

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

EXAMINATION FOR ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES 1
(Semester 1: 2006-2007)

PHILOSOPHY

PH1101E/GEM1004 REASON AND PERSUASION

November/December 2006 - Time Allowed: 2 Hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. This examination paper contains **TWENTY** questions and comprises **TWENTY-TWO** printed pages.
2. There is only one section to the examination. It is multiple-choice, 20 questions, worth 1 point apiece, for a total of 20 points.
3. This is an **OPEN BOOK** Examination.

SECTION I**QUESTIONS 1-20; MULTIPLE CHOICE**

1 point for each right answer, for a total of 20 points. No penalty for wrong answers.

Instructions:

A separate bubble form accompanies this question paper. Enter all information and answers on this form in number 2B pencil (not ink). Enter the module code in Section A. Enter and bubble-shade your matriculation number in Section B very carefully. Follow specific instructions in the instruction box on the bubble form. When filling in Section C, take care to bubble-shade answers only for questions 1-20, even though the form has space for answers to 100 questions.

Passage 1, from Plato's *Euthyphro* (p. 7):

S: What charge, you ask? No mean one, as I see it, for it is no small thing for one so young to have figured out such a serious situation. He says he knows how, and by whom, the young are corrupted. More likely than not the man is wise; so when he sees my dull ignorance corrupting his whole generation, he is provoked to denounce me to the city like a child running to its mother. I think he is the only one of our public men to make a proper start in politics. One's primary concern really ought to be for the young, so they will become good men—just as it's reasonable for a good farmer to tend young sprouts first, looking after the rest later. In just this way Meletus will start off by uprooting weeds—such as myself—that damage the tender shoots of the young, as he says. Later he will obviously turn his attention to older men, thereby making himself a source of bounty and fruitful blessings for the city; a likely fate for anyone who sets out from a starting point as good as this one.

QUESTION 1

In passage 1, Socrates declares Meletus is the only one 'to make a proper start in politics'. Which of the following is the best statement of the reasons Socrates offers for thinking so. (HINT: Yes, Socrates is being ironic. For question purposes, take him at his word.)

- a) Socrates gives no reasons.
- b) Meletus' primary concern is for the young.
- c) Meletus' primary concern is for prosecuting Socrates.
- d) Meletus is a good farmer, and good farmers make good politicians.
- e) Meletus is obviously a source of bounty and fruitful blessing for the city.

Passage 2, from Plato's *Euthyphro*, (pp. 14-15).

S: Try to speak more clearly about what I was asking just now. Because, my friend, you did not teach me adequately when I inquired as to what holiness is. You told me that the thing you happen to be doing at the moment—namely, prosecuting your father for murder—is holy.

E: And what I said was true, Socrates.

S: That may be. But there are lots of other things, Euthyphro, that you would also claim are holy.

E: Yes, there are.

S: Keep in mind, then, that this isn't what I asked you to do—to give me one or two examples out of the many holy actions. Rather, I asked what essential form all holy actions exhibit, in virtue of which they are holy. For you did agree all unholy actions are unholy and all holy actions holy in virtue of some shared form, or don't you remember?

E: I remember.

S: Tell me then what this form is, so that I can pay close attention to it and use it as a paradigm to judge any action, whether committed by you or anyone else: if the action be of the right form, I will declare it holy; otherwise, not.

E: If that is how you want it, Socrates, that is how I will give it to you.

S: That's what I want.

QUESTION 2

In passage 2 Socrates gives a reason why it is reasonable to demand definitions—in this case, a definition of 'piety'. What is the reason he gives?

- a) Euthyphro's examples may indeed be good ones.
- b) It is impossible to offer examples of holy actions.
- c) It is unclear whether Euthyphro's examples are good ones.
- d) Examples will provide a basis for settling other cases that may arise.
- e) Examples won't provide a basis for settling other cases that may arise.

