BA EXAMINATION 2003

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

PHILOSOPHY

Optional subject (e): <u>Philosophy of Language</u>

Thursday, May 15th, 2003, 2.30 pm - 5.30 pm.

Answer <u>THREE</u> questions. Avoid overlap in your answers.

1   Are (a) and (b) below at least roughly equivalent?

       (a) 'S meant something by uttering U.'
       (b) 'S uttered U with the intention of inducing a belief in a hearer by means of
          the recognition of this intention.'

2   EITHER   (a) 'Davidson's semantic project is, in essence, an attempt
                      to make a theory of reference do the work of a theory of
                      sense. Since facts about reference fall far short of facts
                      about sense, such a project could never succeed' Discuss.
       OR   (b) As a proponent of truth-theoretic semantics, how can
                      Davidson intelligibly claim that 'reference plays no
                      essential role in explaining the relation between language
                      and reality'?

3.   'If we were to represent in linear form an utterance of, say, the imperative
       sentence "Put on your hat", it would come out as the utterance of a sentence
       like (a) "My next utterance is imperatival in force" followed by an utterance of
       (b) "You will put on your hat".' (Davidson) What recommends the treatment
       of non-indicative sentences suggested here? Is it an adequate treatment?

4.   Is it a constitutive rule of assertion that one may assert that p only
       if one knows that p?

5.   Evaluate the suggestion that assertibility should be the central concept in a
       theory of meaning.

6.   Does Quine have any convincing argument for the claim that there is
       no fact of the matter about what our words mean?

7. What role, if any, does knowledge play in the best account of human linguistic competence?

8. EITHER (a) 'No compositional semantics can be given for languages containing either propositional attitude reports or indirect speech reports.' Discuss.

   OR (b) Both Fregeans and Millians endorse the principle of substitution of singular terms *salva veritate*. In what way, then, do they differ in their semantic treatments of belief reports?

9. What conclusions does Kripke draw from his 'Puzzle about Belief'? Is he right?

10. EITHER (a) Does incorporation of the copula help to solve Frege's paradox of the concept?
    OR (b) Is Frege's view that predicates refer to incomplete entities properly motivated?

11. 'The general term "wise" neither refers to wisdom nor to the extension of the predicate "is wise", but it refers dividedly' (Quine). Explain and discuss.

12. EITHER (a) 'The propositions speakers communicate by uttering sentences are not the propositions expressed by the sentences they utter.' Discuss.
    OR (b) Does Grice's distinction between what is said and what is meant provide adequate resources to explain linguistic communication?

13. 'Semantics is the domain of truth conditions. Pragmatics is the study of all other contextual effects on meaning.' Discuss.

14. What is the best semantic account of the complex demonstrative 'this dog'?

15. What sense can be made of Lewis's claim that a language is both a set of ordered pairs of strings and meanings and a social phenomenon? Is this view defensible?

16. 'Very often, metaphor provides the only way to express a thought.' How is it able to do so?

END OF PAPER