

Reviews

OLSON, RAYMOND, and PAUL, ANTHONY. *Contemporary philosophy in Scandinavia*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972. 508 pp.

This book is a collection of papers by Scandinavian philosophers, including most of those who are already well known outside Scandinavia and many more whom it is well worthwhile to learn of. von Wright's interesting introduction maps out the philosophical trends and the lines of intellectual descent in Scandinavia in the last two hundred years. There are several papers that deal historically with particular Scandinavian philosophers. But only to that extent is this a book about Scandinavian philosophy. On the contrary, it reinforces our impression that there is no longer any such thing as Scandinavian philosophy. Scandinavian philosophers are inseparably part of the wider world, and go about their work pretty much the same way as the rest of us.

The book is indeed useful, for two different reasons. Considered simply as a collection of papers (25 new, 6 reprinted), we find a good proportion of interesting and worthwhile ones. There is something here for nearly every philosophical taste. Only the reader who hopes to encounter a new and distinctive and homogeneous style of philosophy will be disappointed. But in addition, the book is valuable because several of the papers are summaries or short expositions of their authors' longer works; you can use it as a catalog. We mention, for instance, Åqvist on questions, Hintikka on epistemology, Bergström on metaethics, Ross on speech acts, Hedenius on the alleged obligation to obey the law, Ofstad on free will and responsibility, Naess on scepticism, Wyller on Plato's later dialogues, and Berg on Bolzano. Some of the historical papers—Blegvad on Harald Höffding's moral philo-

sophy, Marc-Wogau on Hägerström's ontology—introduce and advertise works that may be less well known to most of us than they ought to be. In both these ways, the book does a service both to the reader and to the philosophers thus publicised.

It would be pointless to say a few words about each of 31 substantial papers. Intending no slight whatever to the rest, we shall discuss below a few papers that especially interest us.

1

STIG and HELLE KANGER's *Rights and parliamentarianism* is a paper in deontic logic; but it is deontic logic with a difference. Pure deontic logic provides a formal language capable of expressing some of the simplest things about obligation that we would ever wish to say, plus some complicated things ("It is obligatory that it is obligatory that it is permissible that ...") that we never wish to say and can scarcely understand. The applicability of such systems is very much open to question. By enriching the language of deontic logic with a non-deontic intensional operator of agency, the Kangers produce a system capable of a much more worthwhile sort of complexity. The distinctions they can make clearly in their formalism would be hard to make in ordinary language, and do have serious real-life applications.

We begin with the standard deontic logic *D*, presented axiomatically. The operator of deontic necessity (or obligation) is read "It shall be that ..."; the operator of deontic possibility (or permissibility) is read "It may be that ...". So far, the system is impersonal; there is nothing to show who is obligated, or to whom the obligation is owed. The personal element is introduced via a family of operators of agency. For each party *X*, there is an operator "*X* sees to it that ...". These are classical intensional operators, permitting interchange of equivalent arguments: if *F* and *G* are logically equivalent, so are "*X* sees to it that *F*" and "*X* sees to it that *G*". Further, they imply success: it is taken as axiomatic that if *X* sees to it that *F*, then *F*. This completes the description of the Kangers' primitive apparatus. The rest of their paper displays its rather startling expressive power.

Consider two parties X and Y , and a state of affairs $S(X, Y)$. (The parties may be individual persons, or they may be such things as corporations or the Swedish state. The state of affairs is regarded as a relation between X and Y , but this stipulation amounts to less than one might suppose since the Kangers stretch the concept of a relation. For example, they mention a "relation" that X bears to any Y if X resigns the office of prime minister, and to no Y otherwise. We guess they would even countenance a "relation" that is universal if snow is white and empty otherwise, and if so then any state of affairs whatever is relational in their stretched sense. What's true is that *most* of the intended applications of their apparatus involve states of affairs that are relational not only in the stretched sense but also in a more ordinary sense.) We might say in ordinary language that party X has some sort of right versus party Y regarding the state of affairs $S(X, Y)$. But that seems rather indefinite; and we see just how indefinite it is when we see how many different ways there are to specify this right precisely in Kangerese.

One possible constituent of X 's right is as follows: it shall be that Y sees to it that $S(X, Y)$. Then the Kangers say that X has versus Y a *claim* to the effect that $S(X, Y)$.

