

PHIL 4603: Metaphysics
Prof. Funkhouser
11/28/07

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

Below I have listed questions for each of our topics covered since the midterm. For the final exam, I will select two of these questions from each topic. You will then answer five of these six questions. They will be worth 50 points each, for a total of 250 points.

Your final exam is on **Monday, December 10th, from 7:30 – 9:30 a.m.**

Personal Identity

1. Explain the difference between a quasi-memory and a genuine memory, as Shoemaker uses these terms. Describe a situation in which (apparently) distinct people quasi-remember the same experience “from the inside”. What problem does this raise for a psychological, broadly Lockean, theory of personal identity? How does Shoemaker address this problem?
2. Bernard Williams provides two versions of a torture story. One version appears to support the psychological continuity theory whereas the other version appears to support the bodily continuity theory. Provide the version of the torture story that is supposed to support the bodily continuity theory. Present the story in the careful step-by-step manner employed by Williams. At what step in this story could the psychological continuity theorist reasonably object, and how so?
3. Explain Parfit’s objection to Shoemaker’s handling of fission cases. How does Parfit reconcile his commitment to psychological continuity and connectedness with his recognition of the difficulties presented by fission and duplication cases? Explain Parfit’s positive theory and how it radically departs from earlier accounts of personal identity and survival.
4. Explain Johnston’s objection against philosophers who, according to him, confuse evidential and constitutive questions of personal identity. Present examples he uses against both the psychological and bodily continuity theories. Then, explain the positive theory of personal identity that he offers in its place.

TURN OVER!

Causation

5. Explain Mackie's INUS theory of causation by applying it to a particular example in which it seems to correctly identify a cause. Next, describe an example in which the INUS theory seems to misidentify something as a cause. *Explain* why this latter example is a counter-example to Mackie's theory.
6. Davidson agrees with Hume and Mill that singular causal statements must be supported by a general law. Yet, he allows that it can be true that Smith's fall from the ladder caused his death even though there is no general law relating falls from ladders to deaths. Explain how Davidson reconciles these claims.
7. Explain how Lewis uses his counterfactual theory of causation to handle cases of epiphenomenalism that, he thinks, pose problems for the regularity theorist. Discuss a particular example, if only in an abstract manner.
8. Tooley offers four arguments in favor of his singularist account of causation. One of these is the argument from the possibility of indeterministic laws. Explain, by discussing a specific example, how this argument is supposed to serve as an objection to the dominant supervenience view.

Realism/Anti-Realism

9. Explain, by discussing a particular example, what Putnam means by the following passage:

And it is no accident that metaphysical realism cannot really recognize the phenomenon of conceptual relativity — for that phenomenon turns on the fact that *the logical primitives themselves, and in particular the notions of object and existence, have a multitude of different uses rather than one absolute 'meaning'*. (597)
10. What is internal (or pragmatic) realism? (Be sure to invoke the notion of a thing-in-itself in answering this question.) Explain how it is supposed to differ from Metaphysical Realism, but nevertheless be a kind of realism.
11. Present, as Sosa reconstructs it, Putnam's master argument against realism. Present what you think is the best objection to this argument.
12. What is verificationism? Next, provide the argument against realism based on the lack of "fixed intuitive certainties". Explain why Alston thinks that this argument relies on verificationism.