

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
MPHIL EXAMINATIONS
for internal students

The Philosophy of Davidson

10:00-13:00, Wednesday 15th May, 2002

Candidates should answer THREE of the following questions. Please avoid overlap in your answers.

1. Does Davidson show that psychophysical generalisations are heteronomic?
2. Does Davidson's appeal to supervenience suffice to show that anomalous monism does not render mental properties epiphenomenal?
3. Explain and assess Davidson's account of intending.
4. 'Jones buttered the toast slowly in the bathroom.' Why does Davidson think we need to quantify over events to give an adequate account of the logical form of such sentences? Is he right?
5. Does Davidson succeed in showing that languageless animals cannot think?
6. 'I conclude that there is no such thing as a language, not if a language is anything like what many philosophers and linguists have supposed' ('A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs'). Explain and assess Davidson's argument for this conclusion.

7. Evaluate Davidson's truth-theoretic account of meaning.

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8. Discuss the developments in Davidson's thinking about truth.

9. 'Hello, I'm swampman.' Would such an encounter be an embarrassment for Davidson?

10. Is there a persuasive Davidsonian response to scepticism?

11. 'Every boy said that he loved his mother.' What problems does this sentence raise for Davidson's account of indirect discourse in 'On Saying That'? Does this account face any other serious problems?

12. 'The mentally ill can have beliefs and speak meaningfully. The mentally ill can be irrational. So there is no rationality constraint on interpretation.' Do you agree?

13. 'If I am right, our propositional knowledge has its basis not in the impersonal but in the interpersonal' ('Three Varieties of Knowledge'). Explain and discuss.

14. 'Davidson's theory of interpretation is best seen as an attempt to sift the good from the bad in Quine's theory of radical translation.' Discuss.

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