

PHILOSOPHY TRIPOS Part II

Wednesday 25 May 2016

09.00 – 12.00

Paper 5

PHILOSOPHY IN THE LONG MIDDLE AGES

*Answer **three** questions, including at least one from each section. You are permitted to write on an author in section B even if you have discussed a passage by him in section A, but you must not repeat material. Write the number of the question at the beginning of each answer. If you are answering an either/or question, indicate the letter as well.*

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

20 Page Answer book x 1

Rough Work Pad

**You may not start to read the questions
printed on the subsequent pages of this
question paper until instructed that you
may do so by the Invigilator**

SECTION A

1. Identify each of the passages (i) and (ii), explain the part it plays in the argument of the text from which it is taken and supply whatever background material and interpretative comments a reader now would need in order to understand its full significance. You may also compare the two passages.

Passages (i) and (ii) – at end of paper.

2. Identify each of the passages (iii) and (iv), explain the part it plays in the argument of the text from which it is taken and supply whatever background material and interpretative comments a reader now would need in order to understand its full significance. You may also compare the two passages.

Passages (iii) and (iv) – at end of paper.

SECTION B

3. 'Boethius claims, in his second commentary on the Isagoge, that there are real, universal things.' Discuss.
4. Does Abelard's solution to the problem of universals allow for some form of realism?
5. Zayd and 'Amr are both humans, but Avicenna denies that the humanity in Zayd is the same as the humanity in 'Amr. Why does he take this position and how well does he defend it?
6. How important for Scotus is the distinction between common natures and universals?
7. EITHER (a) 'Ockham repeatedly begs the question in his attack on Scotus's theory of universals'. Discuss.

OR (b) Compare Abelard's and Ockham's versions of nominalism.

8. 'Locke's professed nominalism is merely superficial.' Discuss.
9. EITHER (a) How well does Averroes justify his position that the Quran should be 'interpreted' when its literal sense conflicts with a demonstrated truth?

OR (b) Compare Averroes's and Maimonides's intellectual elitism.

10. Does Maimonides believe that we can reach the truth about whether the world had a beginning?
11. 'Boethius of Dacia operated with a notion of truth-within-a-game as opposed to absolute truth.' Discuss.

12. In which sense is the knowledge advocated by theologians supernatural according to Scotus, and how does he explain that it is necessary for human beings in their lives on Earth?
13. EITHER (a) How successful is Pomponazzi's critique of Aquinas's theory of the human soul and its immortality?
- OR (b) Is Pomponazzi's *De immortalitate animae* an attack on the Christianity of his day?
14. What limits does Spinoza set to his naturalism in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*?

PASSAGES

Question 1

- i) We do not say it is necessary for every understanding that arises from a subject, but not as that subject itself is disposed, to be seen as false and empty. False opinion rather than intelligence occurs only in those cases that arise from composition. If one puts and joins together by the understanding what nature does not allow to be joined, no one fails to realize that that is false. For example, if someone joins a horse and a man in imagination, and portrays a centaur. But if this understanding arises from division and from abstraction, then the thing is not disposed the way it is understood, and yet that understanding is not false at all.
- ii) But it seems that we should balk at taking the agreement of things according to what is *not* any thing, as if we are uniting in *nothing* things that exist when we say this man and that man agree in the *status* of man – that is, *in that they are men*. But we mean only that they *are men* and in this respect do not differ at all – I mean in the respect *that they are men*, even though we appeal to no *essence* here. Now someone's *being a man*, which is not a thing, we call the *status* of man. We also called it the common cause of the imposition of a name on single men insofar as they agree with one another. We often call by the name cause what are not any *thing*. For example, when we say 'He was flogged *because* he does not want to go to the forum'. 'He does not want to go to the forum', which occurs as a cause here, is no *essence*.

Question 2

- iii) Truth does not oppose truth; rather, it agrees with and bears witness to it. Since this is so, if demonstrative reflection leads to any manner of cognizance about any existing thing, that existing thing cannot escape either being passed over in silence in the Law or being made cognizable

in it. If it is passed over in silence, there is no contradiction here; it has the status of the statutes passed over in silence that the jurist infers by means of Law-based syllogistic reasoning. If the Law does pronounce about it, the apparent sense of the pronouncement cannot escape either being in agreement with what demonstration leads to, or being different from it. If it is in agreement, there is no argument here. And, if it is different, that is where an interpretation is pursued.

- iv) This is so because the natural philosopher denies as a natural philosopher that the world and the first motion began to be, and this is for him to deny that the world began to be from natural principles. Whatever the natural philosopher denies or concedes as natural philosopher, this he denies or concedes from natural causes and principles. Wherefore the conclusion wherein the natural philosopher asserts that the world and the first motion did not begin to be is false when it is taken without qualification; but if it is referred back to the arguments and principles from which the natural philosopher derives it, it follows from these. For we know that both he who says that Socrates is white, and he who denies that Socrates is white in certain respects, speak the truth. Thus the Christian speaks the truth when he says that the world and the first motion began to be, and that there was a first man, and that a man will return as living and as numerically one and the same, and that a generable thing can be produced without being generated; for such things are conceded to be possible by reason of a cause whose power is greater than that of any natural cause. The natural philosopher also speaks the truth when he says that such things are not possible from natural causes and principles; for he concedes or denies something only from natural principles and causes, just as the grammarian denies or concedes something as grammarian only from grammatical principles and causes.

END OF PAPER