

Davidson Memorial – Berkeley January 26, 2003

I talked to Donald on the phone the day before his surgery and he complained to me that his doctor wouldn't let him replace *both* of his knees. That was quintessential Donald. I visited him and Marcia last July. The three of us went over to see the New Asia Museum in San Francisco. Afterwards Donald wanted to show off City Hall to me. He tried to race across the rather wide street that separates the museum from City Hall in order to beat oncoming traffic. About half way across he had to stop because his legs couldn't carry him fast enough. He told me he had to get his knees replaced as soon as possible. The quality of his life was not to be compromised by a simple thing like a bad knee or two.

And the quality of Donald's life was really something to marvel. Anyone who has read my interview with him up on Berkeley's home page knows how adventurous and daring he was from early on right up until his death. There was always some new voyage or expedition in the works. Just last summer he lamented that a conference in his honor in Beijing was being canceled because of the SARS scare. He told the organizers that if they would run it, he would come!

My first meeting with him turned into a rather exciting and unexpected affair. I was a graduate student in mid-70's. Donald was going to visit a branch campus of the University of Minnesota and the philosophers there asked if I would accompany Donald from Mpls. We flew up in a four-passenger plane; once airborne Donald asked the pilot if he could take over the controls. He did. That was more than a bit of a surprise for me. Donald flew us back too.

By the time I met Donald I had already been a student of his papers. Four of my teachers had in turn been students of Donald's at Stanford. I remember getting excited from just reading footnotes where he sometimes recounted where he was when he worked out or discussed the topics of the paper. One in particular I recall began by saying that the topics of the essay were developed during long walks with his then student John Wallace

and friend and teacher Van Quine on the beaches of the Island of Corfu. I think part of my wanting to go into philosophy was my belief that all philosophers led the sort of charmed life Donald did. But, of course, Donald was exceptional.

A very attractive feature of his life was not only where and how he lived his life, but also the manner in which he did *not* pursue his career. My education dates back to before Donald collected his papers. If you trace the history of those publications, you'll discover that Donald was without even the slightest speck of careerism from the very start. He traveled the world giving papers in exotic places and often handed them over to local journals upon request. A very early version of "Mental Events," which for the longest time Donald didn't include on his CV, is his paper "Kant on Mental and Physical Concepts." He published this paper in *the Japanese Annals of the Philosophy of Science*. That came about from Donald's first visit to Japan – a trip he took in his typical vibrant style. He bought an-around-the-world ticket that allowed him to visit any country he chose as long as he didn't backtrack. By his own account he very much took advantage of this deal.

One consequence of Donald's cavalier attitude about where his papers wound up appearing in print is that those of us who were fans would often have to spend hours and sometimes days tracking down what were then for us rather obscure journals. If someone in Eastern Europe or in Brazil or in Austria or in Australia or in Yugoslavia asked Donald for permission to publish his presentation he invariably granted. The extent to which these journals are no longer unknown is in part due to Donald's anti-careerism and of course a tribute to Donald's generosity.

In ways that I'm sure Donald himself didn't intend, the great effort it took to track down some of these publications created a sense among those of us who admired his work that we were part of a select community – somehow we were in the know since we possessed a copy of his recent paper from *Dialectica* or *Grazer Philosophica* or even the *Japanese Annals Philosophy of Science*.

Of course, there were the papers themselves. I've heard many philosophers over the years say that Donald wrote his twin giants "Actions, Reasons and Causes" and "Truth and Meaning" in the 1960's and then spent the rest of his career working out their consequences. As a matter of fact, Donald pursued his interests in action theory and the philosophy of language as well as what seems like indefinitely many other interests practically simultaneously. The papers of his first two collected volumes were not written in a sequence as an elaboration of ARC and TM. Rather, many of the papers were written somewhat contemporaneously. Donald kept a complete record of his presentations and if you look at that record you will find titles or slight variations on them familiar to us now all being given much earlier than they were published and relatively around the same time. To give a tiny illustration of what I have in mind, some philosophers have written that Donald's work on quotation was an obvious development of his earlier views on indirect quotation – published some 15 years prior; I possess a mimeographed copy of his quotation paper dated from the early 60's, long before its 1979 publication. Donald simply sat on his papers for the long time.

Why did he do that? Was it because he thought them unfinished or incomplete? No, not at all. The fact is that he was not comfortable submitting his papers to journals. And that explains why people think of him as a philosopher with an almost unprecedented creative burst in his late 40's. But if you go through his published record, what you will learn is that even though he published quite extensively, for example, in *Nous* or in *the Journal of Philosophy*, every one of his papers was invited, including his "Actions, Reasons and Causes". Of course, after that paper came out he couldn't keep editors away.

Let me end by recounting something I noticed immediately after his death. I was here in Berkeley with Marcia and I took some of the condolence calls. There were plenty of them. What they all had in common was a genuine shock that Donald had died. Some of those who were calling had not seen Donald in years, and so were unaware of just how vivacious he was right up until the end; and so, the shock at his death was over *the very idea* of his not being alive. Donald was so much alive that the idea of his dying – even though he was 86 years old –stuns us all. I haven't really comprehended his death. I

continue to have conversations *with* him in my head. And I continue to write *for* him. I refuse to acknowledge or mourn his death. I suppose I still need him. I sure the hell miss him.