

Your name: _____

Your section (circle):

Mon. Tues. Wed. Fri.

Metaphysics Exercise 7

Phil. 93, Winter 2007. Due Thurs., Feb. 8.

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

- a. Porphyry would agree 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 the essential properties of bodies are sensible qualities.
- c. Avicenna would agree with this view, because he thinks we can sense the occult, essential properties of substances.
- 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. (a) and (d).
- f. (b) and (c).

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 know what the wax is, because of our imperfection. Only an infinitely perfect knower (i.e., God) can know what things really are.
- b. We cannot know what the wax is, because all we can perceive (with our intellect) is that it is a body (a substance determined by extension and the modes of extension); its other essential characteristics remain occult.
- c. We can know what the wax really is, because we can use sensible characteristics to stand in for its true essential characteristics.
- d. We can know what the wax is, because we have more objective being than it does.
- e. None of the above.

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

- a. So far he has only shown that he exists. In order to get any farther, he will need to prove the existence of at least one other thing.
- b. He has mistakenly forgotten to doubt whether God exists, so now he assumes that God does exist and tries to prove it.

- c. He needs to settle a slight doubt, left over from the *First Meditation*, about the reliability of reason.
 - d. All of the above.
 - e. (a) and (b).
 - f. (a) and (c).
4. 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. Animals have less formal being than humans, so humans could never have evolved from animals. Therefore they must have been created by God.
 - b. My idea of God has so much objective being that no finite thing, or group of finite things, could be its ultimate source.
 - c. I have an idea of God. But I am a thinking being, so all my ideas must come from something true. 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. (b) or (d).
 - f. None of the above.
5. Which of the following, if correct, would point to a major flaw in the argument of the *Fifth Meditation* (the Ontological Proof)?
- a. Infinite perfection is a self-contradictory concept.
 - b. It is not more perfect to exist than it is not to exist.
 - c. God might not be infinitely perfect.
 - d. God was invented to explain natural phenomena which people were once unable to understand. But those phenomena can now be explained by science.
 - e. (a) or (b).
 - f. (a), (c) or (d).