Passage 3, from Plato's *Euthyphro* (p. 17):

S: When hatred and anger arise, Euthyphro, what sorts of disagreements are likely to be the cause? Let's look at it this way. If you and I were to get into an argument about which of two numbers was greater, would this difference of opinion turn us into enemies and make us furious with one another, or would we sit down, count up, and quickly smooth our differences?

E: The latter, certainly.

S: Likewise, if we had a fight about the relative sizes of things, we would quickly end the disagreement by measuring?

E: That's so.

S: And we would employ a scale, I think, if we disagreed about what was heavier and what lighter?

E: Of course.

S: What sorts of things might we argue about that would make us angry and hostile towards one another, if we couldn't reach agreement? Maybe you don't have an immediate answer, but let me suggest something. See whether it isn't these things: justice and injustice, beauty and ugliness, good and bad. Aren't these the very things for causing disputes which, when we are unable to reach any satisfactory agreement, make people become enemies, whenever we do become enemies—whether you and I or everybody else?

S: What about the gods, Euthyphro? If in fact they get into arguments, won't they be about these sorts of things?

E: That must be how it is, Socrates.

QUESTION 3

In making his argument, in passage 3, Socrates assumes or asserts without argument all of the following but one? Which is the one?

- a) People don't become enemies because of disputes about arithmetic.
- b) People don't become enemies because of disputes about the relative sizes of objects.
- c) People can become enemies because of disputes about justice.
- d) The gods must be like mortals, with regard to the question of which things they get in arguments about.
- e) The gods get in arguments about justice.

Passage 4, from J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (p. 286):

The peculiarity of the evidence of mathematical truths is, that all the argument is on one side. There are no objections, and no answers to objections. But on every subject on which difference of opinion is possible, the truth depends on a balance to be struck between two sets of conflicting reasons. Even in natural philosophy, there is always some other explanation possible of the same facts; some geocentric theory instead of heliocentric, some phlogiston instead of oxygen; and it has to be shown why that other theory cannot be the true one: and until this is shown and until we know how it is shown, we do not understand the grounds of our opinion. But when we turn to subjects infinitely more complicated, to morals, religion, politics, social relations, and the business of life, three-fourths of the arguments for every disputed opinion consist in dispelling the appearances which favor some opinion different from it.

QUESTION 4

In passage 4, J.S. Mill could be giving reasons why what Socrates says in passage 3 is true. If so, and if we accept what Mill says in passage 4, all of the following but one would seem to follow. Which one of the following clearly would not follow?

- a) Arguing that a painting is beautiful is mostly a matter of arguing against the view that the painting is not beautiful.
- b) Showing that a painting is beautiful is more complicated than solving a problem in mathematics.
- c) It is possible to have a difference of opinion about whether a painting is beautiful because there are no arguments on either side, so no objections to any given view are possible.
- d) The reason why differences of opinion about size and number are easy to settle is that it is easy to make clear that only one view of the matter is supported by reasons.
- e) Since religion is not like mathematics, it is possible to have a reasonable difference of opinion about whether gods exist, and what they are like.

Passage 5, from Plato's *Meno* (pp. 54-5):

S: Do you want me to answer *à la* Gorgias, this being the mode you would most easily follow?

S: Of course, I want that.

S: Both of you subscribe to Empedocles' theory of effluvia, am I right?

M: Certainly.

S: And so you believe there are channels into which and through which the effluvia make their way?

M: Definitely.

S: And certain effluvia fit certain channels, while others are either too small or too big?

M: That is so.

S: And there is a thing you call 'sight'?

M: Yes.

S: From this, 'comprehend what I state,' as Pindar says: color is an effluvium off of shapes that fits the organ of sight and is perceived.

M: You have answered the question most excellently, Socrates!

S: Perhaps it was delivered in the manner you're used to. And at the same time, I imagine, you could offer an analogous definition for what sound is, and smell, and many other such things.

M: Quite so.

S: This answer is *theatrical*, Meno. Thus it is more to your taste than the one about shape.

M: It is.

S: But it is not *better*, son of Alexidemus.

