical** imperative?

(Answer in approximately 100 words) 7 Marks

4. There are two people in a boat which is about to sink, and you are in a position to save only one of them. One of them is the ordinary boatman, and the other is a wealthy philanthropist engaged in distributing his wealth for public welfare. Definitely, on utilitarian calculations, the survival of the philanthropist would result in a much greater increase in total human happiness than what would be added to that aggregate happiness by the survival of the boatman. **Utilitarianism** therefore morally justifies your action of saving the philanthropist and thereby letting the boatman die of drowning in the river.

A Kantian criticism of this utilitarian argument would be made by reference to one particular formulation of the Categorical Imperative. Which is that formulation, and what is the anti-utilitarian, deontological *moral* significance of that formula?

(Answer in approximately 100 words) 7 Marks

5. If you are left with the **only** choice of rescuing either your own child from a building that has caught fire, or of rescuing from that burning building a scientist who possesses the most wanted formula of the ultimate cure for cancer, utilitarian moral theory would consider it morally right for you to rescue the scientist, rather than your child, on the ground that the survival of the scientist is far more likely to maximize total human happiness than that of your child. But our normal intuition tells us that you ought to rescue your own child instead.

What is the **anti-utilitarian** moral reason that backs up this ordinary moral intuition?

(Answer in approximately 70-90 words) 5 marks