The MIT philosophy trivia quiz

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1. Consider the following “activities”:

(a) sex w/ home help
(b) death by laughter
(c) blind in one eye
(d) married four times
(e) syphilitic madness
(f) librarianism
(g) suicide
(h) murdered lover
(i) conviction for traveling on train without ticket
(j) recently found God
(k) spankophilia
(l) schoolteaching
(m) sexual abstention
(n) death by assassination
(o) sex outdoors
(p) vegetarianism
(q) near-death experience
(r) public masturbation

Which one was “performed” by:

1. Sex Pistols bass-player Sid Vicious & Louis Althusser?
2. stammering sex symbol Hugh Grant & Crates?
3. Dutch far-right populist Pim Fortuyn & Moritz Schlick?
4. Victorian-era decadent poet Algernon C. Swinburne & Jean-Jacques Rousseau?
5. gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thomson & Gilles Deleuze?
6. English bricklayer Alex Mitchell & Chrysippus?
7. socialite-seducer Casanova & David Hume?
8. aviator-playboy Howard Hughes & Friedrich Nietzsche?
9. faded comedian Peewee Herman & Diogenes?
10. peroxided punkstar Billy Idol & Bernard de Mandeville?
11. British heart-throb Jude Law & Karl Marx?
12. Al Gore’s former wardrobe advisor Naomi Wolf & Antony Flew?
13. raincoated gumshoe Peter Falk & Jean-Paul Sartre?
14. NBA iron-man A.C. Green & Gilbert Ryle?
15. animal loving sex-kitten Brigitte Bardot and Bertrand Russell
16. former teen idol Leif Garrett & C. E. M. Joad?
17. “Dallas” bad boy Larry Hagman & A. J. Ayer?
18. tantric sex devotee Sting & Ludwig Wittgenstein?
2. Which philosophical character:

1. is a fool?
2. gave Bert a banana?
3. discovered Gödel’s incompleteness theorem?
4. was once an iceman from Chicago?
5. signed a contract giving him a share of the team’s gate receipts?
6. was believed by Ralph to be a spy?
7. said “I was wounded”? 
3. Who observed that:

1. no fine, prehensile organ provided with striated muscles can be a sex organ?

2. only a male intellect clouded by the sexual drive could call the stunted, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped and short-legged sex the fair sex?

3. such an unnatural use (and so misuse) of one’s sexual attributes is a violation of one’s duty to himself and is certainly in the highest degree opposed to morality?

4. the secret of success with orgasm, as with comedy, is timing?

5. sexual desire involves a kind of mental fight against the flaccid designator: and the tragedy is that it is a fight which we are logically compelled to lose?

6. philosophy and the study of the actual world have the same relation to one another as onanism and sexual love?
4. In the pages of what did Jones:

1. own a Ford?

2. present a theory of his fellow men?

3. allegedly rake leaves?

4. lose the job to Smith?

5. mean addition by ‘+’?

6. find and fasten on a certain coat, which he needs to keep him from freezing?

7. have the minute processes of his brain and nervous system manipulated by Black?
5. Who spilled the beans in:

1. The Time of My Life?
2. Part of My Life?
3. Philosopher: A Kind of Life?
4. More of My Life?
5. The Making of a Philosopher?
6. The Confessions?
7. Three volumes?
1. “Isn’t it ludicrous for someone just one generation from the shtetl, a pisher from Brownsville and East Flatbush in Brooklyn, even to touch on the topics of the monumental thinkers? Of course it is”?

2. “Several writers, who have honored the Author’s Philosophy with answers, have taken care to direct all their batteries against that juvenile work, which the Author never acknowledged, and have affected to triumph in any advantages, which, they imagined, they had obtained over it: A practice very contrary to all rules of candour and fair-dealing, and a strong instance of those polemical artifices, which a bigoted zeal thinks itself authorized to employ”?

3. “Philosophy is a wonderful subject but it does not make a human life. I wrote this book after coming to see that. Philosophy is too spare and exacting for single-minded devotion. There is something heartless about it, and withering too. Too much of it is not good for a person”?

4. “I would like finally to say a word of gratitude to Venice, La Serenissima herself, where the book was first written”?