Passage 6, from Descartes' "Second Meditation" (p. 260):

Let us take, for example, this piece of wax, just come from the comb. It has not yet lost the sweetness of the honey it contained; it retains some of the scent of the flowers from which it was gathered; its color, shape and size are apparent; it is hard, cool and can be readily handled; if you tap it with your knuckle it makes a sound. In short, it has everything which seems necessary to enable a body to be known as distinctly as possible. But see how, even as I speak, I place the wax by the fire: what remained of its taste evaporates, its scent dissipates, its color changes, its shape is lost, its size increases; it becomes liquid and hot; you can hardly touch it, and if you do it no longer makes a sound.

QUESTION 5

Assuming the 'effluvium' theory put forward in passage 5 is correct, all of the following—except one—are plausible hypotheses concerning the changes to the wax Descartes describes in passage 6.

- a) Heat may alter the shapes of effluvia.
- b) Heat may not alter the shapes of effluvia.
- c) Heat may inhibit the release of certain effluvia.
- d) Heat may catalyze the release of certain effluvia.
- e) If heat affects the shape and size of wax, shape and size must be defined in terms of effluvia.

Passage 7, from a history of skepticism [this passage was quoted in lecture]:

[In 1628] A large number of the leading savants of the time ... were there to hear a talk by a strange chemist, Chandoux, an expert on base metals, who was executed in 1631 for counterfeiting currency ... Whatever Chandoux said, whether it was Pyrrhonic or materialistic, almost everyone present applauded his views, except Descartes. Cardinal Berulle ... noticed this and asked what Descartes thought of the speech 'which had seemed so lovely to the audience.' ... [Descartes attacked] the fact that the speaker and the audience were willing to accept probability as the standard of truth, for if this were the case, falsehoods might actually be taken as truths. To show this, Descartes took some examples of supposedly incontestable truths, and by some arguments even more probable than Chandoux, proved that they were false. Next, he took what was alleged to be a most evident falsehood, and by probable argument made it appear to be a plausible truth.

QUESTION 6

In passage 5, Socrates objects to the effluvium theory on the grounds that it is 'theatrical'. Assuming he is using 'theatrical' as a label for the sorts of faults Descartes thinks he sees in Chandoux's 'lovely' argument, which of the following is the best statement of the problem with the effluvium theory, according to Socrates?

- a) It is not mathematical.
- b) It is not plausible.
- c) It is not probable.
- d) It is not true.
- e) It is not certain.

Passage 8, from Plato's *Meno* (pp. 58-9):

S: Well then, those who you say want bad things, while believing that bad things harm the one who possesses them—do they actually know they will be harmed by them?

M: They must.

S: And don't they think those who are harmed are wretched to the extent that they are harmed?

M: That seems unavoidable.

S: And don't they think those who are wretched are miserable?

M: I think so.

S: Is there anyone who wants to be wretched and miserable?

M: I don't think so, Socrates.

S: Then no one wants what is bad, Meno—unless he wants to be in such a state. For what else is misery, if not wishing for bad things and having your wish come true?

M: What you are saying is probably true, Socrates. No one really wants what is bad.

S: Weren't you saying just now that virtue is the desire for good things, and the power to acquire them?

M: Yes, I was.

S: It seems everyone satisfies the 'desire for' part of this definition, and no one is better than anyone else in this respect.

QUESTION 7

Suppose Socrates granted, additionally, that if there *were* anyone who wanted bad things, they would not be virtuous. He would then be committed to which of the following? Satisfaction of the 'desire for' part of the definition may be:

- a) neither necessary nor sufficient for virtue.
- b) necessary but not sufficient for virtue.
- c) not necessary but sufficient for virtue.
- d) sufficient but not necessary for virtue.
- e) sufficient if necessary for virtue.

Passage 9, from Plato's *Meno* [just a bit further on after passage 8, pp. 60-1]:

S: And by good things you mean, for example, health and wealth?

M: I also mean amassing plenty of gold and silver—and winning honors and public office.

S: So, by 'good things' you don't mean other sorts of things than these?