It is one thing for Y to bring about a state of affairs, another thing for him merely to forbear from preventing it. So another possible constituent of X 's right, implied by a claim but not implying it, is as follows: it shall be that Y does not see to it that not- $S(X, Y)$. Then the Kangers say that X has versus Y an *immunity* to the effect that $S(X, Y)$.

So far we have considered the deontic status of Y 's agency; but the deontic status of X 's agency also enters into the specification of X 's right. A third possible constituent is as follows: it may be that X sees to it that $S(X, Y)$. (Equivalently: it is not the case that it shall be that X does not see to it that $S(X, Y)$.) Then the Kangers say that X has versus Y a *power* to the effect that $S(X, Y)$.

For X , as for Y , we distinguish bringing about from forbearing to prevent; it might be that only the latter is permissible. So a fourth possible constituent of X 's right, implied by a power but not implying it, is as follows: it may be that X does not see to it

that not- $S(X, Y)$. (Equivalently: it is not the case that it shall be that X sees to it that not- $S(X, Y)$.) Then the Kangers say that X has versus Y a *freedom* to the effect that $S(X, Y)$.

X 's rights with respect to a state of affairs may consist partly or entirely of rights not to have it. Another possible constituent of X 's right with respect to $S(X, Y)$, then, is a claim versus Y to the effect that not- $S(X, Y)$; the Kangers call this a *counterclaim* versus Y to the effect that $S(X, Y)$. (We find it somewhat confusing that they speak of the "opposite" to S ; by this they do not mean a relation at the other end of some spectrum from S , but only the relation that holds exactly when S doesn't. The opposite to love, in the sense they intend, is non-love rather than the narrower relation of hatred.) In a parallel way, X has versus Y a *counter-immunity*, *counterpower*, or *counterfreedom* to the effect that $S(X, Y)$ iff X has versus Y respectively an immunity, power, or freedom to the effect that not- $S(X, Y)$.

A complete Kangerese specification of X 's right versus Y regarding the state of affairs $S(X, Y)$ specifies, for each of the eight simple constituents just listed, whether or not it holds. Of the 256 superficially possible combinations, most are provably inconsistent. The Kangers show that there are exactly 26 fully specified consistent combinations. These are, of course, mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive. Less complete specifications of right can be regarded as disjunctions of some of the 26 cases. (More precisely, we should say that 26 of the possible combination-schemata are deductively consistent under the Kangers' axiomatization of their primitive apparatus. Of course a consistent schema might have inconsistent instances, for instance if a contradictory formula is put in for S .)

Not only do the Kangers study the logical relations among the various constituents of X 's right versus Y regarding the state of affairs $S(X, Y)$. Also there are logical relations between these and the various constituents of Y 's right versus X regarding the same state of affairs. (Note that the state of affairs $S(X, Y)$ can also be represented as $\tilde{S}(Y, X)$, where the relation \tilde{S} is the converse of the original relation S .) For instance, if X has versus Y a claim to the effect that $S(X, Y)$, then it follows that Y does not have versus X

a counterfreedom to the effect that $S(X, Y)$, and that Y does have versus X an immunity to the effect that $S(X, Y)$. The converse of the first implication holds also, but not the converse of the second. These reciprocal logical relations between constituents of rights are thoroughly investigated.

As a piece of ordinary language philosophy, the article has little to recommend it. What the Kangers call powers and immunities could just as naturally have been called freedoms; in fact, we see little to choose between the six possible ways of pairing the three terms "immunity", "power", and "freedom" with the three referents the Kangers wish to label. "Claim" is perhaps a bit more natural; "counterclaim", etc., are unabashedly artificial. The most familiar senses of such terms as "freedom" and "power" are related only remotely, if at all, to the senses captured by the Kangers' definitions. Also the technical uses of some of these terms introduced by Hohfeld do not quite match the Kangers' uses, as they explain. All in all, it is best to take the Kangers' definitions as entirely stipulative, introducing new technical terminology. But is that a bad thing? We think not. After all, the entire point of the project is to *improve* on the expressive resources of ordinary language and of previously available technical jargon. The fact that it's hard to find exactly the right word for the concepts the Kangers introduce just goes to show that it was worth going to the trouble of introducing them.

