

When, however, we come to consider 'speech' just those questions do become relevant. Here arise questions of what that particular speaker intended, what he meant his hearer(s) to understand by what he said, what effects he hoped for. Here psychological (psycholinguistic) questions emerge. In short, in 'language' words and expressions have meanings quite apart from individual human intentions, but in speech more than the meaning an expression or a word has is at issue. 'Language' can be, indeed must be, studied without regard to the individuals who speak it; thus we can study dead languages. But to study speech we must take into consideration the actual situation and actual individuals in a particular speech situation. To study 'speech' we need speakers.

Thus it may be illuminating (no more) to say that the question raised by Professor Aldrich—namely, how can an expression mean one thing and yet be used to mean something else if use and meaning are connected—requires for its answer the distinction between 'language' and 'speech' made above. Naturally to say that 'language' and 'speech' should be distinguished is in no way to say that they are not intimately connected.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Studies*, 13:33–35 (April 1962).

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), Part I, p. 498.

<sup>3</sup> J. A. Fodor, "Of Words and Uses," *Inquiry*, 4:190 (Autumn 1961).

<sup>4</sup> Would this be one of the uses of 'using a hammer'? What would that have to do with its meaning?

<sup>5</sup> *Course in General Linguistics*, edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959). See too Alan H. Gardiner, *The Theory of Speech and Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), and "The Instrumentality of Language" by A. M. MacIver, in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1962 (presidential address).

<sup>6</sup> *Semantic Analysis* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1961).

## *Correction to "The Logic of Obligation" (A Reply)*

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IN "An Axiom System for Deontic Logic," Nicholas Rescher proposed a set of axioms and definitions intended to formalize the ordinary notions of obligation, permission, deontic commitment, etc.<sup>1</sup> The primitive notation

of the system is  $P(p/c)$ , which is to be read as "the act  $p$  is permitted (allowed) under the circumstances (or condition)  $c$ ." Let us call this *Semantical Rule R1*. The expressions designating acts appear on the left of '/' and those designating circumstances on the right; and both sets of expressions are governed by the rules of propositional logic. Rescher offers seven axioms, the last one being

$$A7. \quad \vdash P(p/d) \rightarrow P(p/c \ \& \ \sim c),$$

which according to R1 should be read as: "If an act  $p$  is permitted in some circumstance  $d$ , then it is permitted in the unrealizable circumstance  $c \ \& \ \sim c$ ." The sign ' $\rightarrow$ ' is a modal conditional.

The central part of Rescher's system consists of the following definitions:

- D1.  $O(p/c) =_{\text{df}} \sim P(\sim p/c)$ : "An act  $p$  is obligatory in circumstance  $c$  if and only if it is not the case that its omission is permitted in  $c$ ."  
 D2.  $P^*(p) =_{\text{df}} P(p/t)$ ,  $t$  being a tautology: "An act  $p$  is absolutely permitted if and only if it is permitted under all circumstances whatsoever."  
 D3.  $O^*(p) =_{\text{df}} O(p/f)$ ,  $f$  being a self-contradiction, e.g.,  $c \ \& \ \sim c$ : "An act  $p$  is absolutely obligatory if and only if it is obligatory under logically unrealizable circumstances."

In Part I of "The Logic of Obligation," I objected to Rescher's definitions as adequate formalizations of our *ordinary* concepts of obligation.<sup>2</sup> Now, recently, E. J. Lemmon has argued that my objection is unfounded, as follows:

[1] Castaneda argues that Rescher wants  $O^*(p)$  to mean "p is obligatory under all circumstances," whilst in fact it means, by D3, "p is obligatory under circumstances  $c \ \& \ \sim c$  which are never realized, i.e., in no circumstances whatsoever," whence no act is absolutely obligatory. This is a misunderstanding, however, of Rescher's position. [2] According to axiom A7, what is permitted in some circumstances is *trivially* permitted in the circumstance  $c \ \& \ \sim c$ . By contraposition, what is obligatory in case  $c \ \& \ \sim c$  is obligatory in all circumstances. [3] Conversely, what is obligatory always is obligatory even in case  $c \ \& \ \sim c$ , so that  $O(p/f)$  is equivalent in Rescher's system to absolute obligation. [The labeling is mine; the italics are Lemmon's.]<sup>3</sup>

