

# Holism and Indeterminacy

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In Word and Object, Quine presented an argument for the indeterminacy of translation.<sup>1</sup> The argument arose out of Quine's approach to the problems set by cases of radical translation. Donald Davidson's account of radical interpretation develops out of the original Quinean position,<sup>2</sup> and just as, in Quine, radical translation is associated with an indeterminacy in translation, so, in Davidson, radical interpretation is associated with an indeterminacy of interpretation. Yet although not explicitly acknowledged by Davidson, indeterminacy also appears to give rise to a problem for interpretation.

The basis for the indeterminacy thesis in both Quine and Davidson is their adoption, in slightly different forms, of a holistic approach to the problems of interpretation. Such holism is not only clearest in Davidson, but in his hands it also becomes much broader. Originally Davidsonian holism appears in terms of the interdependence of meaning with belief.<sup>3</sup> Thus the attempt to interpret a speaker's utterances presupposes an ability to identify the speaker's beliefs while the identification of beliefs (and of a speaker's attitudes in general) presupposes the ability to interpret the speaker's utterances. In fact this interdependence conceals a much broader holism which encompasses the psychological in general. Davidson does himself say that it is not just beliefs or meanings which are implicated in the holistic web but 'wishes, hopes, desires, emotions... and fears'.<sup>4</sup> Indeed holism encompasses the realm of behaviour as well - not only linguistic but non-linguistic behaviour. It is for this reason that I think it is appropriate to say that what is involved here is indeed a holism of the psychological. For by the psychological I mean the whole range of action, attitude and feeling that is involved in the life of the person, all of which can be relevant to the problem of interpretation.

Such psychological holism is, of course, an ontological and not merely an epistemological thesis. It involves the idea that the psychological realm is to be understood as composed, not of discrete components, but of interdependent and

interconnected elements. Beliefs, desires, fears and so forth are themselves constituted only by their relations with other elements of the psychological. The interdependent character of the psychological is thus intrinsic to it – certainly it is an ineliminable feature of the psychological conceived as an intentional system.

It is the intrinsic holism of the psychological that gives rise to holism at the level of interpretation. It is only because belief, meaning and so on are by their very natures interdependent that the interpretation of speakers is itself holistically constrained. Of course it is generally only when we attempt to interpret speakers that the holism of the psychological becomes evident. It is when we are asked to make sense of speakers' utterances, behaviour and so forth that we are required to take account of (and indeed must rely upon) the interconnections between behaviour, attitude and the rest. Yet the fact that holism is evident only from the perspective of interpretation should not lead us to suppose that such holism is restricted to interpretation. What might be called 'interpretative holism' is thus merely a reflection of the more fundamental holism of the psychological itself.<sup>5</sup>

The psychological realm is characterised as a thoroughly holistic realm - a realm in which the various elements are constituted by their relations with other elements. Such holism is a feature of the psychological in general. But the psychological network is not such that we could simply lay out, all at once, the interconnections which make it up. Indeed, the psychological realm lacks just the sort of determinacy that this would imply. The psychological realm is not merely holistic, it is also indeterminate.

The various elements of the psychological - whether they be beliefs, desires or whatever - are individuated only through the relations that obtain between those elements. This is indeed the essence of the holism thesis itself. There is, moreover, nothing which lies outside of the psychological which could serve as an independent source of individuation. Thus beliefs, for instance, are individuated only by their relations with other beliefs, attitudes and behaviour which are, in their own turn, individuated in the same fashion. The relations that are constitutive of psychological entities (beliefs, actions and so forth) are always psychological relations.

It is holism of this sort which represents the major barrier to any form of broadly physicalist reduction. Such reduction would presuppose that we could separate out the various psychological elements as distinct and individual components. But this is just what holism will not allow. Moreover the relations which obtain between attitudes and between attitudes and behaviour are not relations which are likely to be mirrored by any purely physical relation. This is the gist of the Davidsonian claim in support of the anomalous character of the psychological that the holistic principles that govern the psychological realm – in particular principles of rationality, consistency and coherence – 'have no echo in physical theory'.<sup>6</sup> The rationality of the psychological is thus irreducible to the causality of physics.<sup>7</sup>

