

Your name: _____

Your section (circle):

Mon. Tues. Wed. (am) Wed. (pm)

Metaphysics Exercise 7

Phil. 93, Winter 2006. Due Thurs., Feb. 9.

1. In the first full paragraph on p. 84, Descartes considers a view according to which we know bodies distinctly (or clearly and distinctly) with our senses. Based on our reading, which of the following is correct?

- a. Porphyry would disagree with this view, because he thinks only substantial qualities, not ordinary sensible qualities, can be essential.
- b. Porphyry would agree with this view, because he thinks we can sense not only sensible qualities like heat, but also supersensible substantial qualities.
- c. Avicenna would disagree with this view, because he thinks we never sense the essential characteristics of bodies.
- d. Descartes himself would disagree with this view, because he thinks we can never know whether there are any bodies at all, let alone what their essential characteristics are.
- e. (b) and (c).
- f. (b), (c) and (d).

2. On pp. 84–5, Descartes presents an argument for a different view about the above issue. Which of the following correctly describes the conclusion of that argument?

- a. We cannot really know what the wax really is; we can only use sensible characteristics to stand in for its true essential characteristics.
- b. We cannot know what the wax is, because of our imperfection. Only an infinitely perfect knower (i.e., God) can know what things really are.
- c. We can know what the wax is, because we perceive (with our intellect) that it is a body (a three-dimensional extended substance), and we perceive (with our senses) that it is particular kind (species) of body. (Thus we perceive its true genus with the intellect and its true differentia with our senses.)
- d. We can know what the wax is, because we perceive (with our intellect) that it is a body (a substance determined by extension and the modes of extension) and that is all there is to know about what it is (its only essential characteristic).
- e. None of the above.

3. According to the new view, what mistake was the Meditator making when he held the old view?

- a. He falsely thought that the wax existed, when in fact only he exists.
- b. He failed to realize that, by knowing what he himself is (a thinking thing), he

also knows what the wax is (a body). After all, a thinking thing is a kind of body (since thinking is done by the brain).

c. He knew what the wax is (because he perceived it with his intellect), but he confused that correct knowledge with other, irrelevant things.

d. He did not know what the wax is; he falsely thought it was composed of sensible qualities.

e. He did not know what the wax is; he falsely thought it was essentially three-dimensional extended quantity.

4. From *Principles of Philosophy* II.4 (p. 190), and from the third paragraph of the *Fifth Meditation* (p. 105), we can tell that:

a. Descartes ultimately rejects the new view about the wax which emerges at the end of the *Second Meditation*. He holds (like Thomas Aquinas) that we can only know there are bodies at all by having faith in God.

b. Descartes ultimately rejects the new view about the wax which emerges at the end of the *Second Meditation*. He holds that we know bodies with our senses, because they “extend” (that is, move away continuously) when we push them.

c. Descartes ultimately accepts the new view about the wax which emerges at the end of the *Second Meditation*. He holds that we do not know whether bodies exist except when we push them and feel them “extend” (that is, move away continuously).

d. Descartes ultimately accepts the new view about the wax which emerges at the end of the *Second Meditation*. He holds (like Avicenna) that the quantity of bodies is not essential to them, only their substance.

e. Descartes ultimately accepts the new view about the wax which emerges at the end of the *Second Meditation*. He holds (like John Philoponus) that a certain kind of quantity is essential to bodies.

5. In the *Third Meditation*, the Meditator wants to prove the existence of God because:

a. He is afraid that otherwise he might be condemned by the Church.

b. He believes through faith that the supreme happiness of the next life consists solely in the contemplation of the divine majesty.

c. Since the senses have now proved untrustworthy, he must find out about the world from books. But, as long as he hasn’t proved that God exists (and is not a deceiver), he still has a slight doubt about the truth of Scripture, and therefore still can’t use books to find the truth about the world.

d. Since the senses have now proved untrustworthy, he must find out about the world using his reason. But, as long as he hasn’t proved that God exists (and is not a deceiver), he still has a slight doubt about the reliability of reason.

e. None of the above.

6. Which of the following is a good summary of the proof(s) of the existence of God which Descartes presents in the *Third Meditation*?

a. I am a thinking thing—that is, a human being. But human beings (I assume) did not evolve from lower animals; therefore, I must have been created by God. Therefore God exists.

b. I am a thinking thing—that is, I create my own objective being by thinking. But I have an idea of God. Therefore, God has objective being—that is, exists.

c. I have an idea of God. But (I assume) my ideas must have come from true objective beings. Therefore God must be a true objective being—that is, God must exist.

d. I find that certain imperfect, finite things exist. These things can't have come from nothing (because they have being), but also can't have caused themselves to exist (because they are imperfect and finite). Therefore their existence can be explained only if there is also a perfect, infinite being—that is, God.

e. I find that certain imperfect, finite things exist. But whatever is imperfect always has the potential to become more perfect. Therefore, there must be a series of more and more perfect beings, leading up to the most perfect being of all—that is, God.

7. Which of the following, if correct, would point to a major flaw in the argument of the *Fifth Meditation* (the Ontological Proof)?

a. Existence is not a perfection.

b. Existence is not a substance.

c. God was invented to explain natural phenomena which people were once unable to understand. But those phenomena can now be explained by science.

d. There are many things we have ideas of which don't exist (e.g.: the Tooth Fairy; Trogdor, the Burninator). Just because we have an idea of God existing doesn't mean that God exists.

e. (a) and (b).

f. (a), (c) and (d).