**Worksheet 8: Metaphysics**

**Name:** ………………………………………

**Skimming the text**

Read the text’s title (headings and subheadings) and

Write some of the text’s keywords in the following blanks.

................. .................. ..................... ..................

Write the names of some important people and places given in the

reading passage.

.................. .................. ..................... .....................

Read the first sentences of each paragraph. What do you think the

reading is probably about?

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**6.1 Substance**

(1) The Latin term substantia, translated as “substance,” is often used to refer to the basic reality supporting or standing under features that are incidental to that same thing. Ancient Greek philosophers were both monists and dualists. Indian philosophers developed the idea of atomism. The challenge of persistence (i.e., whether a thing could be said to retain identity despite changes introduced through time) can be explored through the Ship of Theseus thought experiment.

**6.2 Self and Identity**

(2) There are different answers to the question “What is the self?” The Judeo-Christian view tends to posit the “really real,” or the true self, in terms of a soul. Hindu and Buddhist views identify the self with the “atman.” Atman is an ancient term and has many meanings, but typically the term is translated as eternal self, soul, or even breath. Unlike in the Judeo-Christian view, the soul is reincarnated until the self attains release from reincarnation (moksha). The Buddhist doctrine of No Self (anatman) challenged the Western view in which the self is understood as enduring. There is no persistent self; within Buddhism, the “me” is ephemeral.

(3) A second issue addressed within this subsection is the reality of the mind. Many people identify the mind as the brain. Perhaps the attempts to reduce thinking to an independent mind are relics of an outdated view. The hard problem of consciousness is identified as the inability to explain one’s awareness of being aware. Behaviorism, the understanding of the self in terms of behavior, is one possible explanation for the ultimate reality of the self.

**6.3 Cosmology and the Existence of God**

(4) The attempt to demonstrate the existence of God has taken many forms and occurred across multiple cultures. Cosmological arguments consider that which is found in experience—that is, they are a posteriori and move from observed effects to cause. Ontological arguments are not based in experience but call upon people as thinkers to apply reason in order to reach a conclusion (i.e., they are a priori arguments). These arguments, much as a geometer might consider the nature of a triangle and then prove a theorem concerning triangularity, do not appeal to experience. Rather, they pose that the basic attributes of God are known through reason. Moral theorists argue for the existence of a divine being through a consideration of the possibility of objective values.

(5) How might the existence of evil support or argue against the existence of a god? The evidential problem of evil considers the reality of suffering and challenges the attributes we might apply to God given the existence of suffering. As not all traditions assume the same cosmology, some traditions (such as the African or Yoruban view) do not have this particular issue. Augustine, working within a Christian cosmology, attempted to answer the challenge by positing evil as the absence of good. Thus, a god could not be challenged as being good if evil existed as evil was merely the privation (absence) of good.

**6.4 Free Will**

(6) Does the sensation of freedom prove the existence of freedom? The metaphysical libertarian response declares that human action are free and outside of the causality observed governing natural objects. Because free choices exist, we are culpable for our decisions. The determinist response, in its so-called hard form, states that all actions are governed by the laws and principles observed in nature. According to this view, people’s actions, although accompanied by a feeling of freedom, are not in fact free. This section considers the soft determinist position, in which, as long as the moral agent did not face internal constraints concerning the choice at hand, the action could be free. Soft determinism is considered a compatibilist position, as the lack of alternative possibilities was considered compatible with freedom. Indeterminism, observing the inability of human reason to capture reality and all cause-and-effect chains in totality, asserts that the possibility of one event being outside of a cause-and-effect sequence is enough to assert the possibility of human freedom.

**Comprehension check**

*Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false. Write “T” before true statements and “F” before false ones.*

1. Ancient Greek philosophers were just monists. …

2. Like in the Judeo-Christian view, the soul is reincarnated until the self attains release from reincarnation (moksha). …

3. Many people identify the mind as the brain. …

4. Ontological arguments are based in experience but call upon people as thinkers to apply reason in order to reach a conclusion (i.e., they are a priori arguments). …

5. Augustine, working within a Christian cosmology, attempted to answer the challenge by positing evil as the absence of good. …

6. The metaphysical libertarian response declares that human action are free and outside of the causality observed governing natural objects. …

**Multiple choice questions**

*Read the reading passage carefully and select the most appropriate answer for each of the following multiple-choice test items. There can be more than one answer correct.*

