

INHALTSVERZEICHNIS

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<p>The propositional objects of the mind, and their constituents, are supposed to have the following two properties: they identify, or help to identify, a thought by giving its content; and they constitute an essential aspect of the psychology of the thought by being grasped or otherwise known by the person with the thought. The problem is to understand this psychological relation. Apparently we have to find objects about which error is impossible — objects that must be what they seem. But there simply are no such objects. This, however, need not prevent us from specifying the subjective state of the thinker by relating him to an object without assuming that this object itself has a subjective status, that it is “known” by the thinker, or is “before his mind”. Once we grant this possibility, we are free to divorce the semantic need for content-specifying objects from the idea that there must be any objects at all with which someone who has an attitude is in psychic touch.</p>	
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<p>The writer’s 1956 contention that “the thesis that consciousness is a process in the brain is ... a reasonable scientific hypothesis” is contrasted with Davidson’s <i>a priori</i> argument in ‘Mental events’ for the identity of propositional attitude tokens with some unspecified and unspecifiable brain state tokens. Davidson’s argument is rejected primarily on the grounds that he has failed to establish his claim that there are and can be no psycho-physical bridge laws. The case for the empirical nature of the issue between the identity thesis and interactionism is re-stated in the light of an analysis of the causal relations involved. The same analysis is also used to demonstrate the incoherence of parallelism and epiphenomenalism as alternatives to interactionism.</p>	
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<p>The empirist tradition has it that the genuine explanation of the occurrence of an event requires citing its cause and citing its real cause requires specifying a law that subsumes the explanandum-event and the explanans-event. Davidson denies that the mentalistically de-</p>	

scribed antecedents of intentional actions can be subsumed under strict laws, but nonetheless affirms, that beliefs and desires are causes of actions. Some critics pointed out that this position is not a consistent one and levelled the charge of epiphenomenalism against it. It is shown that there are reasons for thinking that Davidson's position is sound.

**Matthias VARGA von Kibéd: Some Remarks on Davidson's Theory of Truth . . . . .**

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Preventive solutions for the paradoxes lead to the inexpressability of the adequacy conditions for the representation of truth within the system. Davidsonian theories of truth presuppose an understood language (for the background theory) which should permit the expression of the solutional principles for the paradoxes. The suitability of languages for this aim is tested by inferential validity paradoxes. They necessitate the introduction of an inner and an outer truth predicate. For the paradoxes, two different types of circularity, often wrongly identified, have to be distinguished. For Davidsonian theories of truth, non-two-valuedness, different versions of convention T and "principled openness" of the background theory have to be postulated.

**Ernest LePORE and Barry LOEWER: What Davidson Should Have Said . . . . .**

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According to Davidson, a theory of meaning for a language L should specify information such that if someone had this information he would be in a position to understand L. He claims that a theory of truth for L fits this description. Many critics have argued that a truth theory is too weak to be a theory of meaning. We argue that these critics and Davidson's response to them have been misguided. Many critics have been misguided because they have not been clear about what a theory of meaning is supposed to do. These critics and Davidson himself, though, have also been misguided because they thought that by adding further conditions on a truth theory we can come up with an adequate theory of meaning. We will show that Davidson has available to him, though he apparently failed to see so, a reply to his critics in his own paratactic account of the semantics for indirect discourse reports.

**Johannes BRANDL: What is Wrong with the Building Block Theory of Language? . . . . .**

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It is argued that Davidson's basic objection to the Building Block Method in semantics is neither that it gives the wrong explanation of how a first language is learned nor that it assigns a meaning to

single words prior to interpreting a whole language. The arguments against Fregean concepts and truth-values as the references of predicates and sentences are found to be equally superficial as the arguments against a primitive notion reference defined in causal terms. Davidson's basic objection turns out to be that thoughts do not have a deep-structure which can be revealed by a correct analysis. His constraints on a theory of meaning do not allow for a distinction, as suggested by Dummett, between analysis and decomposition of thoughts. This forces us to a very general decision about how to do philosophy. As a non-reductivist I think it makes sense to assume a basic thought-structure. From this perspective the use of building blocks in semantics is vindicated.

Eva PICARDI: Davidson on Assertion, Convention and Belief

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The attitude of believing or "holding true" fulfils a twofold role in Davidson's theory of meaning: it provides the basic evidence for a theory of radical interpretation and it also constitutes the key notion in terms of which the linguistic act of assertion is to be characterized. It is however doubtful whether the notion of "holding true" can fulfil either of these two roles without presupposing an implicit grasp of the public significance of the practice of making assertions. The lack of specific conventions governing assertoric force and linking assertion to what is believed true is no ground for supposing that a theory of meaning can dispense with an account of the act of assertion: on the contrary, such an account is indispensable if we are to understand the bearing of the notion of truth on that of linguistic meaning.

Hans Georg ZILIAN: Convention and Assertion . . . . .

