

PHIL123.01A: Philosophy of Human Nature
Exam I Review: Genesis 1-3, *Phaedrus*, Buber

I. Genesis

- A. There are two different creation stories juxtaposed in the first two chapters of Genesis, with the second story extended into an explanation of the origin of evil in God's creation. Know the main differences between the two stories, especially in terms of the order of creation of human beings.
1. What does the first story's cycle of six days plus a seventh day of rest emphasize both about creation as a whole and the place of human beings in creation?
 - a) Note that the sequence of events in the days of creation is not exact – light is created without any sun or stars to be the source of light – but scientific precision is not the point of the story: Rather, the emphasis is on orderliness, goodness, fruitfulness, and the seventh day being set aside for God.
 - b) The final day that is set aside for God's rest is a model for human life as well: the Sabbath was always to be holy ("hallowed") and to be kept as a day of rest. In following this model, humans are subservient to God, but also *like* God.
 2. Human beings are created on day six "in the image of God" and as "male and female." Note how this "in God's image" emphasizes why humans are also expected to rest on the Sabbath: they are to *obey* God by acting *like* God.
 - a) The human beings are told to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." What implications does this have for human sexuality?
 - b) Humans are also told to "subdue [the earth]" and "have dominion" over every living thing, both animals and plants.
- B. *Genesis* chapters 2-3: note differences from Chapter 1.
1. How is the perspective on humankind different in the chapter 2-3 account?
 - a) What is the image of the earth that the chapter 2 account starts with (2:5-8) and how is this different from the chapter 1 account?
 - b) How does the story of the actual creation of the first human differ in chapter 2 from chapter 1? (Note that while no mention is made of God's "image," it is still God's *breath* that makes Adam live.) Where does the human come in the order of living things?
 - c) Although the creation of Eve out of Adam's rib might seem to make woman secondary, we emphasized Adam's reaction to Eve as compared to all the other animals he has named. What is his reaction and what is its significance for the understanding of human nature, male nature, female nature of this story?
 - d) Note also that the last line of chapter 2, which states that Adam and Eve were naked, but felt no shame, points, like chapter 1, to the initial innocence and goodness of human sexuality, an innocence that disappears.
 2. Chapter 3 describes the appearance of evil in the world. What is the cause of evil? (Note: if you say it is God, I will mark your test paper wrong; there is no textual support for this notion and there are no Jewish or a Christian readings of the story that give this interpretation.)
 - a) We might consider three statements, the first two direct conclusions from Genesis and the third from human experience: a) God is good; b) what God creates is therefore good; c) but evil exists in the world and is part of our experience. Thus, chapter 3 explains the origin of evil in the world as a result of human action and choice.

- b) What are the results of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God's command?
- 1) How does their relationship to the earth change?
 - 2) How does the goodness and fruitfulness of the world change?
 - 3) How does their relation to their own bodies and to their sexuality change?
 - 4) How does their relationship to God change?

II. Plato: *Phaedrus*.

A. Socrates encounters Phaedrus as he is walking out into the countryside to rehearse a speech he has heard Lysias give, a speech about love but one that seems to criticize love even though the goals it pursues might seem to be the true goals of a lover (i.e., sexual favors). Phaedrus was so impressed by this speech, by its techniques an rhetoric that he has either borrowed a written copy from Lysias or written it out himself. In this brief introduction, we meet most of the key issues of the text: speech or rhetoric as either a tool of seeming, opinion and manipulation or of truth, the quest to know through examining speeches the true nature of love, and also the status of writing as opposed to speech.

1. Socrates first indicates his true concerns when he says that, instead of trying to figure out rational accounts for all the old and somewhat fantastic legends (such as Boreas carrying away the maiden Orethuaia), he is rather preoccupied with what question (230A)?
2. This introduces the other key theme of the dialogue – the nature of the human soul and the suggestion that we may share in “a divine and gentle nature.”
3. The *setting* of their recital of the speeches and their discussion is unusual for Socrates: in the country rather than in the city, but you don't need to be concerned about this for the exam – except for the mention of the cicadas in the last part of the dialogue.

