

Metaphysics Exercise 6

Phil. 100B, Winter 2011. Due Thurs., Jan. 27.

Note this is to be done on-line via Question Cloud if possible. However, if this proves impossible for some reason, please hand this in as a hard copy or e-mail your answers to your TA.

1. On pp. 84–5, the Meditator presents an argument for a new view about the nature of the wax (i.e., of a particular piece of wax she seems to be perceiving). Which of the following correctly describes the conclusion of that argument?

- a. We cannot know what the wax is; our only certain knowledge is of our own existence and the existence of God.
- b. We cannot know what the wax really is in itself (per se), but we can use sensible characteristics to stand in for its true essential characteristics.
- c. We can know what the wax really is in itself (per se), because we clearly and distinctly perceive that its true nature is such as to cause certain sensible impressions in our soul.
- d. We can know what the wax really is in itself (per se), because we clearly and distinctly perceive that it is a body, and that is all there is to know about its true nature.
- e. (c) and (d).

2. 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 accepts the new view about the wax which emerges at the end of the *Second Meditation*.
- b. Unlike Thomas Aquinas, Descartes holds that we can know there are bodies without relying on our knowledge of God.
- c. Descartes believes that the sense of touch is deceptive, because all bodies “extend” (move away continuously when we push them), making it impossible to touch them completely.
- d. Descartes believes that philosophers were wrong to call bodies “continuous.” Actually, he thinks, bodies are quantified.
- e. (a), (b) and (c).
- e. (a) and (d).

3. Which of the following arguments is a step in a proof of the existence of God which Descartes presents in the *Third Meditation*?

- a. I can be certain that I lack some perfections of which I can conceive, because I can be certain that I doubt.
- b. If I were powerful enough to create and conserve myself, I would also be powerful enough to give myself all the perfections of which I can conceive.

- c. My belief in the existence of God is objective (has “objective being”): i.e, it is not merely subjective.
- d. A thinking thing (such as myself) is too complex (has too much “formal being”) to have come into existence merely by chance.
- e. (a) and (b).
- f. None of the above.