We wonder how completely the Kangers' taxonomy of rights covers the field. For one thing, they say that X can have a right versus Y regarding a state of affairs only if that state of affairs consists of a relation of X and Y . But we think that sometimes the state of affairs will consist rather of a relation between Y (or perhaps X) and some third party Z . The parent has versus the sitter a claim to the effect that the sitter will care for the baby. So the Kangers' restriction on the states of affairs that enter into rights seems wrong. But perhaps not; if we stretch the sense of "relation" so that any state of affairs whatever counts as a relation between X and Y , then in particular a relation (in the ordinary unstretched sense) between Y and Z counts as a relation (in the stretched sense) between X and Y . Taking "relation" in the

stretched sense, the case of the parent, the sitter, and the baby is covered, as it ought to be. But if the restriction is saved from error in this way it becomes entirely empty, and we would be better off if it were dropped from the theory. We wonder also about rights that a party *X* may have versus nobody in particular, or versus the world at large. (We do not suppose the world at large counts as a "party".) You may well think that you have some sort of right to be treated as a human being, and that this general right is something different from your bundle of rights versus various parties *U*, *V*, *W*, ... to the effect that you shall be treated as a human being respectively by *U*, by *V*, by *W*, Even if the list of parties *U*, *V*, *W*, ... includes all parties with whom you have any sort of social interaction or bond, or even if it includes all parties who exist, or even if it includes all parties who ever have existed or ever will, still something is left out. For one thing, your right to be treated as a human being would apply counterfactually: if there were other parties than there actually are, it would give rise to rights versus them. Not so for your collection of rights versus all the particular parties there actually are. Perhaps such rights versus nobody in particular do not really exist; but the Kangers have left them out of the taxonomy without making a case against them. It is interesting to consider how the primitive apparatus would have to be expanded to cover such rights. At a minimum, we would need to add quantification over parties; but if, as we have suggested, there is a modal element in the concept, that would not be enough.

The Kangers' taxonomy, complete or not, is a useful tool. It is not burdened with any controversial assumptions about the origins of rights, so there is nothing to keep a natural lawyer, a legal positivist, or the holder of any other foundational view within reason from using it to describe whatever rights he may think there are. The final sections of the paper show the apparatus at work. Consider systems of government with a parliament, a prime minister, a head of state, and various other parties. These parties will have various rights to dismiss or appoint one another, and the structure of these rights will differ from one parliamentary form of government to another. The taxonomy of rights (plus some fur-

ther principles of joint agency and political feasibility) leads to a taxonomy of possible forms of parliamentarianism. It is gratifying, and all too unusual, to see a philosophical theory do so well at describing full-blown, real-life examples (especially the case of West Germany) instead of simple, made-up ones.

2

LENNART ÅQVIST's paper *On the analysis and logic of questions*¹ provides another interesting example of the expressive power of a system that combines deontic and non-deontic intensional operators. Åqvist combines a treatment of imperatives patterned after standard deontic logic with the quantified epistemic logic of Hintikka's *Knowledge and belief*. In the resulting system of imperative-epistemic logic, he is able to find plausible translations of many different kinds of questions. Question-forming operators are defined accordingly. The logic of questions need not be developed as a new subject, but rather can be derived via the translation scheme from the given epistemic logic plus appropriate further principles governing imperatives.

Åqvist's plan is to equate a question with an imperative which we may schematize, in a general but rough way, as "Let it be that I know the correct answer!" The word "correct" may however be dropped as redundant, since correct answers are the only ones that can possibly be known. For yes-no questions, we have the scheme:

Question: Is it that P ?

Imperative: Let it be that either I know that P or I know that not- P !

¹ Åqvist's paper serves as a summary of his book *A new approach to the logical theory of interrogatives*, Part 1: *Analysis* (Uppsala, 1965). Further elaboration, and some modification, of Åqvist's treatment is found in two sequels: "Scattered topics in interrogative logic", in *Philosophical logic*, ed. by J. W. Davis, D. J. Hockney, and W. K. Wilson (Reidel, 1969); and "Revised foundations for imperative-epistemic and interrogative logic", *Theoria*, vol. 37 (1971), pp. 33—73. The latter supersedes the section of the present paper that deals with the "ought-to-know" paradox.

For multiple-choice questions, presupposing that exactly one of the given alternatives is correct, we have the scheme:

Question: Is it that P , or Q , or ...?

Imperative: Let it be that either I know that P , or I know that Q , or ...!

For fill-in-the-blank questions, presupposing that exactly one thing satisfies the given condition, we have the scheme:

Question: For which x is it that Fx ?

