

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

BA EXAMINATION 2001

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

PHILOSOPHY

**MODERN PHILOSOPHY FROM BACON AND DESCARTES TO KANT**

Answer THREE questions, at least ONE from SECTION A and ONE from SECTION B. Candidates taking optional paper (1) Philosophy of Kant may NOT attempt questions from SECTION C, marked with an asterisk.

SECTION A

1. Discuss critically Descartes' proof that he is essentially a thinking thing.
2. Is there any irremediable circularity in Descartes' retrieval of knowledge subsequent to the doubts of Meditation I?
3. 'And I must not imagine that I do not apprehend the infinite by a true idea, but only by the negation of the finite, in the same way that I comprehend repose and darkness by the negation of motion and light' (Third Meditation). Assess Descartes' use of this thought in his proof in the Third Meditation.
4. Does Spinoza show convincingly that 'except God no substance can be or be conceived' (Ethics Bk. I Prop. 14)?
5. Does Spinoza's understanding of an attribute enable him to explain how there may be more attributes than our intellects can comprehend?
6. Does Spinoza have a single and consistent answer to the question of what it is in the attribute of extension that corresponds to the idea of the body?
7. 'If the Principle of Sufficient Reason is necessary, it is superfluous; if it is contingent, it is useless.' How should Leibniz respond to this observation?
8. Can Leibniz consistently maintain that God is inclined but not necessitated in his choices?

9. Has Leibniz any satisfactory way of distinguishing composite substances from phenomena bene fundata?

TURN OVER

## SECTION B

10. 'Locke's account of personal identity is circular and contradictory.' Can Locke's view be defended against these criticisms?

11. Does Locke's empiricism show that appeal to the innateness of some of our ideas is not needed?

12. Does Locke have good reason to hold that our complex ideas of substances are inevitably inadequate?

13. Does Berkeley's immaterialism leave room for the belief that two people can see the same apple? If so, how? If not, why not?

14. 'If time be taken, exclusive of all those particular actions and ideas that diversify the day, merely for the continuation of existence or duration in abstract, then it will perhaps gravel even a philosopher to comprehend it.' (Principles, §97) Is there justice in Berkeley's observation?

15. Does Berkeley have any right to his claim that the self is a substance?

16. 'Since Hume cannot adequately distinguish between impressions and ideas, he is in no position to claim that every simple idea must be preceded by a corresponding impression.' Is this a fair criticism of Hume's philosophy?

17. Expound and assess Hume's account of our belief in the existence of body.

18. Does Hume's puzzlement about the self stem from the general inadequacy of his understanding of identity?

## SECTION C

\*19. Explain what Kant means in claiming that space is a pure a priori intuition. Does he have any

argument that justifies that contention?

\*20. Does Kant's Copernican Revolution solve any of the problems it was intended to address?

\*21. What is a pure concept of the understanding? Why does Kant believe that there are any?

\*22. Can Kant consistently hold that there are things-in-themselves?

END OF PAPER