This is not to say that, in interpreting a speaker, the physical causes of belief might not be relevant to the identification of those beliefs. Indeed, Davidson himself emphasises the way in which we can make use of the physical circumstances of speakers in working out what their beliefs are about and what their utterances mean<sup>8</sup>. But the possibility of doing this itself depends on the holistic interconnection of attitudes and behaviour. It depends, first, on the fact that we can assume that a speaker's beliefs and utterances will (generally) be coherent and that they will fit with relevant aspects of the speaker's environment and, second, that our own beliefs about the speaker's physical environment can be employed in attributing beliefs about that environment to the speaker. So we can use the physical causes of a speaker's beliefs as a basis for determining the objects of those beliefs – Davidson claims, in fact, that the causes of belief are the objects of belief.<sup>9</sup>

To a large extent, of course, it is this strategy that is enshrined in the Davidsonian version of the principle of charity – assume that speakers have beliefs that are mostly true and in agreement with our own. Charity is an expression of Davidsonian holism, no less than is the idea of triangulation that succeeds it.

Holism is the fundamental and characteristic feature of the psychological. Indeed holism can be treated as giving rise to a certain 'closure' of the psychological with respect to the non-psychological. While the psychological is certainly, as Davidson points out, open to causal influence from the physical realm,<sup>10</sup> there is no

way in which the physical realm, as such, could provide an independent ground from which one could gain interpretative access to the psychological. Physical causes provide clues to psychological states only insofar as they can be connected with particular beliefs or attitudes and thence integrated with a speaker's overall attitudes and behaviour. Put more succinctly (and in terms I used above) the psychological realm is closed in the sense that only psychological relations are constitutive of the components of the psychological.

The 'interpretative closure' of the psychological is itself an expression of the holism of the psychological. Such closure can also be seen as leading directly to the indeterminacy of the psychological. If there is nothing outside of the psychological realm to which we can make independent appeal in interpretation, then there will be no way of adjudicating between rival theories of interpretation except by referring back to some feature or features of the psychological itself. In that case, even were we able to construct a complete theory for all of a speaker's attitudes and behaviour (and here we must leave aside the problem of the dynamic character of the psychological), still it would always be possible to construct an equally complete but alternative account. This will always be possible, first, because all that holism requires is that our interpretation maintain the overall integration of the psychological and such integration can be maintained in any number of ways; and, second, because of the absence of any evidential constraints which are independent of the psychological itself - this is the interpretative closure of the psychological. Thus there is no evidence to which appeal can be made which is independent of our interpretative practice. Indeed, how we construe the evidence will itself depend on how we interpret.

The idea of the interpretative closure of the psychological is surely implied, along with the explicit emphasis on holism, in Davidson's claim that in interpretation 'total theories are what we must construct, and many theories will do equally well'.<sup>11</sup> Many theories will do equally well because we have no way of deciding between theories except by looking to evidence which is itself constituted within the psychological realm and which is therefore itself dependent on our interpretative efforts.

It might be thought that the indeterminacy which arises here is merely a feature of interpretation and that the psychological realm itself will nevertheless possess a determinate structure - albeit a structure inaccessible to us with any certainty. But this would be to forget that the holism which gives rise to the indeterminacy and also to the interpretative closure of the psychological is not merely a feature of how we interpret the psychological; it is a feature of the psychological itself. Beliefs, desires and the rest are constituted by their relations with other attitudes and with behaviour. This is what is meant by saying that holism is an ontological and not merely an epistemological thesis. It is not just that our understanding of the psychological is holistically constrained - the psychological is itself so constrained and that determines our understanding of the psychological. The indeterminacy thesis is likewise an ontological thesis. Indeed given that indeterminacy is grounded in the holism of the psychological it is hard to see how it could be otherwise. Indeed, if holism does lead to closure, then indeterminacy at the ontological level is inevitable. For not only is there nothing outside the psychological on which to base our interpretation, but there is nothing outside the psychological to determine the relations within it. Those relations are only to be determined by other relations internal to the psychological realm which are in turn determined in exactly the same way.

