

Ph.D. General Examination in Philosophy of Mind

Answer four of the following questions from the three sections below. You must answer one question from each section. You have four hours to do so. Each question is of equal weight. If there is overlap among answers to different questions, you need not repeat what you have already written; just refer to your earlier answer.

Part I Theories of the Mind

1. Answer at most one of these three questions:

1a. Explain carefully substance dualism. What are the main arguments in favor of this theory? What are the main objections against this theory? Consider possible responses to these objections.

1b. Explain carefully (philosophical) behaviorism. What are the main arguments in favor of this theory? What are the main objections against this theory? Consider possible responses to these objections.

1c. Explain carefully identity theory. What are the main arguments in favor of this theory? What are the main objections against this theory? Consider possible responses to these objections.

2. Explain carefully functionalism. Explain the differences among various versions of this theory. What are the main arguments in favor of this theory? What are the main objections against this theory? Consider possible responses to these objections.

3. Answer at most one of these two questions:

3a. Explain Daniel Dennett's intentional stance. How does he motivate this view, and what are the main objections against it? What do you think about it?

3b. Explain what philosophers mean by 'folk psychology'. Is folk psychology a theory? Explain Paul Churchland's argument for his eliminative materialism. Do you think it succeeds?

4. What is the point of John Searle's Chinese room argument? Consider some possible responses to Searle's argument. Do you think the argument succeeds?

Part II

5. Answer at most one of these two questions:

5a. What is the explanatory gap? Explain how this gap has been invoked to argue against physicalist views of the mind. Compare this argument to Frank Jackson's knowledge argument. Do you think these arguments succeed?

- 5b. What is the modal argument against physicalist views of the mind, that is, the argument appealing to the possibility of zombies? Explain the difference between what is conceivable and what is (metaphysically) possible. Do you think this argument succeeds?
6. What is the representationalist view of consciousness? What are the main arguments for this view? What are the main objections against it? Discuss possible responses.
7. Some authors defend teleological accounts of intentionality. Explain what such accounts amount to. What are their main virtues? What are the difficulties they face?
8. What does Wilfrid Sellars mean by 'the Given', and what are his objections against it? Do they succeed? Are there acceptable forms of the Given?
9. What are the main arguments for externalism? Some authors claim that externalism is incompatible with privilege access. What do they mean? Are they right?

Part III

10. Explain Jaegwon Kim's causal exclusion argument. What does he conclude from this argument? Discuss some possible responses. Do you think the argument succeeds?
11. Answer at most one of these two questions:
- 11a. Explain Stephen Yablo's views about the relation between mental and physical properties. Discuss and evaluate some criticisms.
 - 11b. Explain Sydney Shoemaker's views about the nature of properties, and the relation between mental and physical properties. Discuss and evaluate some criticisms.
12. Answer at most one of these two questions:
- 12a. There are many statements of the supervenience thesis. Compare and contrast some of them. Which statement do you think best captures the thesis of physicalism?
 - 12b. Terence Horgan contends that the supervenience thesis does less philosophical work than sometimes thought. He proposes to move to superdupervenience. What does he mean by that? Is Horgan's proposal warranted?
13. Explain Donald Davidson's thesis of anomalous monism. How does he defend this thesis? Discuss some objections.
14. Both Tyler Burge and Lynne Rudder-Baker defend the priority of our explanatory practice over metaphysical considerations. Explain and compare their respective views, as well as the conclusions they draw from them. Discuss some objections.