B. Lysias' speech: You do not need to know in detail the “arguments” of Lysias' speech, but you should know its general characteristics: what attitude toward love Lysias professes, what Lysias' purpose is, etc. A couple other things to note:

1. What is Phaedrus' attitude toward Lysias' speech? What does this tell us about Phaedrus?
2. What are some of the criticisms Socrates eventually brings against Lysias' speech: its beginning, its order, its honesty, its level of insight, etc.
3. Our translators mention that Lysias' speech was a “show speech” or one not given in actual circumstances (law courts or assembly meeting, but a speech intended to display the orator's skill by taking on a seemingly impossible theme and making listeners buy into it just through skill of speaking. How should this affect our judgment of the speech (think about the distinction between seeming and being)?
4. Note also Socrates' characteristic irony in responding at first that he is as carried away as Phaedrus is, even though it soon becomes obvious that he's not very carried away by Lysias' speech at all. This irony is Socrates' method of getting people to recognize the inconsistencies in their ideas and opinions and thus begin to examine an issue and think for themselves. because we are often unsure that we can take what Socrates says at face value, we are forced to examine carefully the arguments and what is being discussed.

C. Socrates' First speech: cautions about love.

1. Socrates' opening: invocation of Muses (asks for divine help because he himself "doesn't know") and description of insincere character of speech ("one of them was wily and had persuaded him that he was not in love, though he loved the lad no less than the others"), which is a not-so-subtle criticism of Lysias. Finally, though we did not mention it, notice that Socrates never identifies himself with the content of this speech: it is all given in 3rd person: "The one who is wily and pretends to be what he is not says this...."
2. Socrates' definition of love:
 - a) Socrates first defines love as desire but then says this definition is useless. Why is it useless? (237D)
 - b) How does Socrates describe the principles that lead all human beings (237D-238B)?
 - c) How does this help him derive a more precise definition of love (238C)?
3. Socrates' description of the harms that are likely to come to a young person who allows himself to become the object of another's love. Be familiar with:
 - a) 239A-C: the harms to a person's intellectual development;
 - b) 239C-D: the harm to a person's physical development;
 - c) 239E-240A: the harm to a person's possession and family relations
 - d) 240B-E: the lack of even any immediate pleasures – the disgusting behavior and appearance of the older lover;
 - e) 241A-C: what will happen when the lover falls out of love.
 - f) These are all summed up at 241C, at the end of the ¶. What is the most important harm imagined to befall the young person who gives in to love?

D. Socrates' divine sign and self-criticism.

1. When Socrates mentions his "divine sign" what does he say it usually tells him? What conclusion does he draw from this about his and Lysias's speeches.
2. Note that Socrates says, in discussing his divine sign, says that "the soul...is itself a sort of seer" (242D).
3. What does Socrates decide to do to make up for his impiety?

E. Socrates' Second Speech.

1. What does Socrates suggest about "madness" at the beginning of this speech (244A-245B)?
2. The true nature of the human soul
 - a) Be able to give at least a brief summary of the argument for the immortality of the soul (245C-E).
 - b) The structure of the soul: know the description of the soul as a charioteer with two horses (the soul is the whole ensemble of these). What do these three parts represent about the soul?
 - c) Even before Socrates describes how these souls lose their wings, he describes why the designation "living beings" are said to comprise both mortals (humans) and immortals (the gods), even though the soul itself is immortal. Explain.
3. What causes the shedding of the wings from the horses? Be able to explain this in some detail – 246D-248C – especially why the God's horses retain strong wings while the horses of the human souls shed their wings.
4. What is seen in the "place beyond heaven"? What is important about this sight? See (247C-248C).

5. Be able to describe the seeming hierarchy of “incarnations” (types of lives) into which a soul might fall (248D-E). Why are they in the order they are?
6. What determines how a soul is reassigned in its cycle of incarnations on earth and especially determines whether the soul can grow wings again?
 - a) What is the relation of things such as beauty, courage, justice, self-control, etc. here on earth to the visions of heaven?
 - b) How is beauty different or unique among the things like courage, justice and self-control? (250A-251A)
7. According to Socrates’ description of someone falling in love, what causes the agitation and alternate “pain and joy” of one falling in love (251B-252B)?
8. What difference on earth does it make which God the soul followed in heaven?
9. Be able to describe the dynamic of the parts of the soul (charioteer and two horses) as it related to Socrates’ description of someone falling in love.
 - a) What ends up happening to the young person (the beloved) in this process of the lover’s struggle to control the desire (255C-E), especially if the struggle is won by the charioteer and the “lover’s soul follows its boy in reverence and awe” (254E/255A)?
 - b) Socrates then describes a possible relapse into physical sexual activity. How do we know that Socrates admires more those who resist such temptation? *Why* would Socrates think it is better and nobler to resist the temptation to physical love?
10. From all of this second speech, what does Socrates believe is the ideal result of love, the great blessing that it brings to human beings?