5. “It is time to stop and make a progress report”?
(ctd.):

6. “-If this book is unintelligible to anyone and hard on the ears, the fault, as I see it, does not necessarily lie with me.”

7. “The business of any writer, and especially of the philosopher, is, as they say, to discover, utter, and diffuse truth and adequate conceptions. In actual practice this business usually consists in warming up and distributing on all sides the same old cabbage.”

8. “Let us begin by setting aside all the facts, for they do not affect the question.”

9. “The body of the work had received its completion according to the then present extent of the author’s views, when, in the investigation of some flaws he had discovered, he found himself unexpectedly entangled in an unsuspected corner of the metaphysical maze. A suspension, at first not apprehended to be more than a temporary one, necessarily ensued: suspension brought on coolness, and coolness, aided by other concurrent causes, ripened into disgust.”
7. Who, initially, are:

1. M. A. E.?

2. C. A. B.?

3. B. A. O.?

4. P. M. S.?

5. F. L. G.?

6. M. D.?

7. A. N.?

8. J. B.?

surnames not included; if there are multiple answers, pick *the most famous*
8. What:

1. is not a body of doctrine but an activity?

2. is not an event in life?

3. for a large class of cases—though not for all—...can be defined thus?

4. must look after itself?

5. is the best picture of the human soul?

6. could be written consisting entirely of jokes?
9. Who croaked with:

1. “I don’t know”?

2. “what an irreparable loss!”?

3. “only one man ever understood me. And he really didn’t understand me”?

4. “I am about to take my last voyage, a great leap in the dark”?

5. (to his housekeeper who had just asked if he had any last words)
   “Go on, get out! Last words are for fools who haven’t said enough!”?

6. “Crito, I owe a rooster to Asclepius. Will you remember to pay the debt?”?

7. “tell them I’ve had a wonderful life”?

8. (on his death bed when asked by a priest to renounce Satan)
   “now now, dear man, this is not the time to be making enemies”?
10. Who was:

1. a real pissant?

2. a boozy beggar?

3. a beery swine?

4. permanently pissed?

5. a bugger for the bottle?

6. a drunken fart?
11. Which philosopher-novelist wrote:

1. The Mind-Body Problem?
2. The Space Trap?
3. The Slave of the Passions?
4. Nausea?
5. Avenging Angel?
6. Francesca: a novel?
7. Julie, or the new Heloise?
8. Radiant Cool: A Novel Theory of Consciousness?
next up:

a softball for those cretins and illiterates who have got none right so far...
12. Identify the thrower of all of these brickbats:

a. “Philip Johnson, a scholarly mediocrity in his chosen field...”

b. “I can’t say I read Andrew Sullivan with any regularity; he has no knowledge base or intellectual skills, and he mostly recycles stale right-wing tripe, dressed up in slightly better prose. But occasionally I do end up at his blog because of one link or another, and I am repeatedly struck by how morally repulsive the man is. So I ask myself, why? What is it about this noxious creature that makes him stand out?”

c. “Thomas Friedman of the NY Times remains as juvenile as he was the last time I bothered to lambast him”

d. “I confess that it is tempting to conclude from this irrational display that this man is either criminally dishonest or a stark raving moron.”

e. “The discussion of the dispute between Summers and Cornel West makes for a good read, though West is described, I am dismayed to see, as a “philosopher,” though his PhD is not in philosophy, his work is (at best) really bad philosophy, and he has never held an appointment in a philosophy department.”

f. “It will not be news to regular readers that the know-nothing journalist Jonah Goldberg of the right-wing National Review is morally depraved and deficient in basic human emotive and cognitive capacities...”

g. “One longstanding difficulty has been Dworkin’s inability to represent his opponent’s views fairly....the problem has actually gotten worse over time, as indicated by the bizarre and slightly unhinged polemic against legal positivism he recently published under the title, “Thirty Years On”.”
13. Name:

1. the Sosas
2. the Strouds
3. the Strawsons
4. the Blocks
5. the Gerts
6. the Mills
14. From which language would one translate:

1. “Gavagai”?
2. “squiggle squiggle, squoggle squoggle”?
3. “block”?
4. “CAT”?
5. “S”?
6. things that are names of themselves?
15. Who said, of the profession:

1. “the point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as not to seem worth stating, and to end with something so paradoxical that no one will believe it”?