It is at this point that a problem must arise. Davidson's talk about the need to construct 'total' theories, whether one or many, seems, on the face of it, to presuppose that we can indeed fix the values for all psychological variables. But there is no way of giving values for all the variables of attitude, behaviour and so forth because, given the interpretative closure of the psychological realm, there is no standpoint from which such a 'total' theory could be advanced. Indeed one cannot properly conceive of the psychological realm as a whole being the object of interpretation. There is no final determination for the psychological as a whole. Thus, on the one hand, holism requires that our interpretation of a speaker be directed towards developing an overall theory for that speaker, while, on the other hand, the indeterminacy which arises out of the holism of the psychological implies that the construction of such an overall theory is impossible. And of course this

problem will be one which will arise independently of whether or not indeterminacy is thought to be ontological or merely epistemological.

The existence of this difficulty is not something which Davidson anywhere seems to have recognised. Indeed while Davidson himself accepts the existence of some indeterminacy as an inescapable fact about interpretation and about the mental he claims that on his account indeterminacy is considerably lessened.<sup>12</sup> On this matter Davidson seems simply to have underestimated the full significance, and perhaps the extent, of the holism implicit in his work. It is, of course, only when that holism is given full rein that the problem appears. That Davidson is indeed mistaken in supposing that indeterminacy will, overall, be less on his account than on the original Quinean account is, I think, fairly clear. Even the formal constraints which are placed on the development of a theory of meaning for a language - constraints which derive from Davidson's employment of Tarski<sup>13</sup> - themselves turn out to be extremely pliable. This is because those constraints are indeed very formal in the first place and because how they are to be applied is itself subject to the overall requirements of holism. And the over-riding requirement is simply one of overall (though perhaps imperfect) consistency.

That indeterminacy is indeed going to present problems for Davidson is suggested in one of his own discussions of the matter. In 'The Inscrutability of Reference,' Davidson attempts to provide an account of Quine's claim that reference is relative. The difficulty that Davidson encounters is that it seems that, given the indeterminacy thesis, there is nothing to which reference can be made relative.<sup>14</sup> This leaves Davidson with a problem. He writes:

What we have shown, or tried to show, is not that reference is not relative but that there is no intelligible way of relativizing it that justifies the concept of ontological relativity... we cannot claim that it [relativization] settles the question of reference in any language. But there is something to settle, and relativization is the only attractive way to settle it... In some sense or other, my interpretation or translation is relative to, or based on, a specific scheme.<sup>15</sup>

Davidson seems to be faced with a problem not unrelated to the problem which I have already set out here. In the case Davidson discusses, however, the problem is

that indeterminacy seems to undermine the possibility of a relativisation which appears necessary if we are to make sense of reference within specific languages. Davidson's solution is to argue that, when we claim to relativise reference, 'all that we can say gets fixed by the relativization is the way we answer questions about reference, not reference itself'.<sup>16</sup> Yet this remark is itself a puzzling one. For how can 'the way we answer questions about reference' be fixed by relativization if it is the very idea of relativization itself which is in question? Indeterminacy does indeed appear to threaten the very notion of interpretation or translation just because it must infect, not only the language being translated, but also the language in which the translating is done. Indeterminacy is as much a domestic as it is a foreign problem.<sup>17</sup>

That there is a problem with indeterminacy is, of course, something which opponents of the Davidsonian and Quinean positions make much of. Thus one response to the dilemma here is to take it as a reductio of the holism thesis itself. The dilemma is then avoided by simply rejecting the holism which gives rise to it. J.J. Katz seems to take something like this sort of line with respect to the original Quinean thesis of the indeterminacy of translation. He argues that not only is the indeterminacy thesis (and with it Quine's more general attack on meaning) counter-intuitive, but that it results in some absurd consequences. Katz argues that indeterminacy is a slippery slope:

Quine's argument [for indeterminacy]... in the case of translation between languages, if sound, would also show that translation between dialects of a language must be indeterminate. Further, the same argument would show that translations between idiolects of a dialect must be indeterminate. Nor does the slide stop here. We also have to accept indeterminacy in the case of stages of the same idiolect.<sup>18</sup>

The solution that Katz advocates is simply that we ought not to embark on the road that leads to this conclusion - we ought to reject the Quinean account which gives rise to it. An analogous claim could be (and indeed has been<sup>19</sup>) made with respect to the Davidsonian account. We might thus be led to claim that the existence of the problem set by the combination of indeterminacy and interpretative holism suggests

that we ought to reject the holism which gives rise to that problem. In so doing we would also, incidentally, reject the main ground for the indeterminacy thesis itself.

