

Phil 107: First Short Essay (Schelling)
Winter, 2020

Instructions

Due, as an attachment, via the “Assignments” tool on Canvas, by 11:55pm Wednesday, January 29 (in PDF or any format easily converted to PDF, e.g. MSWord, OpenOffice, L^AT_EX, RTF, plain text).

Answer any *one* of the questions listed below in 2–3 pages (double spaced).

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.)¹ To cite Schelling, please just give the page number in our text.

You can find answers to some commonly asked questions about my assignments and grading in my FAQ (<https://people.ucsc.edu/~abestone/courses/faq.html>).

Questions

1. (Introduction and Part One) Briefly describe the two “prejudices” designated A and B on pp. 9–10. Explain why the first prejudice (A), according

¹If you have any questions about policies on plagiarism and related issues, please see https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct.

to Schelling, is characteristic of a “theoretical” attitude or standpoint (one in which we want to know and contemplate the truth); and why the second prejudice (B) is characteristic of a “practical” attitude or standpoint (one in which we want to decide how to act). What does each of these prejudices say about the relationship between the subjective and the objective: that is, between *subject* of presentations (that which represents) and their *objects* (that which is represented)? If, as transcendental philosophy contends, the highest principle of knowledge is “I = I” — a proposition in thinking which I make myself into my own object — why is that likely to overturn both prejudices?

2. (Parts Two and Three) Why, according to Schelling, does being an *object* entail *finitude* (that is: limitedness, being limited, being one thing and *not* something else)? Hint: why does he say that “only that which is limited me-ward,² so to speak, comes to consciousness” (p. 44)? Explain why this means, according to Schelling, that the ego (or “self”) is “originally” infinite, but becomes finite through the act of intuiting itself? Why, as a result, does the intuited ego feel itself affected by an alien force originating outside the realm of presentations? What do we, the transcendental philosophers, say is really affected the intuited ego?

3. (Part Four) Consider the following paradox which Schelling puts forward with respect to free action: “The contradiction here is that the act has to be both explicable and inexplicable” (p. 159). Why must the free act of an intelligence be “inexplicable” (through the previous state of that intelligence)? Why must it be “explicable”? How is the existence of other intelligences, who both (a) have rights against me and (b) *demand* of me that I satisfy those rights, supposed to resolve the contradiction? (Note: although I talked a lot about Leibniz while explaining this in class, you do not need to discuss Leibniz in your answer.)

4. (Parts Five and Six) [coming soon]

²*Das, was begrenzt an mir ist:* might be better translated “that which is limited at me,” i.e. that which has a limit at me, or in me.