

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

BA EXAMINATION 2007

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

PHILOSOPHY

4. Greek Philosophy from the beginnings to Aristotle

Answer THREE questions, at least TWO from SECTION B. Avoid overlap in your answers.

SECTION A

1. Did Heraclitus deny the principle of non-contradiction?
2. Is Parmenides right to think that whatever can be thought must be?
3. Aristotle says that Zeno's Dichotomy (or Stadium) argument can be handled by pointing out that time is divisible in just the same way as spatial magnitude. How successful is this response?
4. According to Anaxagoras, 'All things are present in everything'. Is this a coherent claim?
5. To what extent does Democritus' atomism commit him to scepticism?

SECTION B

6. Comment critically on the following passage:

When I heard of this reply I asked myself: 'Whatever does the god mean? What is his riddle? I am very conscious that I am not wise at all; what then does he mean by saying that I am the wisest? For surely he does not lie; it is not legitimate for him to do so.' For a long time I was at a loss as to his meaning; then I very reluctantly turned to some such investigation as this; I went to one of those reputed wise, thinking that

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there if anywhere I could refute the oracle and say to it: 'This man is wiser than I, but you said I was.' Then, when I examined this man – there is no need for me to tell you his name, he was one of our public men – my experience was something like this: I thought that he appeared wise to many people and especially to himself, but he was not. As a result, he came to dislike me, and so did many of the bystanders. So I withdrew and thought to myself: 'I am wiser than this man; it is likely that neither of us knows anything worthwhile, but he thinks he knows something when he does not, whereas when I do not know, neither do I think I know; so I am likely to be wiser than he to this small extent, that I do not think I know what I do not know.' (*Apology* 21b-d).

7. 'True belief is an intermediate state between knowledge and ignorance, so Meno's paradox fails'. Discuss.
8. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates sets out a 'simple-minded' view that things are beautiful because they share in the Beautiful, and are big by sharing in Bigness. What sense does it make to cite such things as causes?
9. In *Republic* V, does Socrates succeed in showing that only philosophers possess knowledge?
10. Can Platonic Forms survive the criticisms made of them in the *Parmenides*?
11. EITHER (a) What is meant in the *Timaeus* by the statement that intelligence persuades necessity? What problems does it raise, and how might they be overcome?

OR (b) Outline and critically discuss the most distinctive features of Plato's conception of God, as presented in the *Timaeus*
12. EITHER (a) In the *Theaetetus*, does Socrates succeed in showing that relativism is self-refuting?

OR (b) How puzzling are the *Theaetetus* puzzles about the possibility of false belief?
13. In the *Sophist*, how does Plato prove that some Kinds combine and some do not? What is proved in proving that Kinds combine?
14. Comment critically on the following passage:

A difficulty presents itself: why should not nature work, not for the sake of something, nor because it is better so, but just as the sky rains, not in order to make the corn grow,

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but of necessity? What is drawn up must cool, and what has been cooled must become water and descend, the result of this being that the corn grows. Similarly if a man's crop is spoiled on the threshing-floor, the rain did not fall for the sake of this - in order that the crop might be spoiled - but that result just followed. Why then should it not be the same with the parts in nature, e.g. that our teeth should come up *of necessity* - the front teeth sharp, fitted for tearing, the molars broad and useful for grinding down the food - since they did not arise for this end, but it was merely a coincident result; and so with all other parts in which we suppose that there is purpose? Wherever then all the parts came about just as they would have been if they had come to be for an end, such things survived, being organized spontaneously in a fitting way; whereas those which grew otherwise perished and continue to perish, as Empedocles says his 'man-faced ox-progeny' did.

Such are the arguments (and others of this kind) which may cause difficulty on this point. Yet it is impossible that this should be the true view. For teeth and all other natural things either invariably or normally come about in a given way; but of not one of the results of chance or spontaneity is this true. We do not ascribe to chance or mere coincidence the frequency of rain in winter but frequent rain in summer we do; nor heat in the dog-days, but only if we have it in winter. If then, it is agreed that these things are either the result of coincidence or for an end, and these cannot be the result of coincidence or spontaneity, it follows that they must be for an end; and that such things are all due to nature even the champions of the theory which is before us would agree. Therefore action for an end is present in things which come to be and are by nature. (*Physics* II.8)

15. Critically discuss the role played by the unmoved mover in Aristotle's account of change.
16. In *Posterior Analytics* II.19, Aristotle says that we use sensation to get hold of first principles. What are these 'first principles' and how could sensation allow us to get hold of them?
17. EITHER (a) Aristotle's position on the relation between soul and body is neither materialist nor dualist'. – Discuss.

OR (b) Is it fair to say that Aristotle holds rational thought to depend on nothing bodily or material?
18. EITHER (a) What are Aristotle's reasons for saying, in *Metaphysics Z*, that form is primary substance?

OR (b) In the *Categories*, what makes primary substance primary?
19. How can Aristotle maintain that first philosophy examines being in general if its subject is god?

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20. Does Aristotle believe that there can be true statements about what will happen in the future? Is his view correct?

END OF PAPER