M: No, I mean all things of this kind.

S: Very well. According to Meno—hereditary guest friend of the Great King—virtue is getting your hands on the cash. Do you qualify this definition, Meno, with the words 'justly' and 'piously'? Or is it all the same to you—virtue either way—if you make your fortune unjustly?

M: Certainly not, Socrates.

S: You would call it evil, then?

M: That I would.

S: It seems, then, that the getting of gold must go along with justice or moderation or piety or some other element of virtue; if it does not, it won't be virtue, no matter what good things are obtained.

M: Yes. How could there be virtue if these elements were missing?

S: Then failing to acquire gold and silver, whether for oneself or for another, if these other elements were missing from the situation, would be a case of virtue?

M: So it seems.

S: It follows that getting hold of the goods will not be virtue any more so than failing to do so is.

QUESTION 8

In passage 9, Socrates is claiming which of the following concerning the 'getting the goods' part of Meno's proposed definition of 'virtue'. Satisfaction of the 'getting the goods' condition may be:

- a) neither necessary nor sufficient for virtue.
- b) necessary but not sufficient for virtue.
- c) not necessary but sufficient for virtue.
- d) sufficient but not necessary for virtue.
- e) sufficient if necessary for virtue.

Passage 10, from Plato's *Meno* (pp. 82-3):

S: Let us investigate whether it is teachable or not by means of a hypothesis, like so: of all the sorts of things existing in the soul, what sort would virtue have to be, in order to be teachable or not? First of all, if it is something like or unlike knowledge, can it be taught, or not—or rather, as we have been putting it, can it be recollected, or not? Let's not bother to disagree about which of the two names we employ. Here's the thing: can it be taught? Or isn't it completely obvious to everyone that the one and only thing a man can be taught is knowledge?

M: That would be my view.

S: Then if virtue *is* a kind of knowledge, it is clear that it could be taught.

M: Of course.

QUESTION 9

In passage 10 Socrates makes an inference about the nature of virtue that is formally invalid. All of the following, except one, are examples of similarly invalid inferences.

- a) If only diamonds can be kept in this safe, then if *this* is a diamond, it must be kept in the safe.
- b) If only four-sided figures can be squares, then if *this* has four sides, it must be a square.
- c) If only black cats are invisible at night, then if *this* is invisible at night, it must be a black cat.
- d) If only P's are Q's, then if *this* is a P, it must also be a Q.
- e) If only Q's are P's, then if *this* is a Q, it must also be a P.

Passage 11, from Plato's *Republic*, Book I, (pp. 168-70)

Cephalus: Men my age flock together; we are birds of a feather, as the proverb says; and at our meetings most of my friends weep and moan—they long for the pleasures of youth, and reminisce about sex and drinking and feasting and everything else like that. They feel annoyed, as if they have been robbed of something great, and say, 'life used to be good; now it's not worth living.' Some complain about old people being disrespected in their own households; they sing a sad song blaming age for being the cause of all their woes. But to me, Socrates, these whiners put the blame in the wrong place. If old age really caused all these evils, I—and every single other old man, for that matter—would feel the way they do. But I don't, and neither do others I have known.

QUESTION 10

All of the following statements about passage 11 are false, except one. Which is the one?

- a) Cephalus is offering himself as a typical example of what an old man is like.
- b) Cephalus is assuming that if A causes B, A will always cause B.
- c) Cephalus argues that 'life used to be good; now it's not worth living.'
- d) Cephalus does not offer any reason why some men find old age miserable.
- e) Cephalus denies that old age can be miserable.

Passage 12, from Plato's *Republic*, Book I, (p. 212):

Thrasymachus: And each government establishes laws with an eye to its own advantage—the democracy making democratic laws and the tyranny tyrannical ones, and so forth. And these laws, which are made by them for their advantage, are the justice that they hand down to their subjects. And whoever breaks these laws is punished as an unjust lawbreaker. And that, my good man, is what I mean when I say that in all states there is the same principle of justice: namely, the advantage of the established government. And as the government must be supposed to have power, the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn is that everywhere you go there is but one principle of justice: namely, the advantage of the stronger.

