

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

577 0225

MA Examination
for Internal Students

PHILOSOPHY

Early Modern Philosophy

Monday 18 May 2009: 10.00 -1.00 pm

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions. Avoid overlap in your answers.

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1. EITHER: (a) What can the senses contribute to our knowledge of the world, according to Descartes? How, and how successfully, does he argue for his view?
OR: (b) Descartes holds that external bodies are the sources of our sensory ideas, but denies that the bodies wholly resemble the ideas they cause. How, and how successfully, does he argue for his view?
2. Descartes describes the First Meditation doubt as ‘providing the easiest route by which the mind may be led away from the senses’. What does Descartes mean when he speaks of withdrawing the mind from the senses? What role does this process play in the argument of the *Meditations*?
3. ‘All the thoughts we have as a result of our dependence upon our bodies are completely false, and the more dangerous for our soul as they are useful to our bodies.’ Explain and assess Malebranche’s argument for this claim.
4. What does Malebranche mean when he claims that we see all things in God? How strong a case does he make for this account?
5. ‘Here is a kind of *Attraction*, which in the mental world will be found to have as extraordinary effects as in the natural.’ Critically discuss Hume’s use of the principle of the association of ideas in explaining the operations of the human mind.
6. Does Hume succeed in explaining our belief in the continued existence of unperceived objects?
7. What account does Hume give of the relationship between impressions and ideas? Does he make a strong case for his account?
8. Explain and assess the part played by Descartes’s claim that the passions ‘move and dispose the soul to want the things for which they (the passions) prepare the body’ in the argument of *The Passions of the Soul*.
9. What relation or relations does a virtuous person have to their passions, according to Descartes? How persuasive do you find his view?
10. Assess the comparative strengths and weaknesses of Descartes’s and Hobbes’s accounts of deliberation.
11. What, according to Hobbes, is the difference between animal passions and human passions? How does this difference bear on the uses to which passions can be put?

12. 'The passion to be reckoned with is fear.' Is this view borne out in Hobbes's political philosophy, and if so, how?
13. Expound and assess the principal differences between the Aristotelian and the mechanical approaches to physics.
14. Critically compare the implications that the existence of a plenum and that of a vacuum would have for corporeal motion.
15. Does extension entail divisibility? What consequences will the answer to this question have for the natures of corporeal and spiritual substances?
16. Critically compare Newton's and Leibniz's theories of space.
17. Is there any convincing argument for the mind-independent existence of extended things? Is there any convincing argument against it?
18. What role does the notion of resemblance play in Locke's account of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities? Is his account of the distinction a defensible one?
19. Does Berkeley succeed in showing that the things we immediately perceive are ideas which exist only in the mind?

END OF PAPER