Imperative: Let it be that for some x I know that Fx !

These three basic forms are only the beginning.

If we wish to drop the presupposition that at most one alternative is correct, there are two options: roughly, "Let it be that I know some correct answer!" and "Let it be that I know every correct answer!" (In the second case, the qualification "correct" is no longer redundant.) If we wish to drop the presupposition that at least one alternative is correct, we can choose between an imperative that is unfulfillable if no alternative is correct and a safer one that is vacuously fulfilled in that case. Also we can decide whether to tack on an imperative "Let it be that if no alternative is correct then I know that no alternative is correct!" With these several options there are lots of combinations to consider, and Åqvist examines these in some detail.

We have explained Åqvist's project partly in terms of the relation between questions and their answers. It is noteworthy that Åqvist himself does not do this. In fact, he thinks it an advantage of his treatment over others that "logical relations among questions ... can be studied without our having to specify in advance the so-called question-answer relationship" (page 29). In a sense, this is true: the question-answer relation will not appear explicitly in Åqvist's formal account of the logic of questions. But in that formal account, the imperative-epistemic translations of questions of various sorts are given merely by a host of miscellaneous stipulations. Where did these stipulations come from? What common principle governs the translation of questions of different sorts? We think that a question-answer relation does enter

crucially into Åqvist's theory at this stage, at least if we want to capture generalizations broad enough to apply to questions of more than one kind. To disregard the unofficial preliminaries to Åqvist's formal theory, and to concern ourselves only with already translated questions, would, we think, detract seriously from the power and interest of Åqvist's work.

As Åqvist says, his approach is at least compatible with the approach of those who study questions primarily by investigating the question-answer relation. We can add that Åqvist's approach also is compatible with that of Robert Hull and Edward Keenan, in which question-*cum*-answer pairs are treated as declaratives and the properties of questions are studied via the contribution they make to the conditions of truth (or appropriateness) of these declarative pairs.* We are sure that these various ways of studying questions can at least coexist consistently; we hope also that they can contribute usefully to one another, and eventually merge.

We fully agree with Åqvist that questions can legitimately and usefully be treated as imperatives. When you have been asked a question, just as when you have been asked to pass the salt, the asker has by his words placed you under some sort of obligation. It is up to you to comply with the imperative and discharge the obligation by answering or by passing the salt. The obligation may be a more or less stringent one; that depends on your relation to the asker, on the way he asked, and on the circumstances. (It may be so very far from stringent that it is stretching usage to call it an obligation at all, as when a stranger in the street asks you to give him money or asks you why you have a beard. But even here we understand what it is that, in some very attenuated sense, you are supposed to do; and that is so even if you have no reason whatever to discharge the "obligation" the stranger has presumptuously imposed on you.) Questions and other imperatives are alike in the role they play in our linguistic practices. They differ only in the superficial grammatical flags they fly. Therefore it seems eminently reasonable to treat them alike in formal semantics.

* Edvard L. Keenan and Robert D. Hull, "The logical presuppositions of questions and answers". In *Präsuppositionen in Philosophie und Linguistik*, edited by János S. Petöfi and Dorothea Franck (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1973).

If questions are to be treated as imperatives, then we should be able to find out just what imperatives they are by considering what it is to comply with them. If someone asks you a question, he puts you under some sort of obligation; under what conditions do you fulfill that obligation? If his question can be treated as an imperative "Let it be that *S*!", then the conditions under which your obligation is fulfilled are given by the embedded sentence *S*. According to Åqvist, *S* says that the asker shall have knowledge on a certain topic. (Presumably, that he shall have knowledge in the immediate future, not at the time of asking and not just at some time or other; but Åqvist is not as explicit and precise about this temporal aspect as he is about some other parts of the analysis.) Is it so, then, that if the asker gets the knowledge he requests, and not otherwise, then your obligation is fulfilled? We think not.

Suppose that someone asks you, "When will the train arrive?" He thereby imposes an obligation on you. Åqvist translates the question by the imperative "Let it be that, for some *t*, I know that *t* is the time when the train will arrive!" We can put it more colloquially: "Let it be that I know when the train will arrive!" (Suppose it is presupposed that the train in question will arrive at exactly one time.) That means that the obligation imposed on you is fulfilled if and only if the asker knows (immediately after asking) when the train will arrive. But is that right? We think not.

