

Phil. 106: Kant

Take Exam 2

Instructions

Answer any *one* of the following questions in 2–3 pages (double spaced). Your answer is due, as an attachment, via the “Assignments” tool on eCommons, by midnight Thursday, May 17th. Please submit in MSWord format (.doc or .docx are both fine) or in a format easily convertible to MSWord (e.g. plain text or RTF). The eCommons site is set to accept late submissions, though late papers (without an approved extension) may not receive full credit. It is *not* set to allow resubmissions: once you press the “submit” button, it will not let you change your response. If, however, you mistakenly submit something and want to change it, please contact me and I will make an exception.

The questions are keyed to different sections of the reading, with the idea that each question is raised most centrally in a certain section. 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 B edition only, please base your answer on the B edition text (where there are differences). You can cite it by the B-edition page number (e.g., “B112”).

For answers to some common questions about my assignments, please see this FAQ.

Questions

1. (Transcendental Deduction, part I) A deduction, according to Kant, establishes the legitimacy or “objective validity” of a concept — that is, it explains how we know that the manifold of appearances can be synthesized (by the imagination) in such a way as to be unified by that concept. Explain (1) why, according to Kant, we don’t normally need a deduction

of empirical concepts; (2) why, if we do want a deduction of an empirical concept, it will be what Kant calls an “empirical deduction” — that is, roughly, an account of how we acquired the concept in the first place; and (3) why an alleged empirical deduction of a *pure* concept (for example, of one of the categories) would not be a deduction at all.

2. (Transcendental Deduction, part II) Assume that the representation “I think” (which is at least potentially part of every representation of mine) doesn’t, in itself, contain sufficient conditions to ensure that a single *object* is thought (determined, made the target of reference) in it. If that is nevertheless a priori necessary, what are the additional conditions which ensure it? (Hint: how is this related to the pure form of sensibility and the a priori capabilities of the imagination?) Explain why this could be expressed by saying that the analytic unity of apperception depends on a prior synthetic unity.
3. (Schematism) Explain why an empirical concept, such as the concept *dog*, does not apply directly to sense impressions — in particular, does not apply directly to *images* of dogs. What role does the faculty of imagination play in allowing such a concept to be applied? (In what way does the imagination “produce” an image?) How does this involve a “schema”? Give another example which shows the role of the imagination and its schemata in the case of mathematical concepts. Why is there a special problem with there being schemata for pure concepts of the understanding, such as the categories?
4. (System of Principles) The Highest Principle of All Synthetic Judgments is, roughly, that the appearances must be such that they can all be thought together as mine (in the unity of apperception). What does this have to do with the categories, and with the schemata of the categories? How does it rule out certain synthetic judgments as, not self-contradictory, but *empty*? Why do such purported synthetic judgments undermine themselves, even though the predicate (more generally: the knowledge or rule) in them does not contradict the subject (more generally: the condition on which they apply the rule).
5. (Phenomena and Noumena) The Transcendental Analytic has shown that all the objects of our knowledge are phenomena: that is, they are *objects* (of a cognitive faculty) only insofar as they *appear* (are given in sensible intuition). Kant (as I understand him) then entertains an objection along these lines: doesn’t this mean that we do, after all, know *something* about noumena: that is, about things which are objects of our understanding

directly, without the mediation of a sensible intuition? Explain why this objection might arise: that is, why the conclusion of the Transcendental Analytic might seem to have that implication. Explain further why, if this were correct, it imply that the categories have, not only a transcendental meaning, but also a transcendental employment.

6. (Amphiboly) Consider the concepts of *identity* and *difference*. Explain why we must be able to apply them to objects if we are to think of those objects under concepts (for example, to think of an object as *cinnabar*, or as *some cinnabar*, or as *this cinnabar*). How, according to Kant, can we actually apply these concepts (of identity and difference) to objects: that is, what makes two objects different? (Hint: how is space involved?) Why would that not work, according to Kant, if the objects of our knowledge were noumena?