

Philosophy of Mind: Paper Topics 2

Write a 4–6 page paper on ONE of the following topics. The papers are due at the beginning of class on Monday, November the 13th.

1 'Functionalism is just a modified version of behaviorism, and it can be refuted by modified versions of the arguments which refute behaviorism.' Discuss. In your answer, explain one argument against behaviorism; say whether you think the argument succeeds, and why; explain why a similar argument might be thought to pose problems for functionalism; and consider how the functionalist might respond to this argument.

2 Saul Kripke, in *Naming and Necessity*, presents an argument against the Identity Theory. What is Kripke's argument? David Lewis has an objection to Kripke's argument which he sums up in the following passage:

...the word 'pain' is a nonrigid designator. It is a contingent matter what state the concept and the word apply to. It depends on what causes what. The same goes for the rest of our concepts and ordinary names of mental states (NM, p.231)

Explain Lewis's objection. Does the objection succeed? If not, is there some other objection to Kripke's argument which does succeed? Defend your answers.

3 'Just as chemists discovered that to be made of water is to be composed of H₂O molecules, so scientists who investigate the workings of our brains can discover what it is to believe something, or to be in pain.' Discuss. In your answer, explain either the Identity Theory or Empirical Functionalism or both, and consider the problems posed for this kind of view by the apparent possibility of beings very different from us who nevertheless have mental lives.

4 Ned Block presents the following argument against functionalism:

It makes sense, or seems to make sense, to suppose that objects we both call green look to me the way objects we both call red look to you. It seems that we could be functionally equivalent even though the sensation fire hydrants evoke in you is qualitatively the same as the sensation grass evokes in me. (NM, p. 221),

Explain Block's argument. David Lewis ('Mad Pain and Martian Pain', p.232) and Sydney Shoemaker ('Functionalism and Qualia') both suggest responses to this argument. Briefly explain ONE of these responses. Does the response work? *BMJ*

5 Could a computer that was programmed in the right way have a mental life? Defend your answer. In the course of your defence, explain and critically evaluate John Searle's argument that the answer to this question is 'no'.