Superset of Questions on AHRF16 Test 3

S Bringsjord

v 120516

Note: *Minor but potentially important* additions and modifications between now and the in-class exam are possible.

Q1 Recall the BBS article "Darwin's Mistake: ..." by — abbreviating again, as we've done — PHP. Of the commentaries that follow the main paper by PHP that directly attack either the main claim of PHP, or PHP's argument for that claim, (i) select and clearly announce the one you find most powerful, (ii) summarize that commentary (one paragraph) and what PHP say in response (one more paragraph), and (iii) offer and defend your own view on who wins the exchange, and why.

Q2 What would Nicholson Baker likely say about the "infinitized" seriated cup challenge, and whether or not the challenge provides an example of something that distinguishes human from nonhuman animals? Make sure that in answering this question you refer as appropriate to his essay ("The Wrong Answer," linked from our syllabus and readily findable online at any rate). Now give your own verdict as to whether Baker is right or wrong.

Q3 You show The Liar Paradox (LP) to a friend of yours with paper and pen at Starbucks. He asks why anyone would *ever* carefully study such things. You reply that one reason is that sometimes such study makes possible historic discoveries in rational thought. He demands an example. You reply: "Well, Gödel's first incompleteness theorem, as a matter of fact." He says: "Hmm. I'm not familiar with that theorem. Can you give me the basic idea, using a parallel of what you've just written out in front of me here about LP?" Deliver on this request now, in your booklet. (If you are going for an A=with-distinction, it's required that you answer Q3, and that you at least try to specifically answer the A+ question that appears in our last slide deck.)

Q4 (i) Do you think computing machines will ultimately handle "souped up" versions of the kinds of tasks that PHP say nonhuman animals simply can't? (ii) Do recent accomplishments in AI (e.g., AlphaGo) provide evidence in favor of your answer? Justify.

Q5 Bringsjord has argued that the domain-independent, abstract reasoning power of humans, contrary to what Darwin maintained, is simply not seen in honhuman animals, at all. (Recall the analysis and argumentation in question, and the citations of Darwin; see the deck. Recall specifically the karkooking problem.) What is the relationship between this claim, and the position and argumentation given by PHP?

Are Bringsjord and PHP in agreement? Do they only partially agree? Explain.

Q6 Assuming the identity of Dennett, write out in your own words an argument in favor of atheism that takes account of what was presented and discussed in class on this subject, making sure to factor in specifics from the slide deck in question, and our discussion in class that day.

Q7 Do you think a computing machine (perhaps embodied in a robot) can in principle reason in productive and informative ways about infinite concepts and structures? Defend your answer, and in doing so make reference to appropriate topics and examples discussed in this class.

Q8 Defend either the "one-boxer" or "two-boxer" position on Newcomb's Problem by giving an argument in favor of it. Make sure that your argument includes anticipating what someone of the other persuasion would say, and disarming this commentary.

Q9 Present a proposed solution to The Paradox of Proust, and defend it against at least one strong objection.

Q10 S Bringsjord's main claim in this class is of course $\mathcal{R}$. Now that things have drawn to a close, are you currently inclined to accept $\mathcal{R}$, reject it, or are you agnostic? After announcing your overall position explicitly, present the most powerful objection to your position that you can imagine, in the form of a clear argument — and then defend your overall position by refuting this argument.