**What does *subtantia* translated to?**

1. Mater
2. Substance
3. Liquid

**What does Atman mean?**

1. Soul
2. Eternal self
3. Breath

**Cosmological arguments consider that which is found in what?**

1. Reality
2. Experience
3. Life

**What does the evidential problem of evil consider?**

1. Reality of suffering
2. Reality of pain
3. Reality of death

**What does Indeterminism observe?**

1. inability of human mind to capture reality and all cause-and-effect chains in totality
2. inability of human reason to capture fantasy and all cause-and-effect chains in totality
3. inability of human reason to capture reality and all cause-and-effect chains in totality

**Synonym finding**

*Find a single word in the passage which means:*

1. Characteristics (para. 1)………………

2. Assert (para. 2)………………

3. Spirit (para. 2)………………

4. Autonomous (para. 3)………………

5. Illustrate (para. 4)………………

6. Elements (para. 4)………………

7. Agony (para. 5)………………

8. Liberty (para. 6)………………

9. Division (para. 6)………………

10. Beyond (para. 6)………………

**Matching**

*Match the terms with their definitions.*

1. Anatman

2. Compatibilism

3. Cosmological argument

4. Dualism

5. Metaphysics

6. Monism

7. Naturalism

8. Ontological argument

9. Ontology

10. Teleological argument

11. Universal

1. the field of philosophy concerned with identifying that which is real
2. an argument for the existence of God based upon the presence of ends (goals or purpose) as observed within nature
3. the rejection of any non-natural or appeal to supernatural explanatory concepts within philosophy
4. the view that a lack of freedom for the human moral agent is compatible with moral culpability for that same agent
5. when discussing being, a reality or concept that accounts for the shared whatness of a specific type of being
6. a field within metaphysics dedicated to the study of being
7. a Buddhist concept of the self as no-self (as not retaining identity through time)
8. the view that reality is comprised of one fundamental type of being
9. a view that posits two types of being in order to account fully for the nature of the thing under scrutiny
10. an argument for the existence of God built upon a consideration of the attribute of God’s existence
11. a type of argument for the existence of God based upon consideration of cosmic causality

**Cloze test**

*There are some missing words in the following text. Find the best choice for each blank*

**Causal Determinacy of the Past**

Another argument used to support determinism is built upon the consideration of past (1)………….. . Perhaps the simplest way to express the causal force the past holds on future events is to reflect on your first-person experience. How influential has the past been in shaping the decisions you make in the present? We use expressions that reflect this causal power—for example, I will not get fooled again, I guess I will have to learn from my (2)……………. , etc. What has happened in the past can, in the least, limit the event horizon of the present.

The power of the past is not limited to first-person experience. Our socio-economic status, for example, can be a powerful force in determining the actions we deem permissible. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once quipped, we tend to “don the knapsack of custom” without questioning the contents of the knapsack.

Another important distinction when discussing determinism is that of compatibilism. Some determinists will assume that (3)…………….. will is not compatible with determinism. An incompatibilist position asserts that due to the nature of freedom and our lack of control concerning our actions, we cannot be held culpable for our actions. A soft determinist will assume that free will is (4)…………..with determinism. In order to salvage a sense of moral culpability, an incompatibility might challenge the definition of freedom in terms of the PAP. For example, if you consider Frankfurt’s framing of freedom of fulfilling higher-order volitions, then even when forced to take an action, it may have very well been the action you would have chosen if not forced to do so.

William James (1842–1910) offers a view called indeterminism in which the notion is that all events are rigidly controlled. What if there is the possibility that one small effect might be uncaused somewhere out there in the grand series of cause-and-effect sequences? Given the (5)………that such an uncaused effect might occur, there is the chance that not all events are falling dominoes or events that must happen. Thus, even in a deterministic setting, an indeterminist can argue that the possibility of an uncaused act is a genuine one. By extension, your choices, your hopes, and the actions for which you should be praised or criticized cannot be.

1 A) vision B) sight C) experience D) view

2 A) mistakes B) fails C) doing D) self

3 A) free B) open C) broken D) healed

4 A) uncompatible B) diffrent C) compatible D) same

5 A) chance B) possibility C) idea D) option

**Source:**

Smith, N. (2022). *Introduction to Philosophy*. Houstom, Texas: OpenStax.