

Study Sheet for Final Exam

You'll be asked to answer 4 out of 5 of these essay questions at 25 points each.

1. Block argues that functionalist theories of the mind are too liberal. Explain and critique Block's arguments. Can a functionalist effectively respond to Block's arguments without abandoning her commitment to the multiple realizability of mental states? Defend your answer with arguments or reasons.
2. Explain Davidson's anomalous monism and his claim that the "apparently inconsistent triad" he describes can be shown to be consistent if we: (a) identify token mental events with token physical events, but (b) deny that mental properties can be identified with physical properties, and (c) reject psychophysical laws. Is anomalous monism a form of property dualism or is supervenience sufficient for property physicalism? Is anomalous monism a form of epiphenomenalism? Defend your answers with reasons or arguments.
3. Explain the "common road to qualia" taken by those who argue for qualia on the basis of the similarity between (a) hallucinatory (or non-veridical) experience and (b) perception (or veridical experience). How does Smart try to resist this common argument for qualia? Is Smart's rejection of qualia defensible? Defend your answer with arguments or reasons.
4. Explain in detail the thesis we've called "the holism of the mental" and describe the problem for behaviorism posed by the truth of this thesis.
5. Explain and critique David Lewis's response to Frank Jackson's "knowledge argument" against physicalism or materialism.
6. Explain and critique our objection to Jackson's inference from epistemic premises to a metaphysical conclusion—i.e. the inference from (a) the premise that upon leaving her black and white room Mary seems to realize something about what it has (all along) been like for those of us outside of the room when we see red surfaces, to (b) the conclusion there are non-physical (i.e. irreducibly mental) properties of our visual experiences that we can only identify by introspecting on those experiences. (Our argument has the form of a dilemma centered on the two different definitions of "facts" one might accept.)
7. Explain and critique Lewis' argument that (a) acknowledging that Mary learns a new fact according to a broad scheme for individuating facts, entails (b) epiphenomenalism.
8. Explain Fodor's theory of belief and other propositional attitudes (i.e. the "language of thought" theory) and Carnap's theory of belief. Describe: (a) two desiderata for a theory of thought that Carnap's and Fodor's theories both meet, and (b) two problems for Carnap's theory that are not problems for Fodor's theory. Is Fodor's theory plausible? Why or why not?
9. Explain Dennett's conception of the intentional strategy and how it differs from the design strategy and the physical strategy. Explain Dennett's idea that beliefs are theoretical posits shown to be real (or real enough) by their utility in explaining and predicting the activities of humans and other animals. Make sure to describe Dennett's thought experiment in which an Earthling and a super-physicist Martian compete to see who can better predict the actions Mr. Gardner takes in response to his wife's instructions. If the Martian would be astonished at the Earthling's predictive success, does this demonstrate the reality of those beliefs and desires the Earthling attributes to Mr. Gardner when generating his predictions about what Mr. Gardner will do? According to Dretske, "Recipes for thought can't have interpretive attitudes or explanatory stances among the ingredients—not even the attitudes and stances of others. That is like making candy out of candy—in this case, one person's fudge out of another person's caramels. You can do it, but you still won't know what candy is." Does Dretske's point undermine Dennett's analysis of belief by showing that it is circular or empty? Can we give a satisfactory "analysis" or theory of belief that takes for granted our attributions of beliefs to one another? If Dennett's account of belief assumes the existence of beliefs about what other people believe, can it really provide us with the kind of "constructive understanding" Dretske demands? Defend your answers to these questions with argument.

10. According to Dretske's theory of thought, information is necessary but insufficient for thought. According to Dretske, what must be added to a state of information internal to an animal if that state is to genuinely represent things in that animal's environment? Explain Millikan's reasons for thinking information is not necessary for thought and other forms of mental representation. Is Millikan's argument against Dretske's theory a good one? Explain Millikan's preferred account of mental representation on which "use is everything." Is Millikan's positive theory of representation better than Dretske's? Defend your answers with arguments.

11. According to Dretske, Fodor, and Millikan, an adequate theory of mental representation must solve the "disjunction problem." Explain the problem and Dretske's and Millikan's solutions to it. Is Dretske's solution adequate? Is Millikan's? Defend your answers to these questions with arguments or reasons.