

PHIL 4603: Metaphysics
Prof. Funkhouser
3/2/10

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 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”)*. Undergraduate students need answer only 8 of these 10 questions (30 points each, with a gift of 10 points). Graduate students must answer all 10 questions (25 points each). Type your answers according to normal formatting standards (double-spaced, sane margins, etc.). Your exam is due by the beginning of class on Tuesday, March 9th.

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. How does Kripke explain the *appearance* of contingency here? Finally, explain how on Russell’s theory of ordinary names, according to which ordinary names are shorthand for descriptions, 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. Then explain Carnap’s reasons for thinking that such external questions are meaningless.

TURN OVER!

4. Quine opens his article “On What There Is” by discussing a riddle of non-being (Plato’s Beard). Explain why Quine rejects the attempted solution offered by his character Wyman. How, then, does Quine prefer to understand meaningful sentences with subject-terms that fail to refer? Explain by analyzing an example sentence.

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 (i.e., 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 accounts for 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 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 introducing a name.

10. Explain, in some detail, how the 4-dimensionalist would explain the relationship between Thomson’s objects H and W. What is Thomson’s “crazy metaphysic” objection to 4-dimensionalism?