

British Empiricism (PHI 5450)

Distributed: 9/22/11 — Exercise 1: Charitable Interpretation — Due: 9/29/11

Book II, chapter 9 of Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" is titled "Of Perception". This exercise concerns section 8, labeled "*Ideas of sensation changed by judgment*", and the reading, which I am handing out today, from Leibniz's *New Essays*.

1.
 - A. Give a brief restatement, in your own words, of what Locke means when he says, "the *ideas we receive by sensation, are often in grown people altered by the judgment, without our taking notice of it.*" (approx. 1 sentence)
 - B. Explain this view in a way that someone could understand without having read any of Locke's Essay. (approx. 4-7 sentences)
2.
 - A. In the second half of section 8, Locke inserts a "problem" proposed by Mr. Molyneux. In your own words, tell me the question that Molyneux posed, and how Molyneux answered the question. (approx. 3 sentences)
3.
 - A. In Leibniz's *New Essays*, Leibniz uses the dialogue format to frame his discussion of Locke's Essay. The characters of Philalethes and Theophilus are used as stand-ins for Locke and Leibniz, respectively. In the excerpt I have given you, Philalethes and Theophilus are discussing the Molyneux problem. In your own words, tell me what Leibniz's answer to Molyneux's question is. (approx. 1 sentence)
 - B. Explain Leibniz's view in a way that someone could understand without having read the excerpt from Leibniz, or any of Locke's essay. (approx. 4-7 sentences)
4.
 - A. Tell me whose position on the question you find more compelling, and why. (approx. 3-6 sentences).
 - B. For the position that you found less compelling, give a statement, in your own words, of what would lead an intelligent person who seriously thought about the question to come up with that position. (approx. 4-6 sentences)
 - C. For the position that you found less compelling, think about what you dislike about it. Explain whether there is any way to preserve the basic idea of that position that fixes the problem you have in mind. (approximately 4-6 sentences)