The radical character of indeterminacy thus presents a problem for the possibility of interpretation and for the holistic conception of the psychological. It is a problem which, if incapable of resolution, would undermine the holistic approach itself. But consider again the two ideas which give rise to the problem here. One is the claim that holism requires the construction of total theories for speakers; the other was the claim that holism gives rise to an indeterminacy which prevents us from being able to construct such total theories. One way out of this impasse is to deny that holism does give rise to an indeterminacy of this particular sort. However it is difficult to see how this could be done. Indeterminacy seems an inevitable consequence of holism. But there is another possibility open to us also and that is to deny that holism does indeed require us to construct 'total' theories. Such a move will work provided that the indeterminacy thesis is not taken as ruling out the construction of all theories.

The idea here is a simple one. We cannot construct total theories - that is, we cannot determine the whole of a speaker's psychology. But this need not mean that we cannot construct partial, or localised, theories provided that we do not attempt to justify or ground those theories in some overall account or in some 'total' theory. What indeterminacy rules out then, is the possibility of being able to construct theories which provide a complete account of the psychological or which provide an account which is justified by reference to some total theory. But that leaves open the possibility of constructing partial theories which are not justified 'globally, as it were, but, if they are justified, are justified only by reference to other partial theories.

What this seems to suggest is that indeterminacy will generally be at odds with most forms of foundationalism. Certainly it will be incompatible with any form of foundationalism which insists on a universal global foundation for our theorising.<sup>20</sup> Davidson's own position has, in fact, often appeared to involve a form of epistemological coherentism.<sup>21</sup> But while Davidson's opposition to standard forms of foundationalism must follow from his acceptance of both holism and the indeterminacy thesis, and this means that notions of coherence will have a part to

play in his epistemology, it need not commit him to a coherence theory of truth.<sup>22</sup> Certainly those coherence theories of truth which treat truth as a matter of the global coherence of beliefs will be as inconceivable, on the holistic Davidson account, as the idea of any global account of the psychological in general.

The extent of Davidson's commitment to some form of coherentism, and the issue of whether he need be committed to coherentism in any form, is not, however, directly relevant to the solution of the problem to which the conjunction of indeterminacy and holism gives rise. That problem is resolved by simply rejecting the claim that holism involves the construction of total theories and replacing it with something more modest - with the recognition that interpretation always involves the construction of localised, 'partial' theories which are themselves only justified in terms of other 'partial' theories. In fact, this solution to the problem is presupposed by the very way in which the problem originally appeared. For indeterminacy can be seen as arising because of the lack of any independent standpoint from which the psychological in general can be determined. What is assumed here is that interpretation always does require some such standpoint - that interpretation always requires some frame or 'horizon' , In ontological terms this will amount to the claim that the psychological can never be separated from those frames or horizons from within which it is understood. In that case the indeterminacy thesis can be seen to consist in the claim that there is no overall horizon within which interpretation can operate. The only horizons are indeed local or partial horizons. I think that there is some such assumption operating in Davidson's approach. In that case the holism thesis could itself be understood in terms of the claim that interpretation always requires a wider horizon within which it can proceed. That Davidson does indeed have some such idea at least implicit in his thinking is perhaps suggested by his consideration of the problems of the relativity of reference. But there Davidson seems to have taken the indeterminacy thesis as ruling out any actual relativisation. In fact, there is a form of relativity which he can allow - all that the indeterminacy thesis rules out is any final or overall relativisation.

Of course the question now is whether interpretation may indeed proceed in this way and yet still be holistic. I think that it can and the way that it can is quite

simple. Interpretation operates within particular horizons or frames. Holism is retained insofar as different horizons must always be open to being reconciled or integrated with other horizons. The holism of interpretation thus consists, not in the requirement to construct 'total' theories, but rather insofar as any particular interpretation will always be constrained by other interpretations and by the overall requirement of integration and consistency. Of course that overall requirement can never be wholly satisfied – interpretation can never issue in complete consistency or complete integration<sup>23</sup> – and this is precisely because we can always move to some larger horizon within which our previous efforts may prove inadequate. The holistic requirement of consistency is thus a requirement that we should seek to reconcile differences, but that process of reconciliation will never reach an end. We are not, then, faced with the impossible task of constructing total theories. Holism, when understood in terms of the need to look always to a wider background, frame or horizon, does not require this. Indeed, this way of understanding holism itself suggests that a total psychological theory is an absurdity. For it presupposes that we can make the horizons from within which our interpretative project proceeds entirely transparent from within that very project. The very idea of a 'total' theory is itself incoherent.