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Donald Davidson has shocked his readers by arguing that assertion is not a conventional activity, thus attacking what was taken to be a truism by most philosophers of language. The paper claims that Davidson's argument is seriously flawed by his failure to distinguish a number of questions which should be kept separate. Assertion is a matter of seriousness, not of sincerity; departures from seriousness are marked by techniques which are undeniably conventional. There are no parallel indicators of seriousness, i. e. there is no assertion-sign. But this necessary absence of a conventional marker of seriousness from our communicative repertoire does not imply that the activity of asserting is not conventional. Assertion differs in important ways from eating or walking; it is these differences which have led Searle, Lewis, Dummett and countless others to conceive of language as essentially conventional'. The paper argues that Davidson's naturalistic challenge illuminates the (non-existing) role of the

assertion-sign, while failing to undermine the credentials of the 'truism'.

Dunja JUTRONIČ-TIHOMIROVIČ: Davidson on Convention.. 121

The attempt is made to demonstrate that Davidson's claim that communication does not proceed along the lines of convention is controversial and finally misguided. It is claimed that the *framework* theory has 'key ingredients' and thus is necessary for communication. At its abstract level it is the same for every speaker and it is not acquired in different ways. The *prior* theory, having been learned in advance, has to be shared too. There is no clearly defined point when the *passing* theory will start converging in communication. It is shown that there is no qualitative difference among the three theories and that the passing theory, as defined, is not a theory but an *ad hoc* type of procedure.

Damjan BOJADŽIEV: Davidson's Semantics and Computational Understanding of Language . . . . . 133

Evaluating the usefulness of Davidson's semantics to computational understanding of language requires an examination of the role of a theory of truth in characterizing sentence meaning and logical form, and in particular of the connection between meaning and belief. The suggested conclusion is that the relevance of Davidson's semantics for computational semantics lies not so much in its methods and particular proposals of logical form as in its general orientation towards "desubstantializing" meaning.

Joachim SCHULTE: Wittgenstein's Notion of Secondary Meaning and Davidson's Account of Metaphor — A Comparison . . . . . 141

There are similarities between Davidson's theory of meaning and that of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. But in Wittgenstein's later work the relation between meaning and use is seen in a completely different way and not in the least similar to Davidson's conception. In spite of this divergence, however, certain parallels exist between Wittgenstein's treatment of expressions which can be said to have secondary meanings and Davidson's notion of the metaphorical use of certain expressions.

Arto SIITONEN: Understanding Our Actual Scheme . . . . . 149

There are philosophers who think that questions of fact can be distinguished from questions of interpretation of facts. Davidson calls the distinction between unconceptualized facts and interpretative schemes "the third dogma of empiricism". This points to Quine's article "Two Dogmas of Empiricism". In it, Quine challenged the

distinction between synthetic and analytic statements and the possibility of reducing the meaning of all synthetic statements to immediate experience. Whereas Quine has remained faithful to empiricism, Davidson gives up empiricism. It is difficult to determine his standpoint. His remark that our actual scheme is best understood as extensional and materialistic, is rather perplexing. Is it intelligible, under Davidson's premisses, to speak of our actual scheme?

**J. E. MALPAS: Ontological Relativity in Quine and Davidson . . . . . 157**

According to Quine the inscrutability of reference leads to ontological relativity, or, as Donald Davidson calls it, relativity of reference. Davidson accepts both inscrutability and the indeterminacy of translation which it grounds, but rejects any explicit relativity of reference or ontology. The reasons behind this rejection are set out and explained. Explicit relativization is shown to be at odds with indeterminacy. Some notion of the relativity of reference (or, more generally, interpretation) is nevertheless shown to be both possible and necessary. It is, however, a relativity which is compatible with commensurability — the idea of absolute incommensurability is ruled out along with the realist ideal of universal commensuration — as well as with indeterminacy. The indeterminacy thesis itself undergoes some slight elaboration, particularly in respect of the notion of empirical equivalence. In general the resulting account is one which retains both the absolute character of truth and some sense of the relativity of ontology against the background of Davidsonian holism.

**Matjaž POTRČ: Externalizing Content . . . . . 179**

Crude externalist theory of content is realistic and teleologically minded. On its basis, predicate notation can render the content's structure. Davidson's views concerning content are able to refine this theory. They are sophisticated externalist by being based on the implicit rejection of the two claims: the plausibility of the organism-environment dualism and the utility of epistemic intermediaries. It might be well impossible to defend a plausible version of externalism without such a kind of refinement.

**Donald DAVIDSON: The Conditions of Thought . . . . . 193**

This summary paper explains why we are not constrained to start from a solipsistic, or first person point of view in considering the nature of thought. My aim here is to suggest the nature of an acceptable externalism. According to this view, knowledge of other minds need not be a problem in addition to the problem of empirical knowledge. The essential step toward determining the content of someone else's thought is made by discovering what normally causes