

Philosophy 132

The Philosophy of Mind

Mid-Term Questions

Distributed 3 October 2007

ESSAYS DUE: *Friday 19 OCTOBER 2007*

You should use one of the following questions to write a four-paged double-spaced essay. Reminder: my office hours are *Mondays 2.30-4pm Moses 230*.

1. Explain Mill's reasoning here. Does he manage to show that it is reasonable for him to believe that others around him have feelings?

In my own case I know that the first link produces the last through the intermediate link, and could not produce it without. Experience, therefore, obliges me to conclude that there must be an intermediate link; which must either be the same in others as in myself, or a different one: I must either believe them to be alive, or to be automatons: and by believing them to be alive, that is, by supposing the link to be of the same nature as in the case of which I have experience, and which is in all other respects similar, I bring other human beings, as phenomena, under the same generalizations which I know my experience to be the true theory of my own existence. (J.S. Mill)

2. Explain Putnam's strategy here for dismissing sceptical scenarios. Do you think it succeeds?

It is perfectly imaginable that other people should be mere 'dummies' controlled remotely by some intelligence, I know nothing of. But I do not grant that this hypothesis is 'in the field'. For a hypothesis to be in the field, it is not enough for it to represent a possibility that we can imagine; it must meet two further conditions. It must be elaborated, the details must be worked out to a certain degree, various questions which naturally occur to one must be answered, and, secondly, it must not be too *silly* to consider. (Putnam, 359-360.)

3. What does it mean to say that your pains are *private* to you? What does it mean to say that pain is a *subjective* phenomenon? What is the relation between these two claims?

4. Does Jackson have good reasons to claim that pains are objects rather than states or ways of feeling?

5. Are there sensations of position?

6. Does Wittgenstein's example show that it is conceivable that one can feel pain in another's body?

Wittgenstein's example from the Blue Book: Jones feels a pain and when asked to indicate where the pain is points to Brown's body. We can imagine that there is a reliable correlation between damage to parts of Brown's body and Jones's pain responses. (Brown – neurotransmitter; Jones – neuroreceptors; a form of wireless extension to the nervous system: there is a reliable correlation between, e.g., sticking pins in Brown and Jones's reaction. Jones answers, 'It is my other leg that hurts.')