Passage 13, from Plato's *Republic*, Book I (p. 222-4):

Thrasymachus: You don't even realize that justice and the just are literally this: another's advantage—the advantage of the ruler and the stronger, and a source of harm for the subject or servant ... You'll see what I mean most easily if we turn to that highest form of injustice—the case in which the criminal is the happiest man on earth, and his victims, and those who refuse to commit crimes are the most miserable. In a word, I speak of tyranny, when, by force or fraud, property is stolen from its owners not little by little but wholesale. Everything goes into one bag: sacred things as well as profane—private and public. Were someone to commit these acts on a petty scale and fail to get away with it, he would be severely punished and regarded with the worst kind of contempt. Those who commit such partial forms of injustice are called temple robbers, kidnappers, burglars, con-men and thieves. But if men will go to the additional trouble of relieving their victims of their freedom as well as their property—enslaving the citizens—why, then, far from being called these insulting names they are deemed happy and blessed, not only by their fellow-citizens, but by all who hear that they have ascended to the very pinnacle of perfect injustice. For it is not the fear of *doing* wrong, but of *being a victim* of it, that calls forth people's denunciations of injustice. Thus, Socrates, injustice, committed on a grand scale, is a stronger, freer, more masterful thing than justice, and—as I declared from the very start—justice is the advantage of the stronger, whereas injustice is a man's own profit and interest.

QUESTION 11

All of the following are true of passages 12 and 13 except one. Which is the one?

- a) In passage 12, 'justice' is defined as 'the advantage of the stronger' but in passage 13 it is argued that it is to the advantage of the stronger to commit injustice on a grand scale.
- b) Passage 12 treats the meaning of 'justice' as a function of the types of laws people make.
- c) Passage 13 says that tyrants will be called 'just' yet will in fact be unjust.
- d) Passage 13 is offered as an explanation of why the account of justice offered in passage 12 is right.
- e) Passage 13 is offered as an explanation of why the account of justice offered in passage 12 is wrong.

Passage 14, from a commentary on Plato's *Republic*, Book I—on the material in passages 12 and 13:

In the course of pointing out that a shepherd's real concern is not for the sheep's welfare but for their sale as meat, Thrasymachus digressed to remind Socrates of a consequence of his original definition: justice profits not the just, but the unjust who take advantage of them (343c). This point seized his attention, and he directed the rest of his speech to illustrate the profitability of unjust behavior.

Note that this is not the position he began with. In calling justice unprofitable, Thrasymachus is no longer redefining the term, but accepting the traditional *meaning* of justice and denying its *value*. He represents immoralism now—the view that one ought to traduce moral principles—rather than the naturalistic perspective that had led him to call justice the advantage of the stronger. This does not mean that Thrasymachus has let himself be confused into misunderstanding his own position. Rather, he has seized on a single implication of his original position. Assuming one is not in the position of governing, the immoralist view follows from the naturalistic description. (If one is the ruler, then by the original definition justice is profitable. Here Thrasymachus has changed his view, since he calls the tyrant unjust at 344a-c. But since the discussion is not focused on rulers, this change does not affect it.) Thrasymachus has decided to clarify and defend one implication of his definition, because that alone will still let him unseat Socrates' simple-minded faith in the value of justice.

QUESTION 12

According to the author of passage 14, what is the implication of his definition of justice that Thrasymachus is concerned to clarify and defend, per the underlined portion of the passage? (HINT: Some terms in passage 14 may be unfamiliar. Never mind if you don't know what 'the naturalistic perspective' is—although you are welcome to make an educated guess. Yes, I *know* the passage is hard. That's why I chose it.)

- a) Unjust behavior is profitable.
- b) Unjust behavior is unprofitable.
- c) Justice is another's advantage.
- d) 'Justice' has been redefined.
- e) 'Justice' does not mean what we conventionally assume.

