

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

577 0135

MA Examination
for Internal Students

PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy of Psychology

Monday 1 June 2009 : 2.30 – 5.30pm

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions. Avoid overlap in your answers.

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1. EITHER (a) What, if anything, is the philosophical significance of the claim that midbrain dopamine neurons produce a reward-maximising 'error signal'?
OR (b) What are so-called mirror neurons and what do they explain?
2. EITHER (a) Should emotions such as anger and fear be regarded as natural kinds?
OR (b) Does either psychoanalysis or neuroscience help to understand the real nature of depression?
3. Critically assess ONE of the following:
 - (a) Popper's and/or Grunbaum's methodological critiques of psychoanalysis.
 - (b) The claim that Freud's theory of dreams is supported by recent work in neuroscience.
 - (c) The claim that Freud's account of development is supported by observations from research in attachment.
4. EITHER (a) How can the Rat Man's painful and depressing symptoms be regarded as fulfilling his wishes?
OR (b) Compare and contrast the Freudian explanation of a dream with the commonsense explanation of an action.
5. 'Psychological theories are confirmed by behavioural evidence, so the behaviourists were right to regard psychology as a science of behaviour rather than a science of mind.' Discuss.
6. Explain and assess the claim that cognition is classical computation.
7. 'The cognitive architecture of the mind cannot be connectionist, because connectionism cannot explain the systematicity of thought.' Discuss.
8. What are the differences between Wilson's sociobiology and Cosmides and Tooby's evolutionary psychology?
9. EITHER (a) The current environment is different from the Pleistocene environment. Is this a problem for evolutionary theories of the human mind?
OR (b) Is adaptive thinking a reliable method for identifying the functional components of the human mind?
10. Do humans have a cheater-detection module?

11. Is there a distinction between innate and acquired traits that matters for cognitive science?
12. EITHER: (a) What kind of evidence, if any, could justify the postulation of a theory of mind module?
OR: (b) Do we need to posit a theory of mind module to explain abnormal development on the autistic spectrum?
13. 'Cognitive explanations cannot explain all the symptoms of autism but no other kind of explanation does better.' Discuss.
14. Asperger's Syndrome subjects are linguistically competent but have difficulties understanding others. What, if anything, does this tell us about the basis of communication in normal development?
15. What, if anything, can the study of pathological cases tell us about normal visual awareness?
16. Do neuroscientific accounts of vision help to explain the content of visual awareness?

END OF PAPER