F. The Conversation about Rhetoric.

1. Why doesn’t Socrates believe most politicians when they criticize people for being “sophists” (257E-258C)?
2. The story told about the cicadas (259A-D) may seem to be just a stylistic embellishment. However, it also suggests an ideal that Socrates and Phaedrus might aim for. What is this ideal?
3. The first argument against rhetoric is actually brought up by Phaedrus (at 260A), although Socrates returns to it himself (at 272D-274B). What is this objection against rhetoric?
4. Socrates tries to rescue a better judgment of rhetoric by suggesting that a good rhetorician will need to know the truth. What is the basis of Socrates’ argument?
 - a) Note, this argument really doesn’t guarantee that rhetoric will be a good thing – why not?
 - b) Where is the art of rhetoric most likely to be practiced?
 - c) According to Socrates, what is the difference between rhetoric practiced as an art and speaking that is “not an art at all (262C)?
5. Besides a clear definition (263D), what two processes does Socrates suggest should be part of any good use of rhetoric or speaking? 265D-266C
 - a) What is the general title used for this kind of activity? (266c)
 - b) The emphasis on these practices comes back at 276E-277A.
6. You don’t need to know all the techniques promoted by the experts (266E-267D), but you should be able to give a few examples.
 - a) Why does Socrates say that mastering these techniques is not enough to know the “art” of rhetoric? (Hint: He uses analogy to medicine and other arts – 268B-269D)

- b) Socrates suggests two objects of knowledge that a speaker must have if he is to use all these techniques well. What are they? (270B-C)
- c) What especially does Socrates say a good speaker will have to know about the soul? (270D-272A)
- d) Note that even all this will not guarantee that the speaker will not use his knowledge to deceive and manipulate instead of promoting the truth. This is why the argument about how people argue in the law courts comes back
- e) The conclusion at 273D-274B suggests a way that rhetoric and all of its techniques and knowledge can be used in the best way possible, even though these techniques and knowledge could be used for merely persuasive goals. Explain.

G. The argument about writing.

1. What does King Thamus (Ammon) say to the Egyptian divinity Theuth in criticism of his invention of writing? Why isn't writing a great discovery that serves as a medicine or "potion" for memory (274D-275B)?
2. What is the significance of Socrates' reply to Phaedrus about the oracle of Zeus that spoke through an oak (275B-C)? That is, Socrates chiding Phaedrus for having the wrong priorities in evaluating good arguments (in both speech and writing). What's wrong with Phaedrus criteria for what makes an impressive argument in speech (or writing)?
3. How is writing like painting, according to Socrates (275D-E)?
4. Instead of plain writing, what analogy or "legitimate brother" of writing does Socrates say will be "better and more capable" than writing itself (276A-277A)?
 - a) This is the culmination of the entire dialogue, and suggest what was wrong with Phaedrus' initial admiration of Lysias' speech.
 - b) In retrospect, then, you should be able to see Socrates' speeches, and especially his second "Great Speech," as an example of planting and sowing within the soul discourse accompanied by knowledge, discourse...which is not barren but produces a seed from which more discourse grows in the character of others..." (277A).

III. Martin Buber, *The Way of Man: According to the Teachings of Hasidism*.

- A. We did not cover this booking detail, but you should know what Buber asserts about Hasidic teachings in the brief preface on pp. 4-5. Key ideas:
1. Hasidism's appreciation of nature and the created world.
 2. How the world, though it is an "irradiation of God" can become separated from God and "form a crust around itself" and so become "enclosed by an isolating shell."
 3. How can human beings "redeem" or "liberate" the natural world so it returns to its origin?
 4. How can humans go wrong, even though they "have a divine spark within them"?
 5. How, in this midst of this "debasement" can humans redeem both the world and their very selves?