

# **International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad**

**Course Name: Classical Text Readings**

**Course Code: H 201**

**Semester: Monsoon 2025**

## **End-Sem Exam**

**Duration: 03 hrs**

**Max. Marks: 30**

**Date: 29/11/2025**

**Answer the following in 250 words each: (5x2=10)**

*Freedom is the capacity to do otherwise, not the capacity to have done otherwise. No one has that capacity, because you cannot change the past. That sounds like a joke but I mean it. The freedom discovered in reflection is not a theoretical property which can also be seen by scientists considering the agent's deliberations third-personally and from outside. It is from within the deliberative perspective that we see our desires as providing suggestions which we may take or leave. You will say that this means that our freedom is not 'real' only if you have defined the 'real' as what can be identified by scientists looking at things third-personally and from outside.*

1. Elaborate the notion of freedom as discussed by Korsgaard in the aforesaid paragraph.  
Freedom is not a scientific property but as a capacity to deliberate against the impulses and to choose. It is based on the reflective capacity to see oneself objectively and deciding. It cannot be studied like the natural objects in the world.
2. Compare and contrast the psychological egoism *vis-à-vis* virtue ethics in the Aristotle's philosophy.

Psychological egoism is descriptive and argues that humans are motivated by the pleasure. On the other hand, VE argues that human beings are motivated by well-being.

Pleasure machine argument proves the VE point.

**Answer the following in 500 words each: (10x2=20)**

3. Evaluate the theory of altruism in the light of following themes discussed in the text *The Possibility of Altruism*:

- a) Reason and motivation

Reason and motivation: Role of motivation in moral action; how reason is able to motivate us? Reason and justification. Examples.

- b) Subjective and objective reason

Subjective reasoning: The reasoning based on the subjective interests: I am helping others because I feel good or my parents told me to do that. It is an emotive reasoning.

Objective reasoning: The reasoning based on the objective reasoning; There is objective validity in the argument, and the rational component motivates me to act. For e,g, I should not unnecessarily harm others as I don't like to be harmed by someone unnecessarily.

Objective reasoning is impersonal: T.N (Thomas Nagel) should do what will keep him alive. If I believe that I should get out of a burning building, then it is irrelevant whether I am TN or not (example from the text; since it is slightly complicated argument then we should not insist on it; any simple example to explain the subjective and objective reasoning should be suffice).

c) Solipsism: Solipsism is the theory which says me and my ideas alone exist. Nagel shows that solipsism may be threat to the altruism as it says that the other minds doesn't exist. Nagel shows that solipsism is not possible because our moral concerns are based on the others. For example, if somebody puts a leg on my foot then what is the reason for him to remove his leg? This is only because we expect each other to behave in a certain way.

4. Critically examine the Korsgaard's argument for the Moral Identity as a source of normativity in the light of following:

- a) Reflection

- b) Practical identity
- c) Obligation
- d) Normativity

We are reflective beings hence we are able to deliberate on an issue.

Explanation of reflective capacity and freedom.

We are motivated by our practical identity. Define practical identity. Why we get motivated by it. Example.

The practical identity obligates us. The obligation comes from the subscription of certain values in the light of which we define ourselves. Example.

The values are normative in nature; they tell us to how we ought to do.

Conclusion: The source of normativity lies in the reflective capacity of humans by which he can deliberate on the values which form an essential part of his practical identity. Hence, our moral identities are based on reflection as well as the practical identity.

**-Best of Luck-**