

PHIL 4603: Metaphysics
Prof. Funkhouser
10/5/07

MIDTERM EXAM (250 points)

Since this is a take-home exam, you are free to use whatever resources you may need (except me) to help you with your answers. This includes the readings, online notes, other online resources, conversations with other students, etc. While it is permissible to utilize these resources in preparing your answers, *the phrasing and writing of your answers must, ultimately, be done on your own (e.g., in “your own words”)*. Each question is worth 25 points. I prefer that you type your answers according to normal formatting standards (double-spaced, sane margins, etc.).

Your exam is due by the beginning of class on **Monday, October 15th**.

Identity

1. Briefly explain how Max Black’s two-sphere world (as presented by *B*), is supposed to offer a counter-example to the Identity of Indiscernibles. *A* argues that if one accepts this line of reasoning then one should be skeptical that they have only two hands. But is one who denies the Identity of Indiscernibles by allowing for Black’s two-sphere world rationally committed to this skepticism? Explain.
2. Explain why, according to Kripke, identity statements between ordinary names (e.g., ‘Hesperus=Phosphorus’) are necessary, if true at all. Then explain how on Russell’s theory of ordinary names such identities are supposed to be contingent.

Existence

3. According to Quine, what determines our ontological commitments — i.e., what *really* exists, by our lights? In answering this question do not just use a slogan, but explain it. What argument(s) does Carnap offer for the conclusion that such external questions are meaningless?

TURN OVER!

4. How does Russell analyze sentences like ‘Santa Claus is fat and jolly’? Is that sentence true, false, or neither? Connect your answers to these questions to the following passage from Russell:

So the individuals that there are in the world do not exist, or rather it is nonsense to say that they exist and nonsense to say that they do not exist. It is not a thing you can say when you have named them, but only when you have described them. (35)

Modality

5. Explain how Quine’s mathematical cyclist argument, as discussed in our Plantinga article, is supposed to serve as an objection to *de re* modality (essentialism). According to Plantinga, what is wrong with Quine’s argument?

6. Explain Lewis’s genuine modal realist plus counterpart theory account of *de re* representation/modality. Provide and explain Kripke’s “Humphrey Objection” to this counterpart theory.

7. Explain what Adams means by “primitive thisness” — What *is* a thisness? What does it mean for a thisness to be *primitive*? Then explain one of Adams’s arguments for primitive thisness.

Persistence through Time

8. Explain how the 4-dimensionalist explains an object’s persistence through time. Explain how, according to Lewis, the 4-dimensionalist is better equipped (as compared to the 3-dimensionalist) to handle the problem of temporary intrinsics.

9. As Quine uses the terms in his “Identity, Ostension, and Hypostasis”, explain what is meant by a river-stage, water-stage, river-kinship and water-kinship. How do rivers and waters relate to river-stages and water-stages? Finally, explain how Quine’s example involving the river Cayster illustrates the ambiguities that can arise when naming or introducing a general term.

10. Explain, in some detail, how 4-dimensionalism is supposed to offer a solution to fission/fusion cases. What is Thomson’s “crazy metaphysic” objection to 4-dimensionalism?