

PHIL 4233: Philosophy of Language
Prof. Funkhouser
2/28/08

MIDTERM EXAM (250 points)

Since this is a take-home exam, you are free to use any resources, 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*”). Type your answers according to normal formatting standards (double-spaced, sane margins, etc.). Do not write too much, and do not write too little. Your exam is due *by the beginning of class* on Thursday, March 6th.

The first two questions are mandatory, and each is worth 50 points. Then answer 5, and *only* 5, of the next 8 questions. These 5 questions are worth 30 points each.

Mandatory Questions (50 points each; 100 points)

1. Explain, with the help of an example, the difference between a description *fixing the reference* and a description *providing the meaning* of a term. Sticking with your example, explain how these two accounts of reference yield different results when considering certain counterfactual situations. Finally, briefly explain why Kripke thinks that descriptions play *neither* role for most ordinary names.

2. Provide and explain Kripke’s positive theory as to how the reference of ordinary names for individuals (e.g., ‘Aristotle’, ‘Feynman’, etc.) is determined. Use a specific example to illustrate how the reference of the name is initially determined. Further explain what determines the reference of the name for subsequent users of that name. Point out some salient ways in which this theory differs from the description theories that Kripke criticizes.

TURN OVER!

Answer 5, and *only* 5, of the next 8 questions (30 points each; 150 points)

3. Explain Locke's theory of the meaning of terms. How does this theory differ from that of, say, Hilary Putnam? On Locke's theory what is required for successful linguistic communication?

4. Frege distinguished between the sense and nominata of both words and sentences. Explain how Frege applied this distinction to what he called "indirect discourse", such that he preserved Leibniz's *salva veritate* principle. (In answering, discuss a particular example of indirect discourse.)

5. According to Russell, what is the logical form of an expression with a definite description as the grammatical subject? Specifically, how would Russell translate the following statement into logical form: 'The youngest married bachelor has red hair.'? According to Russell, is this sentence true, false, or neither?

6. What is a logically proper name, as Russell understands the concept? How does Russell argue that ordinary proper names (e.g., 'Aristotle' or 'Homer') are not logically proper names?

7. Provide Strawson's objection, involving the notion of the *use* of an expression, to Russell's analysis of the sentence 'The present King of France is bald.' How did Russell respond to this objection?

8. Prior to Kripke, many thought that sentences like 'Hesperus is identical to Phosphorus' are contingent because they can be known only *a posteriori*. Using the concept of a *rigid designator*, provide Kripke's argument for the conclusion that this identity statement is necessary. Explain and apply the concepts of *epistemic possibility* and *metaphysical possibility* to illustrate how the apparent contingency of this identity statement is an illusion.

9. Kripke and Putnam extended the causal theory of names to kind terms (e.g., 'water' and 'aluminum') as well. Reconstruct Putnam's argument for the conclusion that meaning (for at least some kind terms) "ain't in the head". What factors besides what is "in the head" can contribute to the meaning of a kind term?

10. Evans aims to present a theory of names that allows for changes in denotation. Present one of his cases in which an ordinary name appears (at least to Evans) to change denotation. Explain how Kripke's theory denies that such a change occurs. In place of an initial baptism, what determines the denotation of ordinary names for Evans?