

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

BA EXAMINATION

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 ONE from Section B. Candidates taking the Optional Paper (I), The Philosophy of Kant, may NOT attempt questions from Section C, marked with an asterisk.

SECTION A

1. EITHER (a) Is there any class of beliefs which Descartes could have subjected to doubt but did not? Was this omission (if there was one) such as to undermine his enterprise?
OR (b) 'The Cartesian doubt, therefore, were it ever possible to be obtained by any human creature (as it plainly is not) would be entirely incurable; and no reasoning could ever bring us to a state of assurance and conviction upon any subject'. How cogent an objection is this to Descartes' whole approach?
2. 'Although Descartes explicitly denied that the relation of the mind to the body is like that of a pilot to a ship, this is in fact the conclusion towards which his whole account of mind and body really points'. Is this criticism justified?
3. 'It is impossible that the idea of God which is in us should not have God himself as its cause' (Meditations, Synopsis). Why did Descartes think it was impossible? Was he right?
4. EITHER (a) Does Spinoza have any way of settling what it is in the attribute of extension that corresponds to an item in the attribute of thought?
OR (b) 'Spinoza reduces mind to matter and rejects mind-body interaction'. Is this an accurate evaluation of Spinoza's views on the human mind?
5. Examine Spinoza's proof that there can be no more than one substance.
6. 'All things have been determined by the necessity of the divine nature' (Ethics, I. xxix). Has Spinoza

ruled out any possibility of human freedom?

7. EITHER (a) Can Leibniz consistently maintain that Caesar was free not to cross the Rubicon?
OR (b) 'Leibniz falls, by his introduction of God, into a Spinozistic necessity: only the actual is possible, the non-existent is impossible, and the ground for contingency has disappeared' (Russell). Is this right?
8. What were Leibniz's grounds for holding that this is the best of all possible worlds?
9. What, for Leibniz, is the relation between bodies and simple substances (monads)?

SECTION B

10. Is Locke's attack on innate notions in Book I of the Essay affected by his admission that the mind has many innate capacities and dispositions?
11. EITHER (a) Does Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities presuppose a representational theory of perception?
OR (b) Describe and evaluate the arguments that Berkeley used to show that there are no primary qualities in Locke's sense of that term, and that all sensible qualities are mind-dependent.
12. What did Locke find unsatisfactory in scholastic theories of essence? What innovations did he propose?
13. 'An idea can be like nothing but an idea' (Principles, §8). What use did Berkeley make of this principle? Is the principle defensible?
14. EITHER (a) 'I observed, that though we are satisfied that his [Berkeley's] doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I shall never forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with a mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, — "I refute it thus"' (Boswell, Life of Johnson). Who is right here, Boswell, or Johnson, or neither?
- OR (b) 'But, say you, it sounds very harsh to say that we eat and drink ideas and are clothed with ideas' (Principles, §38). What are the grounds for this objection? Did Berkeley have a satisfactory reply to it?
15. What role does Berkeley's criticism of abstract general ideas play in his argument for immaterialism?
16. To what, on Hume's view, do we owe our belief in an external world? Is the belief a rational or an irrational one?

17. EITHER (a) Did Hume hold a regularity theory of causation?
OR (b) Did Hume hold that inferences from past experience to the future can never be rationally justified?

18. What were Hume's grounds for denying that he could form an idea of the self? Did this make him a sceptic about personal identity?

SECTION C

19.* Kant claimed to be a transcendental idealist and an empirical realist. What did he mean by this, and what distinguishes his idealism from Berkeley's?

20.* How is the Transcendental Deduction supposed to justify the employment of the pure concepts of the understanding? Does it succeed?

21.* What, according to Kant, is wrong with the rational psychologist's claim that the soul is a simple substance enduring through time?

22.* What does Kant seek to establish in the Second Analogy, and with what success?

END OF PAPER