Passage 15, from Descartes' "First Meditation"

Because reason now teaches me that I should be just as careful about withholding assent from uncertain, doubtful things as from patent falsehoods, the least bit of doubt on any point will suffice for complete rejection. And for this it will not be necessary to examine each article individually, which would be an endless task. Once the foundation of a building is undermined, everything above goes with it. So I will go straight for the basic principles underlying all my former beliefs. (p. 249-50)

QUESTION 13

In passage 15, Descartes declares that 'reason teaches him' to take certain precautions concerning his beliefs. Which of the following is the clearest case of someone taking analogous precautions?

- a) To avoid accepting any counterfeits, the cashier authenticates each bill customers present to pay for their purchases.
- b) A medical researcher tests new medicine on rats before giving it to human subjects. She hereby seeks to avoid any potential harm to humans.
- c) A manufacturer determines it is possible some laptop batteries might dangerously overheat. All laptops containing any such batteries are recalled as defective.
- d) A judge notices he has been handing out verdicts on the basis of his feelings about each individual plaintiff. He resolves to find some underlying principle that will justify his feelings.
- e) A priest declares that the fact that there is always room for doubt about religious beliefs means it is always necessary to have faith.

Passage 16, from Descartes' "First Meditation":

Yet although the senses sometimes deceive us with respect to barely perceivable and distant objects, one finds that concerning many other matters no reasonable doubt is possible, even though these things are known through the senses: for example, that I am here, sitting by the fire, wearing a dressing-gown, holding this piece of paper in my hand, and other things of a similar nature. And how could it be denied that these are my hands, or that this is my body? Unless, perhaps, I were to compare myself to madmen, whose brains are so disordered and clouded by chronic vapors of bile that they staunchly maintain they are kings when they are paupers; that they are dressed in purple and gold when they are naked; or that they have jugs for heads, or bodies made of glass. But these are the insane, and I would think myself just as far gone if I took them as my model, and conducted my life accordingly.

What a brilliant argument! As if I were not a man in the habit of sleeping at night and, while asleep, having the same sorts of experiences madmen do while awake—indeed, sometimes even less probable ones. And how often, asleep at night, have I become convinced of quite ordinary things—that I am here in my dressing-gown, seated by the fire—when in fact I am lying undressed in bed! (p. 250)

QUESTION 14

All of the following are plausible statements about passage 16. Which one is not plausible?

- a) Descartes raises the possibility that he might be mad to provide a reason to doubt statements like 'here I am, by the fire, wearing a dressing-gown'.
- b) Descartes thinks 'I would be insane to think myself insane' is a brilliant argument.
- c) Descartes argues that there are no matters concerning which the senses can be completely trusted.
- d) Descartes argues that, in effect, dreaming is like madness.
- e) Descartes argues that he does not know the truth of 'I am here in my dressing gown, seated by the fire' because he may be dreaming.

QUESTION 15

In the “Second Meditation”, Descartes find a proposition that he thinks resists the extreme skeptical doubts of the “First Meditation”. Which of the following is that proposition?

- a) I will proceed in this way until I come upon something certain; or, at the very least, until I determine for certain that there is no certainty. (p. 255)
- b) Nothing is certain. (p. 255)
- c) There is absolutely nothing in the world, no sky, no earth, no minds, no bodies. (p. 256)
- d) I am, I exist. (p. 256)
- e) But what am I, then? A thing that thinks. What is that? A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions. (p. 259)

Passage 17, from Descartes’ “Second Meditation” (continuing on from possible answer e, in question 15):

