

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY II
Philosophy in the World of Language
Final Exam Study Questions
Distributed 29 April 1991

As indicated on the syllabus, the final examination will take place at 10:30 AM, 13 May 1991. The first part of the exam (30 minutes) will consist of quotations (with emphasis upon materials read since the last quiz) to be identified and epitomized (on the paradigm of the two previous quizzes). For better students, or those who so indicate on the form to be clipped below, there will be an optional one-hour essay (on topics 1, 2, or 3, below). For all others, the entire exam will consist of quotations for identification and epitomization, as in the quizzes. You may find it educationally helpful to consider each of the listed one-hour essay topics as a way of assimilating the materials we have studied this term. Please note: You will *not* be well advised to choose a topic which duplicates or significantly overlaps with the topics of either of your papers (especially the last). The evaluation of your work for the course will be based upon your showing a (maximally) comprehensive grasp of the materials studied. That is one reason why duplication would be a mistake.

1. All the basic **themes** of philosophy in the world of language were introduced during the Hellenistic and the Graeco-Roman periods:

(A) **Epicureanism and the Mechanization of the World Picture** (Lucretius, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Bacon, Newton, Locke, Hume, Kant),

(B) **Stoicism and the Internalization of Language, with the attendant Invention of Mind** (Stoic logic, Augustine, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, Kant),

(C) **Skepticism vs. Dogmatism and Arguments for (i.) “Pyrrhonian” Common Sense, (ii.) “Academic” Ignorance, and (iii.), “Transcendental” Conditions of Knowledge** (Sextus Empiricus, Augustine, Erasmus, Montaigne, Descartes, Pascal, Hume, Kant),

(D) **Philonic Creation as a Stoic Speech Act** (Philo, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant),

(E) **Rational Mysticism: The Alienation and Reappropriation of “the One”** (Plotinus, Augustine, Spinoza, Leibniz, Wolff, Kant).

(F) **Quasi-Reappropriations of Aristotle** (Aquinas and Leibniz)—This topic will be especially suitable for veterans of “Philosophy in the *Polis*.”

You may devote a full hour of your final exam to an essay on any *one* of these six (A–F) **themes**. *The major condition* is that you devote some attention to *Kant* and at least *one* other representative philosopher from *each* of the three main (I, II, and III) sections of the course syllabus (please review). This option will appeal most to students who like to tell big-stories. If you choose it, be sure your story has a plot.

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2. The human spirit¹ was discovered by art, religion, and philosophy in the world of the *polis*. Philosophy in the world of language produced a radically new way of conceiving *what it is to be a human being*. In the *polis* (especially the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle) what was spiritually significant was a matter of *paideia* (“cultural” habituation; “education” in the broadest possible sense); “*Paideia Humanity*” was accordingly “ethnocentric”—centered in the ethos of the *polis* and its institutions. It was also elitist, sexist, racist, etc. It has been argued throughout this course that “mind” is *an invention*, a powerful invention (what the Stoics were the first to call the “inner logos”) which has served (particularly in the form of the Christian and Islamic religions) to facilitate the emancipation from ethnocentrism by classes, races, and the female gender. For as “minds” we (as members of a certain biological species) are all *equal*, theoretically and practically. Hence the emancipatory power of “*Logos Humanity*.” Nevertheless, so the argument has gone, “mind” is a mere invention, an artifice (like mathematical constructions in geometry and the construction of sovereignty in Hobbes’ *Leviathan*). If you have come to the point of seeing how the philosophers studied (from the Stoics to Kant) have been guided by the artificial concept of “mind,” you may wish to write a one-hour essay on how and why “mind” was invented, the emancipatory role it has played, the problems and paradoxes which have followed from this invention, and Kant’s attempted resolution of these difficulties. This topic may especially appeal to those who have taken History of Philosophy I (Philosophy in the *Polis*) and who anticipate attempting to work toward a non-mentalist critique of sexism, racism, elitism, and the like in the post-mentalist world now taking shape.

