

Metaphysics: Problem set 5

February 28

due date: Monday, March 5

Type and staple your answer.

NB: Use your own words. No quotation, no paraphrase.

1. (20%): Give your own example of a plausible supervenience thesis. Briefly explain why this thesis is plausible.

Your example should be of the form ‘The A- facts supervene on the B-fact’. Don’t use “the physical facts” or “the arrangement of local qualities” or “the arrangement of local qualities and the causal relations” as your B-facts: choose something more down-to-earth.

2. (40%) In Postscript B to ‘Survival and Identity’, Lewis gives a seven-step argument for the existence of ‘person-stages’, i.e. temporal parts of people. He writes

I do not suppose the doubters will accept my premises, but it will be instructive to find out which they choose to deny.

Which step in Lewis’s argument should be disputed by someone who doubts the existence of person-stages? Begin by briefly explaining the role your chosen step plays in the argument, and why Lewis finds it plausible. Then say why a doubter should dispute this step of the argument. Does this step of the argument succeed, or is the doubter correct?

If you think that the doubter ought to dispute more than one step of Lewis’s argument, just choose one of the problematic steps and write about that.

3. (40%) Compare and contrast the first and third of the solutions to the problem of temporary intrinsics that Lewis considers in *On the Plurality of Worlds* (p. 204). Explain Lewis’s reasons for rejecting the first solution. Are these reasons convincing?

You are encouraged to refer to section 4.6 of Sider’s book as well as to Lewis.