

PHIL 43904: Final exam

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Saturday, December 15

On the final, you will be given four quotes from the selection below. With respect to three of these, you will have to (1) name the author of the quote; (2) explain, clearly and in your own words, the thesis of which the quote is a part, and the author's reasons for thinking that thesis to be true; and (3) state and briefly evaluate at least one objection to that thesis or argument. The objection may be one discussed in class or one that you've come up with on your own.

1. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*:

- 2.021 Objects make up the substance of the world. That is why they cannot be composite.
- 2.0211 If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true.
- 2.0212 In that case we could not sketch any picture of the world (true or false).

2. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*:

- 2.161 There must be something identical in a picture and what it depicts, to enable the one to be a picture of the other at all.
- 2.17 What a picture must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it - correctly or incorrectly - in the way it does, is its pictorial form.
- 2.172 A picture cannot, however, depict its pictorial form: it displays it.
- 2.174 A picture cannot, however, place itself outside its representational form.

3. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*:

- 6 The general form of a truth-function is $[\bar{p}, \bar{\xi}, N(\bar{\xi})]$. This is the general form of a proposition.
- 6.001 What this says is that every proposition is a result of successive applications to elementary propositions of the operation $N(\xi)$.

4. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*:

- 5.533 The identity-sign, therefore, is not an essential constituent of conceptual notation.
- 5.534 And now we see that in a correct conceptual notation pseudo-propositions like ' $a = a$ ' ... cannot even be written down.
- 5.535 This also disposes of all the problems that were connected with such pseudo-propositions. ...

5. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*:

- 6.54 My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them — as steps — to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) ...

6. Wittgenstein, 'Some remarks on logical form': "One might think — and I thought not so long ago — that a statement expressing the degree of quality could be analyzed into a logical product of single statements of quantity . . . But this will not do as an analysis of a statement of degree. For let us call the unity of, say, brightness b and let $E(b)$ be the statement that the entity E possesses this brightness, then the proposition $E(2b)$, which says that E has two degrees of brightness, should be analyzable into the logical product $E(b) \& E(b)$, but this is equal to $E(b)$; if, on the other hand, we try to distinguish between the units and consequently write $E(2b)=E(b') \& E(b'')$, we assume two different units of brightness; and then, if an entity possesses one unit, the question could arise, which of the two . . . it is; which is obviously absurd."
7. Moore, 'Proof of an external world': "Suppose, for instance, it were a question whether there were as many as three misprints on a certain page in a certain book. A says there are, B is inclined to doubt it. How could A prove that he is right? Surely he *could* prove it by taking the book, turning to the page, and pointing to three separate places on it, saying 'There's one misprint here, another here, and another here': surely that it is a method by which it *might* be proved! Of course, A would not have proved, by doing this, that there were at least three misprints on the page in question, unless it was certain that there was a misprint in each of the places to which he pointed. But to say that he *might* prove it in this way, is to say that he *might* be certain that there was. And if such a thing as that could ever be certain, then assuredly it was certain just now that there was one hand in one of the two places I indicated and another in the other."
8. Moore, 'Proof of an external world': "But another reason why some people would feel dissatisfied with my proofs is, I think, not merely that they want a proof of something which I haven't proved, but that they think that, if I cannot give such extra proofs, then the proofs that I have given are not conclusive proofs at all. And this, I think, is a definite mistake. They would say: 'If you cannot prove you premiss that here is one hand and here is another, then you do not know it. But you yourself have admitted that, if you did not know it, then your proof was not conclusive. . . .' This view that, if I cannot prove such things as these, I do not know them, is, I think, the view that Kant was expressing in the sentence which I quoted at the beginning of this lecture . . . Such a view . . . can, I think, be shown to be wrong — though shown only by the use of premisses which are not known to be true, unless we do know of the existence of external things. . . . I should say, therefore, that those, if any, who are dissatisfied with these proofs merely on the ground that I did not know their premisses, have no good reason for their dissatisfaction."
9. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*: "Let us call a proposition which records an actual or possible observation an experiential proposition. Then we may say that it is the mark of a genuine factual proposition, not that it should be equivalent to an experiential proposition, or any finite number of experiential propositions, but simply that some experiential propositions can be deduced from it in conjunction with certain other premisses without being deducible from those other premisses alone."
10. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*: "We begin by admitting that the fundamental ethical concepts are unanalysable . . . But, unlike the absolutists, we are able to give an explanation of this fact about ethical concepts. We say that the reason why they are unanalysable is that they are mere pseudo-concepts. The presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content. Thus if I say to someone, "You acted wrongly in stealing that money," I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, "You stole that money." In adding that this action is wrong I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it."
11. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*: "The best way to substantiate our assertion that the truths of formal logic and pure mathematics are necessarily true is to examine cases in which they might seem to be confuted. . . . [In such cases] one would adopt as an explanation whatever empirical hypothesis fitted in best with the accredited facts. The one explanation which would in no circumstances be adopted is that ten is not always the product of two and five. . . . And this is our procedure in every case in which a mathematical truth might appear to be confuted. We always preserve its validity by adopting some other explanation of its occurrence.
. . . The principles of mathematics and logic are true universally simply because we never allow them to be anything else."