

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
M PHIL EXAMINATIONS 2004
for internal students

Philosophy of Language

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

1. Can a Davidsonian theory of truth serve as a theory of meaning or sense?
2. Does the rule “‘I’ refers to the speaker’ exhaust the meaning of ‘I’?
3. ‘Saying that a referring term is directly referential does not add anything to the claim that it is rigid.’ Discuss.
4. Is linguistic understanding a form of knowledge?
5. ‘The indeterminacy of translation has no consequences for our understanding of meaning.’ Discuss.
6. Are the claims that meaning determines reference and that knowledge of meaning is a psychological state compatible?
7. Davidson tells us that there is no such thing as a language. What does he mean? Is it true?
8. EITHER (a) ‘The truth conditions of a sentence are not fixed by the literal meanings of the words and the way the world is. This shows that pragmatics plays an ineliminable role in fixing truth conditions.’ Discuss.

OR (b) Is there a satisfactory *semantic* treatment of incomplete definite descriptions?
9. The rule-following considerations show that there ‘can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word’ (Kripke). Is there a convincing response to Kripke’s meaning scepticism?
10. Must an adequate account of propositional attitude reports make reference to propositions?
11. The word ‘Hamlet’, as used in Shakespeare’s play, is meaningful. How can we explain this fact?
12. ‘There is no account of the actual-language relation; that is, there is nothing that fixes which language a speaker speaks.’ Discuss.
13. How intelligible is it to claim that a speaker’s linguistic competence consists in tacit or implicit knowledge of his or her language?

END OF PAPER