

Central Problems in Philosophy: Paper Two

Requirements

You are to submit one 6–8 page research paper on Tuesday 19 April, addressing one and only one of the questions listed below. A printed copy of the paper must be submitted in class.

Guidelines

Essay guidelines are available here: <http://goo.gl/jrx25>

Questions

- Explain and evaluate the theory of personal identity defended by (Locke [1689] 2011), addressing at least one of the following questions:
 - Explain and evaluate one argument made by Locke against the view that the identity of persons is determined by the identity of human animals.
 - Explain and evaluate one argument made by Locke against the view that the identity of persons is determined by the identity of souls.
 - What is the problem of transitivity (Mackie 1976, pp. 178–179), and how might Locke's theory be modified to address it?
- Explain and evaluate the theory of the self defended by Vasubandhu in *Ātmavādapratishedha*, addressing at least one of the following questions:
 - What is the main difference between Vasubandhu and the Pudgalavādins, and what is the distinction between kinds of reality on which it rests, according to Ganeri (2007)?
 - According to Parfit (1995), some Buddhists should be interpreted as endorsing a view he calls *eliminative reductionism* about persons. Explain this view and consider whether Vasubandhu endorses it.
- Explain and evaluate the argument made by Velleman (2006), according to which a certain type of suffering is caused by belief in an enduring self, addressing at least one of the following questions:
 - What explains our belief in an enduring self, according to Velleman?

- How does belief in an enduring self lead to belief in the passage of time, according to Velleman?
- Why is coming to believe the conclusion of his paper unlikely to reduce our suffering, according to Velleman?

References

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- Jonardon Ganeri. 2007. “The Imperfect Reality of Persons”, in *The Concealed Art of The Soul: Theories of Self and Practices of Truth in Indian Ethics and Epistemology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 157–184.
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- John Locke. [1689] 2011. “Of Identity and Diversity”, in *Locke on Personal Identity: Consciousness and Concernment*, edited by Galen Strawson, Princeton University Press, Princeton, pp. 163–231. Edited and translated by Galen Strawson.
- John L. Mackie. 1976. “Personal Identity”, in *Problems from Locke*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 173–203.
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- Derek Parfit. 1995. “The Unimportance of Identity”, in *Identity: Essays Based on Herbert Spencer Lectures Given in the University of Oxford*, edited by Henry Harris, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 13–45. Reprinted in Martin and Barresi (2003, pp. 292–317) and Gallagher (2011, pp. 419–441).
- John Perry, Michael E. Bratman, and John Martin Fischer. 2015. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, edited by John Perry, Michael E. Bratman, and John Martin Fischer. 7th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- J. David Velleman. 2006. “So It Goes”, in *The Amherst Lecture in Philosophy*, Vol. 1, pp. 1–23. Reprinted in Velleman (2015, pp. 175–194) and Perry, Bratman, and Fischer (2015). URL: <http://www.amherstlecture.org/velleman2006/>.
- . 2015. *Beyond Price: Essays on Birth and Death*, Cambridge: Open Book Publishers. URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0061>.