This argument, however, for all its tightness is an *ignoratio elenchi*. In part [1] Lemmon does present my claim fairly, and I can see now that that claim is incorrect. I should have said, more cautiously, that *if* there is any act  $p$  which can be truly said to be obligatory (or permitted) in the unrealizable circumstance  $c \ \& \ \sim c$ , and this is all we know about such act  $p$ , then we are in no position to say that it is obligatory (or permitted) in any given, realizable circumstance. In ordinary language, to say that an action is obligatory (permitted) on condition  $C$  is to be in position to say that if and when  $C$  is

realized the action is obligatory (permitted) categorically. And this is precisely the move which being valid in ordinary English we should expect to be valid in any adequate formalization of our ordinary obligation talk. But that move prevents us from inferring from "p is obligatory in the unrealizable circumstance" to "p is obligatory in all circumstances." Therefore, the two are not logically equivalent, let alone synonymous. Rescher quite correctly wants the latter as a semantical rule for his system: "The meaning of the concepts of *absolute permission* and *absolute obligation*," he says, "can be stated simply: an act is absolutely permitted (or obligatory) if it is permitted (obligatory) under all circumstances whatsoever."<sup>4</sup>

I saw then no point in pressing that since '/' is a conditional sign, and from a contradiction every proposition follows,  $O(p/c \ \& \ \sim c)$  will be true of every act p, even if it is not obligatory, conditionally or absolutely. I still leave this unpressed.

Part [2] of Lemmon's quotation has a good argument, leading from Rescher's axiom A7 to Rescher's theorem

T4.6.  $O(p/c \ \& \ \sim c) \rightarrow O(p/d)$ : "What is obligatory in case  $c \ \& \ \sim c$  is obligatory in all circumstances, i.e., in any arbitrarily chosen circumstance d."

Lemmon only forgot to mention that to get this conclusion he has to make a substitution in accordance with D1 on the strict contrapositive of A7, namely, "if it is not the case that it is permitted not to do p in  $C \ \& \ \sim c$ , then it is not the case that it is permitted not to do p in any circumstance d."

But for the life of me I fail to see why Lemmon thinks that this proves my misunderstanding. I never denied that T4.6 can be derived from Rescher's axioms by means of Rescher's definitions. My only contention has been, precisely, that T4.6 is mistaken or counterintuitive, from the point of view of the ordinary language interpretation that Rescher wants for his symbols. I repeat, the fact, if it is a fact, that an act p is obligatory in circumstances which are logically impossible of realization cannot, in the ordinary sense of the expressions involved, entail that such act p is obligatory in all circumstances—which are realized!

In part [3] of his discussion Lemmon concludes " $O(p/f)$  is equivalent in Rescher's system to absolute obligation." This is ambiguous; it can mean one of at least two things: (a) In Rescher's system absolute obligation is defined as  $O(p/f)$ . (b) Rescher's definition of absolute obligation as  $O(p/f)$  is an adequate formalization (together with Rescher's other axioms and definitions) of our ordinary concept of obligation. If Lemmon means (a), there is no disagreement. I have emphasized that in Rescher's system D3 is counterintuitive. But clearly, nothing, then, in Lemmon's discussion shows

that I have misunderstood Rescher, much less that Rescher's formalization of deontic talk is adequate.

If in asserting [3] Lemmon means (b), then we disagree sharply. I claim that (b) is false. Obviously, (b) does not follow from T4.6, or the argument [2] by means of which Lemmon derives T4.6 from axiom A7.

I conclude, therefore, that my original contention against definition D3 stands undefeated. I am grateful to Mr. E. J. Lemmon for having provided an occasion to correct the statement of my objection.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Rescher, "An Axiom System for Deontic Logic," *Philosophical Studies*, 9:24-30 (1958).

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophical Studies*, 10:17-23 (1959), at pp. 17-19.

<sup>3</sup> Discussion in *Journal of Symbolic Logic*, 25:79 (1960).

<sup>4</sup> Rescher, "An Axiom System for Deontic Logic," p. 27.

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