

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

BA EXAMINATION 2007

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by combined students

PHILOSOPHY

Optional subject (q): The Philosophies of Frege, Russell, and the early and late Wittgenstein

Answer THREE questions. Candidates must answer on at least TWO philosophers. (The early and late Wittgenstein count as two philosophers.) Avoid overlap in your answers.

A: Frege

1. Is Frege's conception of concepts as functions from objects to truth-values an improvement on the Aristotelian conception of predication?
2. 'The Number which belongs to the concept F is the extension of the concept "equal to the concept F "' (*Foundations of Arithmetic*, §72). Sketch and evaluate the course of argument that led Frege to this definition.
3. By considering the argument of 'Function and Concept', or otherwise, discuss the connections between Frege's philosophy of mathematics and his philosophy of language.
4. What is the 'Julius Caesar problem'? Assess its significance.
5. Why does Frege hold that the sense of a sentence is the Thought it expresses? Are the reasons he gives compelling?

B: Russell

6. How did Russell distinguish between terms, things and concepts in *The Principles of Mathematics*? Did marking these distinctions enable Russell to provide a satisfactory account of the unity of the proposition?

TURN OVER

7. What was the significance of 'On Denoting' for the development of Russell's philosophy?
8. 'Every proposition which we can understand must be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted.' (Russell, *Problems of Philosophy*). Discuss.
9. Explain the evolution of Russell's multiple relation theory of belief. Did the resulting theory provide a convincing account of the ability of a thinking subject to grasp a proposition?
10. Russell argued (i) that there are universals because the relation of resemblance cannot be eliminated; and (ii) that there are particulars because it is logically possible for indiscernible things to be numerically different. Did Russell succeed in showing the necessity of introducing both particulars and universals into our ontology?

C: Early Wittgenstein

11. Why does Wittgenstein claim at the beginning of the *Tractatus* that it is facts and not things that make up everything that is the case? Is he right?
12. Expound and assess Wittgenstein's 'Picture Theory' of meaning.
13. EITHER (a) How convincing is Wittgenstein's argument in the *Tractatus* that there must be unchanging objects?

OR (b) How convincing is Wittgenstein's argument in the *Tractatus* that there must be simple objects?
14. Explain and assess the account of logical necessity presented in the *Tractatus*.
15. 'Propositions of the form "A believes that *p*" show that Wittgenstein was wrong to claim, as he did in the *Tractatus*, that every proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions.' Discuss.
16. EITHER (a) The 'resolute' reading of the *Tractatus* insists that everything written there is strictly nonsense. How cogent is the 'resolute' reading?

OR (b) 'The doctrines of the *Tractatus* contain the seeds of their own destruction.' Discuss.

TURN OVER

D: Late Wittgenstein

17. Does Wittgenstein present a cogent argument against the claim that meaning is a mental process?
18. '[T]here is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call 'obeying the rule' and 'going against it' in actual cases' (*Philosophical Investigations* §202). To what apparent difficulty is Wittgenstein responding here? Is his response convincing?
19. How, according to the *Investigations*, is the sentence 'I am in pain' used? Is the account correct?
20. 'An adequate response to scepticism must show that I can know I have hands. But Wittgenstein, in *On Certainty*, denies I can know this. Hence, Wittgenstein does not present an adequate response to scepticism.' Discuss
21. 'Wittgenstein's view of mathematical proof is incompatible with proof being a means of our discovering new mathematical facts. That consequence is a *reductio ad absurdum*.' Discuss.

END OF PAPER