

## 京大過去問 1990年 第1問

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We pay more attention to, and remember, messages that we like. (1)If we are faced with a message we dislike, or which fails to confirm our prejudices, we tend to ignore those parts which make us uncomfortable. For example, if we dislike or mistrust the source, our interpretation of the message is likely to be hostile. In all this, first impressions are vital. (2)If we begin with a false idea about the purpose of a communication, such an initial error is unlikely to be corrected, and mistakes may snowball.

Anyone who has used a tape-recorder knows how much more difficult it is to avoid background noises than they might have expected. In addition to the voice, there is a storm of other sounds of which you were unaware when making the recording — the hum of the central heating system, rustling papers, someone whistling in the corridor. On the other hand, you can exclude a great deal of distracting noise from your attention when you are getting to know an attractive stranger at a party, concentrating single-mindedly on the words being spoken. Unlike simple recording equipment, human perception is brilliantly selective: you can ignore almost anything you want to, but the sound of someone speaking your name will cut through a forest of other sounds. (3)This selection is vital for human development if only because we have to respond to a continuous flood of messages, and one brain can handle only so much information. What is more, we have to lump things together into broad categories and treat them as the same until they are proved different: not even the most cautious philosopher will treat each new event as totally distinct from all that has passed before, but will under similarities and thereby know how to respond.