This is no inconsiderable catalogue, if everything on it belongs to me. But does it? Is it not one and the same ‘I’ who now doubts almost everything, who nevertheless understands some things, who affirms this one thing to be true, who denies everything else, wants to know more, is unwilling to be deceived, imagines many things—if only involuntarily—and is aware of many things which apparently come by way of the senses? Are not all these things just as true as the fact that I exist, even if I am asleep all the while, and even if he who created me is doing all he can to deceive me? What one of all these activities is distinct from my thinking? Which of them can be said to be separate from myself? The fact that it is I who am doubting and understanding and willing is so self-evident that I see no way of making it any clearer. But it is also the case that the ‘I’ who imagines is the same ‘I’. For even if, as I have supposed, none of the objects of imagination are real, the power of imagination really exists and takes its place among my thoughts. Lastly, it is also the same ‘I’ who has sensory perceptions—that is, who is aware of corporeal things, as it were, through the senses. For example, I am now seeing light, hearing a noise, feeling heat. But I am asleep, so all this is false. All the same, I certainly seem to see, to hear, and to be warmed. This cannot be false; what is called ‘having a sensory perception’ is strictly just this, and in this restricted sense of the term it is simply thinking.

QUESTION 16

A critic of Descartes, G.C. Lichtenberg, argued that passage 17 assumes too much. By the terms of his method of doubt, Descartes is entitled only to conclude, 'there is thinking going on'. That is, the immediate existence of individual mental events is self-evident, but the existence of the unitary 'I' that has the thoughts, doubts, so forth, is not self-evident. If Lichtenberg is right, which of the following propositions from passage 16 that Descartes claims to know are true are not in fact known by him to be true?

- a) The fact that it is I who am doubting and understanding and willing is so self-evident that I see no way of making it any clearer.
- b) It is also the case that the 'I' who imagines is the same 'I'.
- c) It is also the same 'I' who has sensory perceptions—that is, who is aware of corporeal things, as it were, through the senses.
- d) I am now seeing light, hearing a noise, feeling heat.
- e) All of a-d.

Passage 18, from J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (p. 271):

The effect of custom, in preventing any misgiving respecting the rules of conduct which mankind impose on one another, is all the more complete because the subject is one on which it is not generally considered necessary that reasons should be given, either by one person to others, or by each to himself. People are accustomed to believe and have been encouraged in the belief by some who aspire to the character of philosophers, that their feelings, on subjects of this nature, are better than reasons, and render reasons unnecessary. The practical principle which guides them to their opinions on the regulation of human conduct, is the feeling in each person's mind that everybody should be required to act as he, and those with whom he sympathizes, would like them to act. No one, indeed, acknowledges to himself that his standard of judgment is his own liking; but an opinion on a point of conduct, not supported by reasons, can only count as one person's preference.

QUESTION 17

In passage 18, Mill attributes a view to some unnamed persons "who aspire to the character of philosophers." Assuming that Mill has characterized their position accurately, these would-be philosophers would probably dispute all but one of the following statements from passage 18.

- a) The effect of custom, in preventing any misgiving respecting the rules of conduct which mankind impose on one another, is all the more complete because the subject is one on which it is not generally considered necessary that reasons should be given.
- b) Feelings are better guides than reasons, where questions of right conduct are concerned.
- c) Everybody should be required to act as each individual, and those with whom he sympathizes, would like them to act.
- d) Everybody's standard of judgment is his own liking.
- e) An opinion on a point of conduct, not supported by reasons, counts as only one person's preference.

Passage 19, from J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (p. 278):

The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, or mental or spiritual. Mankind are greater gainers by suffering each other to live as seems good to themselves, than by compelling each to live as seems good to the rest.

Though this doctrine is anything but new, and, to some persons, may have the air of a truism, there is no doctrine which stands more directly opposed to the general tendency of existing opinion and practice. Society has expended fully as much effort in the attempt (according to its lights) to compel people to conform to its notions of personal, as of social excellence.

QUESTION 18

All of the following are true statements about passage 18 except one. Which is the one?

- a) Mill asserts that the reason why freedom is good is that it is each individual's right to be free.
- b) Mill asserts that the reason why freedom is good is that freedom for individuals produces greater good for everyone.
- c) Mill asserts that his doctrine of liberty is not new.
- d) Mill asserts that, at the level of what people say, his principle has solid support.
- e) Mill asserts that, at the level of what people do, his principle has weak support.

