

PHILOSOPHY TRIPOS Part IA

12:00 noon BST Thursday 24 June 2021 –
12:00 noon BST Friday 25 June 2021

Paper 4

SET TEXTS

Answer **three** questions only, which must be chosen from **at least two** sections.

Write the number of the question at the beginning of each answer.

For each question do not write more than **2000** words.

Section A

1. 'People know heaps of things without being able to define the terms in which they express their knowledge, and in a given case examples may be more useful for elucidating the meaning of a general term than a formal definition.' Is Socrates then wrong to demand that Meno provide a formal definition of virtue?
2. Are the literary and dramatic elements of Plato's *Meno* relevant to a philosophical interpretation of the dialogue?
3. Is there a better solution to Meno's paradox than the theory of recollection?
4. 'So too regarding virtue, since we don't know either what it is or what sort of thing it is, let us first make a hypothesis about it and then consider whether or not virtue is teachable.' (PLATO) Is this method vindicated by its results in the dialogue?

Section B

5. 'I see plainly that there are never any sure signs by means of which being awake can be distinguished from being asleep.' (DESCARTES) How does Descartes try to distinguish being awake from being asleep? Is he successful?
6. 'And, when someone says, I am thinking, therefore I am, or exist, he is not deducing existence from thought by means of a syllogism, but recognises it as known directly by a simple intuition of the mind.' (DESCARTES) Discuss.
7. 'It is quite evident that existence can no more be separated from the essence of God than the fact that its three angles equal two right angles can be separated from the essence of a triangle.' (DESCARTES) Why does Descartes compare the essence of a triangle with the essence of God? Does his argument prove the existence of God?

8. 'I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it.' (DESCARTES)
What, in your view, is the strongest objection to Descartes's argument for this conclusion? Does Descartes have a good reply?

Section C

9. 'This doctrine is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. ... For the same reason, we may leave out of consideration those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered as in its nonage.' (MILL) Is Mill right to place these restrictions on the application of his 'one very simple principle'?
10. 'As it is useful that while mankind are imperfect there should be different opinions, so it is that there should be different experiments of living.' (MILL) Why?
11. Why does Mill take the pervasiveness and staying power of patriarchy to be irrelevant to its legitimacy? Is he right to do so?
12. 'Marriage is the only actual bondage known to our law. There remain no legal slaves, except the mistress of every house.' (MILL) How does Mill defend this claim? To what use does he put it in the argument of *The Subjection of Women*?

END OF PAPER