Phil. 106: Kant

Take Home Final

Instructions

Answer any *three* of the following questions, 2–3 pages for each answer, for a total of 6–9 pages. You may hand in your answers early if you like, but all answers are due by Tues., June 8th. Please e-mail to your TA and cc me (`abestone@ucsc.edu`) in PDF, MSWord, plain text, or RTF).

The questions are keyed to different reading assignments, with the idea that each question is raised most centrally in a certain part of the reading. However, you can and should use material from anywhere in the text where it's relevant to the answer.

Because this is an exam rather than a paper, I will give priority to accuracy over originality in grading. However, all the questions do require some thought; they can't simply be read out of the texts. Moreover, in many (if not all) cases the "correct" answer is unavoidably a matter of interpretation: in such cases it would be safest to reproduce what I said in class, but it will also be acceptable if you're clearly following some other reasonable interpretation. And, of course, as usual, your answer must be "original" in the sense that it is your own work. (If you use any outside source—which I *don't* recommend—you must cite it.)

Since we read the A edition almost exclusively, please base your answer on the A edition text (where there are differences), except in the case of the passage from the B Preface which is part of the last reading assignment. You can cite pages by the A-edition page number (e.g., "A112"), or, in the case that one passage from the preface, by the B-edition page number (e.g., "Bxxvi").

Questions

1. (Intro to the Dialectic/Concepts of Pure Reason) Give an example of a categorical syllogism. Explain the various parts of the syllogism, as Kant understands them (major premise, minor premise, etc.). What is the "rule" of the syllogism? Explain how the syllogism subsumes something under a rule on a condition. Give an example of a prosyllogism which has the minor premise of the first syllogism as its conclusion. In what sense does the prosyllogism establish a "higher" condition—part of an "ascending" series of conditions? Explain the roles of the understanding and reason, in their logical employments, in drawing syllogisms and finding conditions.

2. (Concepts of Pure Reason) Explain, roughly, why, according to Kant, "experience" (that is: thinking an object through the appearances) must always involve a *rule*. Why does this mean that all objects of our knowledge can (and must) be thought by the understanding? Explain how this leads to the following two consequences: (1) the objects of our knowledge are always "conditioned" (never "unconditioned"); (2) when reason nevertheless demands that we think an "unconditioned" object, the understanding is led to apply the categories outside the realm of experience. (Note: you need not explain *why* reason makes this demand, although if you could that would be nice.)

3. (Paralogisms) Explain, as precisely as you can, what Kant thinks goes wrong in the syllogism on p. 333 (A348). What type of fallacy does it involve? Where in it is the category of *substance*, and/or its schema (permanence in time) applied illegitimately, and why?

4. (Antinomies) According to the Thesis of the Third Antinomy, p. 409 (A444/ B472), "it is necessary to assume that there is," in addition to natural causality, "also another causality, that of freedom." Explain how "freedom" is defined here, and explain why, according to Kant, reason (in its argument for the Thesis) demands the existence of a "free" cause (in *that* sense of free). On the other hand, how can we tell, based on the conclusions of the Transcendental Analytic, that this demand could never be fulfilled by any object of experience, i.e. that we can never experience anything which is in that sense "free"?

5. (Solution to the Third Antinomy) Freedom (more precisely: transcendental freedom) would seem to be inconsistent with determinism, for the following reason. Suppose I freely choose how to act at time t. According to determinism, whatever happens after t must be completely determined by what happened long before t (i.e., only one course of future events can be compatible with that course of past events). Therefore, I can only choose one way, i.e. can't choose freely. What would Kant say about this argument? (Hint: if I am free, is my free choice something that happens at a time? Is there more than one way I can choose? What is my "intelligible character"?)

6. (Ideal) What is (supposed to be) the concept of an *ens realissimum*? Explain what makes this concept an "ideal," as Kant defines that term on p. 485 (A568/B596): explain, that is, why this is the concept of an *individual* object. How, according to Kant, is this concept related to the totality of all possible things? In particular: why does reason's demand, that a thing

2

be known as possible by seeing it as one among all the possible things, i.e. by comparing it to the sum of all possibilities, end up being a demand that everything be thought by comparison to the ideal of the *ens realissimum*? How does the argument depend on the principle that realities cannot oppose each other, i.e. that the only thing opposed to reality is negation?

7. (Impossibility of the Proofs) Suppose we have a concept, C, and we already agree that C's are possible. Suppose I now tell you, further, that some C's are actual (i.e., that there actually are some C's). How, according to Kant, would this be different from telling you (for example) that all C's are extended, or that all C's are heavy? In particular, if C is an empirical concept, what am I adding to the claim that C's are possible when I say that at least some are actual? Explain using the example of the 100 thalers (dollars).

8. (Canon) Explain the difference between a pragmatic law and a moral law, according to Kant. How is each related to happiness? (Explain what "happiness" means, according to Kant.) Explain further why, given these definition (of moral law and of happiness), and given that the "supreme good" (or "supreme derivative good") is as Kant describes on pp. 640–41 (A813–14/B841–2), our only hope for the supreme good would be to assume that God exists. What is the definition of "God," as the term is used in the conclusion of this argument?