2. “philosophy consists very largely of one philosopher arguing that all others are jackasses. He usually proves it, and I should add that he also usually proves that he is one himself”?

3. “philosophy, n. a route of many roads leading from nowhere to nothing”?

4. “a fool’s brain digests philosophy into folly, science into superstition, and art into pedantry. Hence University education”?
(ctd.):

5. “metaphysics is a dark ocean without shores or lighthouse, strewn with many a philosophic wreck”?
6. “if a man’s good for nothing else, he can at least teach philosophy”?
7. “when he to whom one speaks does not understand, and he who speaks himself does not understand, that is metaphysics”?
8. “to live alone one must be a beast or a god, says Aristotle. Leaving out the third case: one must be both - a philosopher”?
9. “philosophy will clip an angel’s wings”? 
16. What is:

1. a thomson gun?
2. a stalnaker?
3. a hilary?
4. dennett?
5. a harmanica?
6. goldfarbrication?
17. Solve for x and y:

1. “Indeed, although he does not acknowledge it, and the editors of Philosophy and Public Affairs presumably did not know it, X’s central technique - that of insisting that what appear to be ‘external’ or philosophical questions, about the mind-dependency of values are heard only in an ‘internal’ sense, demanding answers to be given from within the enterprise of judging values is a claim I have often made, and indeed I rather thought I had pioneered, back in 1980...Lawyers are happy with certain sources of authority: texts, and the best theories of them. They cannot happily work with emotions, instinct, imagination and culture. And that in turn may be, to echo X’s words, part of what makes their incursions (there are honorable exceptions, of course) into philosophy so wearying, pointless and unprofitable, and the prominence they get such an indicator of the leaden spirits of our age.”

   “Y doesn’t like lawyers, but he adopts the familiar lawyer’s device of arguing in the alternative. He says that I am dead wrong, and besides he said it first. The second claim is sad and false...I should also add that Y’s final comments, about lawyers, show great ignorance of American legal culture.”
(ctd.):

2 “At its worst, indeed, X’s prose puts barriers of jargon, convolution, and metaphor before the reader hardly less formidable than those characteristically erected by his German luminaries ... Wittgenstein complained that “The seed I am most likely to sow is a certain jargon.” One feels that, if so, he only had himself to blame. X is a strong swimmer, but his stroke is not to be imitated.”

“As far as I can see, Y’s remarks about an extraordinary need for constructive exegesis largely reflect his point-missing and—I have to say—ill-tempered efforts to find coercive philosophy in my description of the oscillation. Y is clearly galled by my work, perhaps particularly by my stance of not aiming to compel my readers into theses, and I think this has prevented him from seeing how straightforward my book really is.”
18. Who dedicated with:

1. “To W. V. Quine, without whom not”?
2. “For Ned Block and Georges Rey; old cronies”?
3. “For the philosophers, past and present, of Sydney and Canberra”?
4. “to Thompson Clarke and to the memory of J. L. Austin?”
5. “to the memory of Gilbert Ryle?”
6. “to the memory of my friend David H. Pinset”?
7. “to Etruscan places?”
8. “for Eeyore, in case it’s his birthday?”
19. Which fish:

1. wrote Frege’s Puzzle?
2. wrote Contemporary Theories of Knowledge?
3. wrote The Refutation of Scepticism?
4. wrote “Moral Explanations”?
5. wrote “Friends and Future Selves”?
6. edited (with Boyd and Gaspar), The Philosophy of Science?
7. teaches at Wisconsin?
8. teaches at Stirling?
and, finally...
20. Who remarked:

1. “Unlike making love, which can be symmetrical, tender, and turn-taking all the way through, what we might (without any denigration) call “fucking” contains at least one stage where the male displays his power and force...Exhibiting his quality as a beast in the jungle, with a lion or tiger’s fierceness, growling, roaring, biting, he shows (in a contained fashion) his protective strength.”

2. “Who has not been at a social occasion disrupted by the household dog gripping the legs of a visitor and vigorously rubbing its penis against them? The host usually discourages such activities, but in private not everyone objects to being used by her or his dog in this way, and occasionally mutually satisfying activities may develop.”