

BA EXAMINATIONS 2009

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

PHILOSOPHY

Optional Subject (u): Philosophy of Psychology

Thursday, 30 April 2009: 2.30pm – 5.30pm

Answer THREE questions. Avoid overlap in your answers.

1. What is 'sub-intentional' explanation? Is its use in relation to EITHER dreaming OR neurotic action defensible?
2. 'An unconscious emotion is an unfelt feeling – a contradiction in terms.' Discuss.
3. Can the methodology used by psychoanalysis, and based on clinical data, generate knowledge?
4. Can psychoanalysis and/or neuroscience explain the real nature of depression?
5. What significance, if any, does the claim that midbrain dopamine neurons send an 'error signal' which functions to maximize reward have for philosophy and/or psychology?
6. Discuss the implications for philosophy and/or psychology of recent neuroscientific research into EITHER the deep sources of human motivation OR mirror neurons.
7. '[I]f commonsense intentional psychology really were to collapse, that would be, beyond comparison, the greatest intellectual catastrophe in the history of our species; if we're that wrong about the mind, then that's the wrongest we've ever been about anything.' (Fodor) Discuss.
8. 'Computers process information syntactically, not semantically; as a result, they can never achieve genuine understanding.' Discuss.

9. EITHER (a) To what extent does parallel distributed processing offer a promising account of cognition?
- OR (b) Is it possible for connectionists to explain the systematicity of thought without postulating a Language of Thought?
10. 'It is clear that the language each person acquires is a rich and complex construction hopelessly underdetermined by the fragmentary evidence available' (Chomsky). Discuss.
11. Expound and assess David Marr's computational theory of vision.
12. Does our ability to attribute mental states to other people ('mind-reading') show that we possess a Theory of Mind?
13. What light can cognitive disorders shed on normal cognitive processes?
14. Can the mindblindness hypothesis account for the symptoms of autism?
15. Is there any compelling evidence that the mind is largely or entirely composed of special-purpose modules?
16. EITHER (a) We now live in environments that are very different from those encountered by hominids in the ancestral past. Explain the implications of this fact for evolutionary theories of human cognition.
- OR (b) Explain the claim that cognitive mechanisms are evolutionary adaptations. Is this claim useful in psychological theorising?

END OF PAPER