CASE 1: you know that it will arrive at noon, you say so, the asker understands and believes you, and thus he comes to know also that it arrives at noon. Clearly you have fulfilled your obligation; and so says Åqvist. CASE 2: you are uncooperative or ignorant or both, and refuse to answer. The asker remains ignorant. Clearly you have not fulfilled your obligation, and so says Åqvist. So far, so good; but let us go on. CASE 3: you refuse to answer; but the asker does not remain ignorant. Some more helpful bystander answers; or just then the asker's eye falls on the posted timetable; or the forgotten time returns to the asker's memory. Then we say that you have no more fulfilled your obligation than in Case 2. If the question was an imperative, it is not an imperative that is complied with if the asker comes to know the answer with no help from you. Then it is not Åqvist's "Let it be that I know!"

One way to handle Case 3, without harm to the clear Cases 1 and 2, is to borrow the Kangers' operator of agency and modify Åqvist's imperative translation of the question as follows: "Let it be that you see to it that, for some t , I know that t is the time when the train will arrive!" Thus it is part of the content of the imperative that the asker shall come by the knowledge he seeks in a certain way. Further, the peculiarly impersonal character of Åqvist's imperative translations is remedied, since the addressee is mentioned as the one who is to see to it that the asker knows. (In case there is no addressee, the translation could be "Let it be that someone sees to it ...!" or "Let it be that one of you sees to it ...!") We note that it is possible that Åqvist *already* means by "Let it be that ...!" what we would express by "Let it be that you see to it that ...!"; we find no evidence in the text to support this hypothesis, but also nothing that decisively rules it out.

Introduction of an agency operator, whether by modification or by reinterpretation of Åqvist's translations, is certainly a step in the right direction. But it does not yet go far enough. Consider two further cases. CASE 4: you know that the train will arrive at noon, you say so, but for some reason the asker does not thereupon come to share your knowledge. Perhaps he is of sceptical habits and seldom takes anyone's word for anything; perhaps something in the way you answered leads him to doubt your word in particular. Perhaps you have even aroused such distrust that, far from seeing to it that he knows that the train will arrive at noon, you have caused him to believe firmly that it will not. Then have you failed to fulfill the obligation imposed on you by the question? We think not. You answered, fair and square, telling what you knew to be the truth; and that was all you were supposed to do. It was not part of your responsibility to succeed in overcoming the asker's suspicions, or even to take special pains to be persuasive. On the other hand, consider CASE 5: you know that the train will arrive at noon, but you refrain from saying so. Instead, you take steps to see to it that the asker finds out for himself; perhaps you lead him to the timetable and point to the proper line. Perhaps you think this is the best way, more likely to succeed than simply telling him, of seeing to it that he knows. Have you

fulfilled your obligation? Not quite, we think. He hasn't much cause for complaint, since you did something as good or better; but what you were supposed to do was to tell him, and that you refused to do. To summarize: we think that in Case 4 you have fulfilled the obligation imposed on you by the question, and that in Case 5, strictly speaking, you have not. But on Åqvist's theory, either in its original version or in the improved version with an agency operator, it's the other way around: in Case 5 you have seen to it that the asker had the knowledge he sought, whereas in Case 4 you did not see to it (and perhaps you didn't even make much of an effort) and the asker didn't get the knowledge.

What to do? We think it best to keep the imperative part of Åqvist's imperative-epistemic analysis, but to replace the epistemic part. We propose instead an imperative-assertoric analysis. A question is to be schematized roughly as: "Let it be that you tell me the correct answer!" (or sometimes "... some correct answer" or "... every correct answer"). Now the word "correct" is no longer redundant, since incorrect answers, although they cannot be known, certainly can be told. If we use an intensional operator of assertion, which does not imply truth, we need to complicate Åqvist's formulations. For yes-no questions, for instance, we will have the scheme:

Question: Is it that P ?

Imperative: Let it be that either P and you tell me that P , or not- P and you tell me that not- P !

However, we can define another operator of truth-telling: X tells Y truly that P iff X tells Y that P , and P . Whenever Åqvist gives us an imperative-epistemic translation scheme, we transform it into the imperative-assertoric scheme that we prefer simply by replacing the epistemic operator "I know that ..." throughout by the assertoric operator "You tell me truly that ...".

