

Marking Model Epistemology, Final Exam

Per question: marks can be deducted due to longwindedness and unclarity of expression

Question 1

A

- Full marks: an example where the experience is affected by some prior belief, external or state that the subject is in, e.g. bodily dysmorphia, depression, love goggles.
- Made precise by
 - Attend the same stimuli
 - Be in different background conditions (moods or something affecting the perceptual experience)
 - Have different perceptual experiences
- 3 marks: cases of selective perception and training where the subject is better capable to identify something

B

- Full marks:
 - Reports about our mental states and logical principles do not imply anything about what we perceive
 - perceptual reports are non-inferential, they are cognitively spontaneous
 - No truths about the nature of objects in the external world follow from the candidate basic beliefs
- 2 marks: a problem for foundationalism as a whole

C

- Full marks: Kantian containment, Fregean account, Linguisticism or explanations of the previous
- 3 marks: Parts of an answer: contained, based on meaning, logical truth

D

- Full marks: Differential access to markers of credibility, ethnocentrism, shared reality marks
- 2 marks: hermeneutic injustice, an example of structural epistemic injustice (gender, being marginalised)

Question 2

A

- Full marks: Foundationalism contains a hierarchy of beliefs and makes a distinction between basic and non-basic beliefs. Whereas justification under foundationalism is one-directional and ultimately relies on basic beliefs, coherentism does not presuppose such a hierarchy and claims that beliefs can mutually support one another
- Elements of an answer: hierarchy, basic beliefs, mutual support, pyramid, infallible beliefs

B

- Full marks: whereas testimonial reductionism claims that testimony requires justification from a source which does not rely on testimony, testimonial non-reductionism does not require a positive justification. It just requires the absence of defeaters
- Elements of an answer: positive reasons, independent justification, on the basis of our own perception, memory and induction, prima facie justification, defeaters

C

- Full Marks: whereas epistemic bubble are social epistemic structures which have inadequate coverage through a process of exclusion by omission, echo chambers are epistemic communities which create a significant disparity in trust between members and non-members, marked by the ascription to a core set of beliefs which constitute membership of that group
- Elements of an answer: inadequate coverage, like-minded, confirmation, excluding outside sources, our team, distrust and discrediting, actively undermine trust, us and them, same points of view,

D

- Full marks: whereas intellectualism is characterized by aperspectivalism (i.e. an agent's justification must be accessible to other epistemic agents exposed to the same features of the situation) and atomism (i.e. knowers are generic and, thus, interchangeable), standpoint epistemology claims that there can be differing claims to knowledge by subjects, which are determined by non-epistemic features, such as social identity
- Elements of an answer: social identity, non-epistemic features, generic knowers, epistemic features, atomism, aperspectivalism, empathy, de se representation

Question 3.

- Full marks: engages the arguments by Bonjour that epistemic standards for empirical systems are grounded in a priori truths, or else there is no evaluation, and engages Devitt's arguments that those standards are evaluated by their track records or that the a priori is obscure
- Points deducted: not fully appreciating the arguments made, but acknowledging them
- 10 marks: engages one of the arguments
- 8 marks: forms a coherent argument
- 6 marks: demonstrates understanding of the subject matter

Question 4.

- Full Marks: Peer disagreement problems revolve around normative positions, when confronted with an epistemic peer that disagrees with you. It concerns what we should believe in such a situation. Hyperresoluteness is a related problem that concerns what we should do in the context of disagreement with a superior. It can be related to the instance of PVI vs DL on possible worlds. It is where one cannot make oneself defer or revise one's opinion viz-a-viz an expert. The core of this problem is that epistemic involuntarism: we cannot make ourselves believe something that we are not compelled to believe by the evidence, for belief is an involuntary response to evidence. This provides a problem for peer disagreement as well. Elgin sidesteps this problem by appealing to acceptance, i.e. playing along and demonstrating willingness to accept the opinion as a premise. Acceptance is an action and is, therefore, voluntary. Because of this sidestep, we can meet the demands of the different positions in the context of peer disagreement.
- Elements of a right answer: acceptance, involuntary, action, belief responsive to evidence, epistemic superior, epistemic inferior, revision in light of disagreement, steadfast in light of disagreement
- 6 points for addressing related issues in Elgin's paper

Question 5

- Full Marks: Toole equates empathy to imagining the position of another person as a de se representation, i.e. imagining their exact point of view. Moira, because of her social identity as a black woman, is better able to represent the female victims of the rape case, because she is closer to them in terms of social distance than June, the white woman. From that position, she is better able to understand and judge their actions and testimony.
- Elements of a right answer: social position, de se representation, social identity, imagination,
- Compensating points: pragmatic encroachment, importance to believe truths vs. importance to disbelieve falsehoods, hypersexualisation, entertaining hypotheses, conceptual resources, testimonial smothering
- Setting the scene correctly earns 6-8 points: both subjects are encountered with the same evidence, white police officer who is a serial rapist, black women with criminal records waited a while to come forward
- Explaining what empathy is, is essential for more than 10 points. Explaining how it resolves the situation is also important for full marks

Question 6

- Full Marks: a cogent argument that either challenges or acknowledges Nguyen's argument that those in an epistemic bubble are able to escape by rebooting, i.e. assess all the testimonies given to them as being on par in terms of trust. In the latter case, it discusses whether we should expect those born in an echo chamber to do so and develop an argument
- Deductions for lack of development or inaccuracies
- 10 marks: acknowledges Nguyen's argument, but does not push it further.
- 6 points: cogent argument, which acknowledges what echo chambers are and how hard it is to escape them