

AG lit. review questions: week 1

Absolutism

- (Q1) What is *absolutism about quantifiers* or *generality-absolutism*?
- (Q2) What kinds of examples might motivate the need for an absolutely comprehensive domain?

Quantifier domain restriction

- (Q3) How might a quantifier come to have a less-than-absolutely comprehensive domain?
- (Q4) What is the relationship between *relativism about quantifiers* and *quantifier domain restriction*?

Sortal restriction

- (Q5) How might we characterize a *sortal term*?
- (Q6) Absolutism ... calls for universal nominals: in order to contend that ‘everything’ sometimes attains absolute generality, the absolutist needs to claim that the nominal ‘thing’ applies indiscriminately to any item whatsoever, regardless of its sort. The argument from sortal restriction contests this claim on the twin grounds that [A] a quantifier’s nominal must be a sortal term and that [B] no sortal term is universal. (EMoL, p. 4)

How might a sortalist defend theses (A) and (B)?

- (Q7) How convincing are these defences?

Metaphysical realism

- (Q8) What’s the difference between *ontology* and *metaontology*?
- (Q9) Do we have any (prima facie) reason to think absolutism has any commitments in terms of ontology?
- (Q10) What about for metaontology?
- (Q11) Can a case be made for the thesis Biggest is Best (EMoL, p. 8) on Hirsh’s view of ‘metaphysical privilege’?
- (Q12) What about on Sider’s account of ‘joint-carvingness’?
- (Q13) What about on other metaontological views?

Technical interlude: Russell's paradox and ZFC

(Q14) What is 'naive set theory'? How does it lead to Russell's paradox?

(Q15) How does ZFC avoid Russell's paradox?

(Q16) How might we prove the following theorems of ZFC?

Theorem (ZFC): Let D be a set. Then $\{x \in D : x \notin x\}$ is a subset of D which is not a member of D .

Corollary: No set has everything as a member.

Indefinite extensibility

(Q17) What is an *indefinitely extensible* concept? Putative examples?

(Q18) What is the relationship between the (so called) *Russell Reductio* and the ZFC-theorems stated above?

(Q19) How does the *Williamson–Russell Reductio* differ from the Russell Reductio?

(Q20) How might an absolutist oppose the argument from indefinite extensibility?

Mysteriousness

(Q21) Even if we seldom have call for absolute generality outside of metaphysics, logic and set theory, why doubt that it is available? What's to stop us from quantifying over an absolutely comprehensive domain simply by dropping any restrictions applied to 'everything'? (EMoL, p. 17)

How might relativists respond to worries of this kind?

Ineffability

(Q22) We might attempt to state absolutism and relativism as follows:

(A) Some quantifier's domain comprises everything.

(R) No quantifier's domain comprises everything.

Do (A) and (R) succeed in capturing the relevant views by the absolutist's lights?

(Q23) What about by the relativist's lights?