In our Cases 1 and 4, in which we judged that you fulfilled your obligation, you did indeed tell the asker that the train would arrive at noon. In our Cases 2, 3, and 5, in which we judged that you did not fulfill your obligation, you did not tell the asker that the train would arrive at noon. That conforms to our hypothesis

that your obligation is the one imposed by the assertoric imperative: "Let it be that, for some time t , you tell me truly that t is the time when the train will arrive!"

The imperative-epistemic analysis does not fit examination questions: the examiner ordinarily knows the correct answer already, and if he did not he probably would not come to know it by taking the examinee's word. Elsewhere,² Åqvist has proposed a special treatment for examination questions: "Let it be that I know that you know the correct answer!" This works as well as his imperative-epistemic treatment of ordinary questions, though no better, except perhaps when the examination is graded not by the examiner himself but by his human or mechanical assistant. We note that the imperative-assertoric analysis handles examination questions just like any other questions, with no special ad-hocery, and we think this is something of an advantage. Consider also questions in a police interrogation: the detective asks the suspect "Are you the one who did it?" although he already knows the correct answer, knows that the suspect knows it too, knows that the suspect knows that he knows, and so on. The asker already has all the knowledge he needs; what he wants now is a confession.

We should in fairness mention one case where Åqvist's epistemic imperatives do fit better than our assertoric ones. Questions may be asked, especially (but not only) in soliloquy, just to express one's perplexity and without any intention of eliciting an answer. Tormented by doubt you ask aloud "Is there a God?" You are not requesting that anyone tell you the truth of the matter. Many have told you that there is, as many more have told you that there isn't, and half of these—but which half?—already have told you the correct answer. Another assertion one way or the other, even if true, would help you not at all. What you want is knowledge. Such soliloquy-questions do not fit our account. But they do not quite fit an imperative-epistemic account either; for they do not impose an obligation on anyone, or on the world at large, or on God if such there be, or on yourself, to provide the knowledge that you seek. What fits best is an optative-epistemic translation: "Would that I

² In "Scattered topics in interrogative logic".

knew the correct answer!" Indeed Åqvist mentions parenthetically (page 27) that his "Let it be that ...!" might sometimes be taken as optative rather than imperative. That is just right (for the special case of soliloquy-questions) except that more needs to be said about the proper treatment of optatives.

It is a pleasure now to desist from disagreement, and turn rather to the defense of an aspect of Åqvist's work that is apt to raise a lot of eyebrows. Imperatives—whether questions or more commonplace ones—are used, we said, to impose obligations on the addressee. Other sentences, declarative rather than imperative, are used not to create obligations but instead to describe those that exist already. (There may be some overlap, for instance with sentences of the form "You are ordered to ...", but for the most part we can distinguish easily.) These latter sentences have truth conditions, being true if the described obligation exists and false if it doesn't. It is traditional to capture the distinction between obligation-creating imperatives and obligation-describing declaratives by denying that the former have truth conditions. That denial fits our naive opinions; surely we would react with bewilderment to the dialogue:

*Pass the salt. / That's true.

Åqvist boldly defies tradition. He treats the imperative operator "Let it be that ...!" as a specialized operator of deontic necessity: "Let it be that S!" is true if and only if S holds in all ideal alternatives to actuality, where presumably the ideal alternatives are those in which all actual obligations of the appropriate sort are fulfilled. In short, "Pass the salt!" has just the same truth conditions, for Åqvist, as the declarative "You are supposed to pass the salt" (provided that in interpreting the latter we consider only the obligations that arise from imperatives). Similarly, on our revision of Åqvist's imperative analysis of questions, "When will the train arrive?" has the same truth conditions as the declarative "You are supposed to tell me when the train will arrive" (under the same proviso as before). It is no frill for Åqvist thus to assign truth conditions to questions and other imperatives. He has to, for he wishes to bring them within the scope of such standard logical

relations as (semantic) implication, and those relations are defined in terms of truth. To go along with tradition, Åqvist would have to fundamentally revise his conception of the logical relations among imperatives and between imperatives and declaratives.

