

**UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

**BA EXAMINATION 2007**

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

**PHILOSOPHY**

5. Modern Philosophy from Bacon and Descartes to Kant

Answer THREE questions, at least ONE from Section A and at least ONE from Section B. Candidates taking optional paper (n) Philosophy of Kant may NOT attempt questions from Section C. Avoid overlap in your answers.

**SECTION A**

1. What did Descartes hope to achieve by introducing the possibilities that (i) we are dreaming, and (ii) that we are deceived by an all-powerful being? How important is it to his project that he should succeed in ruling both of them out?
2. What is the 'Cartesian Circle'? Does Descartes have a way out of it?
3. Can Descartes give an intelligible account of how the soul acts on the body, and the body acts on the soul? If he can, what is it? If he cannot, is this a potentially fatal objection to his whole account of the mind-body relation?
4. 'By *substance*, I mean that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself; in other words, that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception.' Why did Spinoza choose to define substance in this way? How did he use this definition in his argument that only one substance exists, or can exist?
5. 'The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things'. What did Spinoza mean by this principle, and why is it of such importance in his philosophy?

**TURN OVER**

6. Does Spinoza's conception of human freedom conform closely with 'vulgar' conceptions, and if not, how much does this matter? Is it compatible with the necessitarian metaphysics set out in Part I of the *Ethics*?
7. Why does Leibniz face the problem of explaining why some truths are contingent rather than necessary? How does he attempt to solve this problem?
8. EITHER (a) What were Leibniz's reasons for saying that bodies are 'well-founded phenomena'? Does this commit him to some form of idealism?  
  
OR (b) In Leibniz's metaphysics, how is my writing this question related to your answering it?
9. What was Leibniz's conception of a monad? Critically evaluate his reasons for supposing that such entities exist.

## SECTION B

10. Given that Locke accepted that self-evident maxims are universally assented to as soon as they are understood, should he not also have accepted that they are innate?
11. Does it make sense to suppose, as Locke did, that ideas of primary qualities resemble the qualities themselves, though ideas of secondary qualities do not?
12. Locke thought that it was very important to distinguish between real and nominal essences. What is the distinction, and how valuable is it?
13. 'In short, let any one consider those arguments which are thought manifestly to prove that colours and tastes exist only in the mind, and he shall find they may with equal force be brought to prove the same thing of extension, figure, and motion' (*Principles*, § 15). What arguments was Berkeley thinking of? Do they prove that all sensible qualities are equally mind-dependent?
14. 'The only thing whose existence we deny, is that which philosophers call matter or corporeal substance. And in doing of this, there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it' (*Principles*, § 35). Discuss.
15. Why did Berkeley not apply to immaterial substance the same kind of arguments that he had used against material substance? Ought he to have done so?

**TURN OVER**

16. EITHER (a) 'Hume did not have a view about what causation is, but only about what causation is not.' Discuss.

OR (b) With reference to Hume, critically examine how far the nature of the world's creator might be inferred from the state of the world itself.

17. What kind of sceptic was Hume? Is his scepticism compatible with his naturalism, or does it undermine it?

18. 'What then gives us so great a propensity to ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions, and to suppose ourselves possess of an invariable and uninterrupted existence thro' the whole course of our lives?' (Hume). How did Hume answer this question? Is his answer a satisfactory one?

### **SECTION C**

19. Why did Kant think that things-in-themselves cannot stand in spatial relations to one another?

20. Describe and evaluate Kant's objections to speculative metaphysics.

21. What did Kant understand by 'transcendental freedom'? Does it provide a satisfactory means of explaining how human beings are both free and subject to the law of causality?

**END OF PAPER**