

Tuesday 02 May 2017

Time: Two Hours

Marks: 50

Answer Question Number 4 and any TWO of the remaining three questions

Answers must be brief and to the point. Unnecessarily long answers will have a negative impact on grading

1. If someone is nasty enough to push you just for fun and you were to fall on a rocky ground that hurts you badly, it is not just that you would *not like* what he did to you (your experience would be one of very bad or unpleasant feelings); you would also *resent* his behaviour.

(a) What is the difference between your unpleasant experience of "not liking" what he does, and your "resenting" what he does? Draw out this difference in such a way that it explains the morality (or *immorality*) of the (nasty) act.

(b) And give your explanation the shape of a moral argument, so that it becomes an example for understanding Thomas Nagel's following assertion:
"Moral argument tries to appeal to a capacity for *impartial motivation* which is supposed to be present in all of us." **16 marks**

2. "It's easy to understand that we might want to have more life, more of the things it contains, so that we see death as a negative evil. But how can the *prospect* of your own non-existence be alarming in a positive way? ... If one thinks about it logically, it seems as though death should be something to be afraid of only if we *will* survive it..." (Nagel).

(a) What is the meaning of death being a "negative evil"? ✓

(b) What paradoxical "logic" of *being afraid of one's own death* is being indicated by Nagel in the assertion above? ✓

(c) Describe another sense of "being afraid of one's own death" that is possibly had by some people, and in a non-puzzling sense — non-puzzling because fearing one's death in this *other* sense is not subject to any logical paradox. ✓ **16 Marks**

Continued

3. "Looking at it *from the outside*, it wouldn't matter if you had never existed. And after you have gone out of existence, it won't matter that you did exist (Nagel)

(a) What is the meaning of looking at one's life "from the outside" and how is it contrasted with one's looking at one's life "from the inside"?

(b) Why is the view from the outside likely, according to Nagel, to yield a sense of meaninglessness about one's own life?

(c) Is the meaning of life a matter of how one finds subjectively, while living one's life, or a matter of a purely objective determination, of whether the world or society (and not the subject who lives that life) considers someone's life to be a valuable one or not?

16 Marks

✓ 4. Ethical Relativism (ER) entails that there is no basis for criticizing the morality of any other culture [that is, *external* criticism or criticism from *without*] but one's own [that is, *internal* criticism or criticism from *within*].

(a) But can the Relativist be consistent with ER in appealing to a moral standard by which it would criticize its own cultural morality? How is internal criticism possible without appealing to external standard, which the critic is not supposed to appeal to?

"Not only do relativists fail to offer a basis for criticizing those who are intolerant, but they cannot rationally criticize anyone who espouses what they might regard as a heinous principle." (Pojman)

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(b) Provide your own explanation of how Ethical Relativism, wedded to the principle of intercultural tolerance, must remain painfully silent about another culture's most unethical principle (like slavery or racism or bride-burning for dowry etc.).

9 + 9 = 18 Marks

ethical
moral standards vary. cult to culture
one can't criticize

eye →