The need for interpretation always to proceed from within some interpretative horizon explains why indeterminacy is not normally a problem for our interpretative activities. The horizon within which the interpretative project operates will itself place constraints on the number of acceptable theories. Theories are thus justified with respect to other theories and those other theories are themselves located within particular horizons. The process of justification is itself one which looks to the horizon in order to ground some result and which looks to more encompassing horizons as the ground for other horizons and projects.

This picture may lead us to say that with respect to any particular interpretative project, constituted within a particular horizon, indeterminacy may effectively be eliminated. Perhaps, however, it is better to say that it is just that the underlying indeterminacy of the psychological is concealed. For of course what counts as part of the horizon in any particular case can always be brought into

question. The horizon can itself be subject to interpretation and thus to indeterminacy. As soon as our attention is transferred from the original object of interpretation to the horizon then that horizon becomes questionable and a new horizon is set up. This suggests that the horizon itself is a very temporary and shifting entity. The horizons of interpretation are indeed continually shifting, as are the objects of interpretation. The psychological in general possesses the same characteristic impermanence.

Thus we are not led to reject holism or to deny indeterminacy. Instead all that is required is to reject the idea that there could be any overarching horizon for all frames, all horizons. And this, I would claim, is what the indeterminacy thesis ought to be seen to essentially consist in. Interestingly, on this account, indeterminacy is itself seen as a form of anti-foundationalism. What goes with this account of indeterminacy, when taken as an ontological thesis, however, is also the claim that the notion of the psychological realm as a whole is essentially the notion of a unity which is without determinate content. The idea of the psychological in general is a formal notion which serves only to give notice of the overall need for integration and consistency.

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<sup>1</sup>The indeterminacy thesis appears in chapter two of Word and Object (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Davidson explicitly acknowledges the Quinean connection in 'Radical Interpretation', reprinted in Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p.126n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> For Davidson's original presentation of the interdependence thesis see 'Radical Interpretation' and 'Belief and the Basis of Meaning'; both reprinted in Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation. It is in these papers that Davidson's account of radical interpretation first appears. For a discussion of some aspects of the Davidsonian account of interpretation see my papers 'The Nature of Interpretative Charity', Dialectica, 42 (1988), pp. 17-36 and 'Shanks, King-Farlowe and the Refutation of Davidson', Idealistic Studies, 18 (1988), pp. 20-31.

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- <sup>4</sup> Davidson, 'Paradoxes of irrationality', Philosophical Essays on Freud, ed. R. Wollheim and J. Hopkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 293.
- <sup>5</sup> The holism thesis is of course not universally accepted. Indeed it is a thoroughly controversial thesis. It is explicitly rejected by, for instance, Jerry Fodor in Psychosemantics: The Problem of Meaning in the Philosophy of Mind (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), pp. 60-67; and also by Colin McGinn in 'Charity, Interpretation and Belief', Journal of Philosophy, 74 (1977), pp. 521-535 and in 'Radical Interpretation and Epistemology', Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 356-368. The defence of the holism thesis against the views of such as Fodor and McGinn is not something I intend to attempt here.
- <sup>6</sup> 'Psychology as Philosophy', Essays on Actions and Events (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 231.
- <sup>7</sup> As it will also be irreducible to any form of functionalism - though this has, of course, been disputed. See especially Brian Loar, Mind and Meaning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and the reply to Loar by John McDowell, 'Functionalism and Anomalous Monism' Actions and Events: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson, ed. Brian McLaughlin and Ernest LePore (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 387-398.
- <sup>8</sup> Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson, op. cit., pp. 317-318.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid. There are suggestions that Davidson is willing to put more emphasis on the identification of the objects of belief with the causes of belief than may be warranted. Thus he is reported as arguing that an envatted brain ought to be taken as having beliefs about, not trees or other external objects, but about events in its cerebral cortex. See Colin McGinn, 'Radical Interpretation and Epistemology', p. 360n. 11 and Richard Rorty, 'Pragmatism, Davidson and Truth', p. 340n. 15 - both in Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson, op. cit.. This reading of Davidson seems, however, somewhat

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inconsistent with Davidson's own comments elsewhere. See particularly 'Knowing One's Own Mind', Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association, 61 (1987) pp. 445-446.