3. Immanuel Kant arguably represents the consummation of “philosophy in the world of language”; for those who can manage it, an essay on this topic would be a most fitting consummation of work for the term.

Beginning with the Stoics, philosophers have tended to reduce the *theoretical* account of determinate things *in the world* to a *logical* account of the relation(s) between abstract entities (“meanings” as “lecta,” propositions, Lockean “ideas,” Kantian “representations,” etc.) *in the mind*. This has yielded a paradox (spelled out by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* at Beck, p. 255): “Either it is the object alone that makes the [mental] representation possible, or it is the [mental] representation alone that makes the object possible.” In the former case the relation seems to be a mere “matter of fact” (à la Leibniz and Hume) and thus a contingent, non-logical, *a posteriori* synthesis whereas in the latter case the relation (albeit an *a priori* “relation of ideas”) seems to require that the object be an “innate” idea (as for Leibniz’s “windowless” monads) or the sheer “creative” expression of mental power (i.e., will) and thus perhaps appropriate to an infinite mind (God’s) but not to our (human) finite minds. Thus the “logic of knowledge” developed by philosophers in the world of language, once thought through, either eliminates objects as possible terms of a logical (objectively justifiable) relation

¹ Please note that the English translation of Bruno Snell’s *The Discovery of the Mind* [original title: *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*] uses the word “mind” to render “*Geist*.” Within the argument of this course, a better translation of Snell’s book would have been *The Discovery of the Spirit*. Indeed, an apt subtitle for History of Philosophy I: Philosophy in the *Polis* would be “The Discovery of the Human Spirit” just as an apt subtitle to this course would be “The Invention of the Mind.”

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or it makes the entire relation intra-mental and hence removes any possibility of talk about a knowable “external” world.

Kant’s transcendental argument attempts to show that the very same *conditions necessary for the possibility of our having any object of knowledge whatever* (which he assumed his readers would not doubt) are themselves *sufficient conditions for the objective validity of our mind’s knowledge of objects*. His strategy assumes that any object of knowledge is a construct and that the construction of any object requires the use of a set of rules like those used in logic. If objective validity is determined by logical rules and the construction of any knowable object requires the use of such rules, then the intra-mental (and hence “subjective”) use of these rules may be taken as a clue to “objective” validity.

Explain Kant’s “two-birds-with-one-stone” strategy (with especial reference to the first two paragraphs under the heading “Transcendental Deduction of the Categories,” Beck, pp. 255–6) and assess its success as an answer to the question (implicit in our course of studying “philosophy in the world of language”) how *within* mind, once invented, there could be knowledge of anything postulated to be *outside* it. The adequacy of your explanation will depend upon how well you are able to distinguish between (a.) the *logical contrast* of Intuitions (unrepresented representations) and Concepts (represented representations), on the one hand, and (b.) the *metaphysical contrast* between Receptivity (to what is mind-external) and Spontaneity (mental activity), on the other (see syllabus). You may also wish to consider the importance of Kant’s refutation (Beck, pp. 286–291, esp., 289) of the argument (alive in the tradition since St. Anselm) that existence is a predicate.

You may devote a full hour to this topic with brief and appropriate (but not numerous) allusions to Kant’s predecessors. One text in particular that is specially commended for your attention is from “early Stoic logic,” SVF II, 80 (in Saunders, p. 67).

Please indicate by Thursday, May 9th, whether you find any of the above topics appropriate for your final examination in this course. If you do, please mark below which topic you plan to write on. If you do not, an examination based on the paradigm familiar from the previous two quizzes will be available. Just fill out the form below, clip it, and hand it in at the last lecture, on May 9th. For all who do not submit the option form on May 9th, the final examination will consist of quotations for identification and epitomization (from the entire course).

9 May 1991

Name: _____

() I would like to write a final examination essay on topic number () above (if you choose 1, give the sub-head, i.e., A, B, etc.).

() I would prefer to write a set of more numerous shorter essays based on quotations (to be identified) from assigned readings throughout the course (as in our earlier quizzes).