Passage 20, from J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (p. 283):

Unfortunately for the good sense of mankind, the fact of their fallibility is far from carrying the weight in their practical judgment, which is always allowed to it in theory; for while every one well knows himself to be fallible, few think it necessary to take any precautions against their own fallibility, or admit the supposition that any opinion of which they feel very certain, may be one of the examples of the error to which they acknowledge themselves to be liable. Absolute princes, or others who are accustomed to unlimited deference, usually feel this complete confidence in their own opinions on nearly all subjects. People more happily situated, who sometimes hear their opinions disputed, and are not wholly unused to be set right when they are wrong, place the same unbounded reliance only on such of their opinions as are shared by all who surround them, or to whom they habitually defer: for in proportion to a man's want of confidence in his own solitary judgment, does he usually repose, with implicit trust, on the infallibility of "the world" in general. And the world, to each individual, means the part of it with which he comes in contact; his

party, his sect, his church, his class of society: the man may be called, by comparison, almost liberal and largeminded to whom it means anything so comprehensive as his own country or his own age. Nor is his faith in this collective authority at all shaken by his being aware that other ages, countries, sects, churches, classes, and parties have thought, and even now think, the exact reverse. He devolves upon his own world the responsibility of being in the right against the dissentient worlds of other people; and it never troubles him that mere accident has decided which of these numerous worlds is the object of his reliance, and that the same causes which make him a Churchman in London, would have made him a Buddhist or a Confucian in Peking. Yet it is as evident in itself as any amount of argument can make it, that ages are no more infallible than individuals; every age having held many opinions which subsequent ages have deemed not only false but absurd; and it is as certain that many opinions, now general, will be rejected by future ages, as it is that many, once general, are rejected by the present.

QUESTION 19

Which of the following is the best statement of the conclusion of the main argument Mill makes, in passage 20:

- a) The deference to their opinions absolute princes enjoy is not a good thing, since it is healthy to be disagreed with sometimes.
- b) Most people are more fortunate than absolute princes, in that they have to endure people disagreeing with them sometimes.
- c) Most people put implicit trust in whatever opinions all those in 'the world'—their world—shares.
- d) The trouble with putting implicit trust in whatever opinions everyone in 'the world'—your world—shares is that it makes you act as though you are infallible, even though you admit you are not.
- e) Ages are no more infallible than individuals and many opinions 'everyone' now holds are bound to be regarded as absurd in the future.

Passage 21, from J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (p. 293):

He who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself, employs all his faculties. He must use observation to see, reasoning and judgment to foresee, activity to gather materials for decision, discrimination to decide, and when he has decided, firmness and self-control to hold to his deliberate decision. And these qualities he requires and exercises exactly in proportion as the part of his conduct which he determines according to his own judgment and feelings is a large one. It is possible that he might be guided in some good path, and kept out of harm's way, without any of these things. But what will be his comparative worth as a human being? It really is of importance, not only what men do, but also what manner of men they are that do it. Among the works of man, which human life is rightly employed in perfecting and beautifying, the first in importance surely is man himself. Supposing it were possible to get houses built, corn grown, battles fought, causes tried, and even churches erected and prayers said, by machinery—by automatons in human form—it would be a considerable loss to exchange for these automatons even the men and women who at present inhabit the more civilized parts of the world, and who assuredly are but starved specimens of what nature can and will produce. Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing.

QUESTION 20

What is the point of the 'automatons in human form' thought-experiment—i.e. the underlined portion of passage 21?

- a) Mill wants us to see that, since it would be a bad idea to have robots live our lives for us, it would be a bad idea to think and act like robots.
- b) Mill wants us to see that, since it would be a bad idea to have robots live our lives for us, even though robots might be guided on good paths and kept out of harm's way, merely being guided onto a good path and kept out of harm's way is not sufficient for a good life.
- c) Mill wants us to see the danger that, if people allow themselves to be treated as robots, they may find their jobs taken by robots.
- d) Mill wants us to see that, ideally, trees are better than robots.
- e) Both a) and b).

END OF PAPER