<sup>10</sup> See 'Psychology as Philosophy', *op. cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>11</sup> Davidson, 'The Inscrutability of Reference', *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* *op.cit.*, p. 241.

<sup>12</sup> See 'Belief and the Basis of Meaning', *op.cii.*, p. 153. Certainly some forms of indeterminacy *will* be less on the Davidsonian account than on the original Quinean version of the thesis - see Gareth Evans, 'Identity and Predication', *Journal of Philosophy*, 72 (1975), p. 346. Generally, however, the greater extent of holism in Davidson *will* lead to a greater indeterminacy. See also Michael Root and John Wallace, 'Meaning and Interpretation', *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, 23 (1982), pp. 161-162.

<sup>13</sup> Davidson takes Tarski's model for a theory of truth as the model for a theory of meaning. See 'Belief and the Basis of Meaning', *op.cit.*, pp. 149-152.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of Davidson's arguments in this paper see my 'Ontological Relativity in Quine and Davidson', *The Mind of Donald Davidson*, ed. Johannes Brandel and Wolfgang L. Gombocz (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989 [published as *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 61), pp. 157-178

<sup>15</sup> 'The Inscrutability of Reference', *op.cit.*, p. 238

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239, see also p. 238.

<sup>17</sup> See *Word and Object*, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-79

<sup>18</sup> J. Katz, 'The Refutation of Indeterminacy', *Journal of Philosophy*, 85 (1988), p. 251.

<sup>19</sup> Both Ian Hacking ('The Parody of Conversation', *Truth and Interpretation*, *op.cit.*, pp. 447-458) and Stephen Mulhall (*On Being in the World.- Wittgenstein and Heidegger on Seeing Aspects* [London: Routledge, 1990], pp. 101-104) make a similar point against Davidson to that which Katz makes against Quine. They argue that Davidson's position is absurd insofar as it appears to transform every act of linguistic understanding, even our understanding of our neighbours, into an act requiring interpretative effort

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<sup>20</sup> It need not be incompatible with all forms of foundationalism. Davidson can certainly be regarded as providing a foundation for knowledge, both in the sense of explaining how knowledge is possible and also in the sense of showing how any particular knowledge claim is to be justified by looking to a particular background of belief - indeed Davidson's insistence that most of our beliefs are true is an assertion of a certain sort of epistemological foundation

<sup>21</sup> See 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge' *op.cil.*. Ralph Walker, in *The Coherence Theory of Truth* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 193-199, treats Davidson as unequivocally espousing a coherence theory of truth.

<sup>22</sup> Indeed, while Davidson certainly rejects standard forms of epistemological foundationalism (see 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge' and 'Empirical Content', *Truth and Interpretation, op.cit.*, pp. 320-332), he also explicitly rejects any coherence theory of truth. This is most explicit in 'The Structure and Content of Truth', *Journal of Philosophy*, 87 (1990), pp. 305-309 and in 'Afterthoughts, 1987' appended to the reprinted version of 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge' in *Reading Rorty*, ed. A. Malichowski (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 136-138.

<sup>23</sup> The consistency which Davidson sees as so essential to the psychological is necessarily a consistency which is flexible and accommodating. The requirement of consistency is, in general, simply the requirement that where inconsistency is found it must be resolved or else remain localised or explicable - explicable in terms of some deeper psychological or perhaps physiological mechanism. Davidson himself discusses the problems of inconsistency and irrationality in two papers, 'Paradoxes of Irrationality', *op.cit.*, and 'Deception and Division', *Actions and Events: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson, op.cit.*, pp. 138-148. Davidson allows that inconsistency within the realm of the psychological can arise but he explains this by suggesting that inconsistent beliefs and attitudes are kept apart (and so do not come into direct conflict) through a partitioning of the psychological; see 'Deception and Division', *op.cit.*, p. 147. Talk of 'partitioning' suggests obvious similarities with my own talk of 'horizons' or 'frames'