

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

088 0120

**BA EXAMINATION 2009**

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

**PHILOSOPHY**

Optional subject (e): Philosophy of Language

**Thursday, 14 May 2009: 2.30pm – 5.30pm**

Answer THREE questions. Avoid overlap in your answers.

1. How does Grice distinguish between the semantic and pragmatic contributions to what speakers convey by their utterances? How plausible is this distinction?
2. ‘The sentence “It is raining” is true if and only if it is raining.’ Discuss.
3. Does context play any role in fixing the content of an utterance, over and above providing values for indexical and demonstrative expressions?
4. EITHER (a) Are definite descriptions quantifiers?  
OR (b) ‘The semantic properties of “this”, “that” and “the” are basically the same, differing only in subtle ways.’ Discuss.
5. ‘The indeterminacy of translation is just a special case of the underdetermination of theory by evidence.’ Discuss.
6. ‘The indeterminacy of reference “admits of trivial proof”’ (Quine). Discuss.
7. Provide an account of the logical form and meaning of ‘Vulcan is a planet’.
8. If Thelma said to Louise ‘I am tall’ and Louise said to Thelma ‘you are tall’, did Thelma and Louise say the same thing?

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9. 'There is no incompatibility between the claim that belief sentences with singular terms can only be understood relationally, and the observation that they have both a transparent and an opaque reading.' Discuss.
10. Should 'that'-clauses in attitude contexts be treated as referring to propositions?
11. 'Kripke's so-called puzzle about beliefs actually presents us with a quandary about ascriptions of belief.' Discuss.
12. Is knowing under what conditions a statement is true either necessary or sufficient for knowing what the statement means?
13. 'An utterance has certain truth conditions only if the speaker intends it to be interpreted as having those truth conditions' (Davidson). Assess this claim.
14. What role does the figure of the radical interpreter play in Davidson's account of meaning?
15. 'S in doing X meant that *p*.' Is there a correct analysis of this along Gricean lines?
16. 'A language is a social phenomenon which is part of the natural history of human beings.' Does Lewis succeed in reconciling this with his view that a language is an abstract object that assigns meanings to symbols?

**END OF PAPER**