Does Åqvist therefore confuse imperatives with obligation-describing declaratives? By no means! Surely nobody would seriously claim that the truth conditions of sentences are all that matter to their role in our linguistic practice. Nor should anyone think that because Åqvist does not distinguish imperatives from certain declaratives by their truth conditions, therefore he cannot distinguish them at all. Indeed, he does not discuss the distinction in the present paper. But we think it is clear what must be said, so let us say it. *What follows is not the only possible treatment of imperatives, but we think it is one that will work and that will fit neatly into Åqvist's program.*³

(1) Imperatives have truth conditions, and (2) their truth conditions are as Åqvist says. (3) The recursive rules generating truth conditions for sentences are only part of the system of rules jointly constitutive of our linguistic practice; there are also rules governing the creation of obligations. (4) These latter rules are such that imperatives are self-verifying: whenever an imperative is uttered (perhaps with exceptions for certain infelicitous cases) the prevailing obligations are thereby changed in such a way as to make the imperative true. (5) Therefore, to the extent that people wish to fulfill their obligations, it is possible to use imperatives to get people to do things. (6) But it is not possible to use imperatives to communicate information about obligations that exist already, since the attempt at such communication would not leave the described obligations unchanged. (7) Although certain declara-

³ Another feasible approach is that of Eric Stenius, "Mood and language-game", *Synthese*, vol. 17 (1967), pp. 254—274, adopted in David Lewis, *Convention* (Harvard, 1969); still another is the "paraphrased performative" theory in David Lewis, "General semantics", *Synthese*, vol. 22 (1970), pp. 18—67. We doubt that these proposals differ otherwise than in terminology from the present one, so we feel no need to choose. We are told that something like our present treatment has been developed independently by Thomas Balmer, but we have not seen the details of his work.

tives match the truth conditions of imperatives, they differ in that they are not self-verifying; according to the rules for creation of obligations, their utterance does not normally bring new obligations into being. (8) Therefore these declaratives can be used to impart information in the usual way: the speaker utters a sentence that he takes to be true (but not true simply because he utters it) and the trusting hearer concludes that the existing obligations are such as to satisfy the truth conditions of his sentence. (9) Since it is difficult or impossible to utter an imperative falsely, we are not in the habit of considering the truth values of imperatives and even find it bizarre to do so.

We think this treatment will do as far as it goes, but if it is to be pushed further some difficult problems must be solved. One of these concerns permissions, which Åqvist treats as equivalent to the denials of imperatives. His permission operator is an operator of deontic possibility, so that a permission sentence "It is permissible that *S*" is true if and only if *S* holds in some ideal—in other words, permissible—alternative to actuality. Such a sentence, if it is to be a genuine permission and not merely a declarative used to describe the absence of an obligation, must be treated along with the imperatives as self-verifying. The rules governing creation of obligations should provide also for the destruction of obligations, so that (at least normally) when a permission "It is permissible that *S*" is uttered, the prevailing obligations are thereby reduced in such a way as to make it true. The trouble is that it is hard to say just what such a rule of obligation reduction should look like, since there will generally be many different ways of reducing obligations to make the permission true. *Some* possible ways for *S* to be true must become permissible alternatives to actuality, but *which* ones? Surely not all; permissions do not erode obligations so powerfully as that. We must leave this as an open problem, with the warning that several rather obvious answers turn out to fail.

3

RISTO HILPINEN'S *Decision-theoretic approaches to rules of acceptance* is a valuable survey of a substantial body of recent

work in epistemology. This is one of the papers that serves partly as a short introduction to the author's own contributions to the subject. But the contributions of others are covered with equal care and sympathy, so that the impressive theory presented is rightly shown as the joint work of many hands. About half those hands are Scandinavian.

The starting point is familiar. For some reason, scientists (or the rest of us amateur knowers) are not content simply to believe various propositions to various degrees, making sure that their degrees of credence always wax and wane appropriately in response to the total evidence at hand. Either alongside of or instead of their subjective probability distributions, real-life scientists have something else: an accepted theory of the way things are. Acceptance is not dogmatic certainty. The scientist's accepted theory may be open to change under the impact of new evidence or new thought, and the rational scientist may well hedge against the risk that his presently accepted theory may be false. But acceptance (however provisional it may be) is in one way strikingly like certainty and unlike lesser degrees of belief. It is all or nothing. All that you accept is equally part of your theory of the way things are. Either you have not made up your mind on a question, and have accepted no opinion although you may lean one way or another; or you have decided what to accept and (until you change your mind) that's that. Postpone the question why we bother with this non-quantitative sort of belief, when the quantitative sort—subjective probability—would do nicely for all practical purposes. Look at the history of science, or look at your own epistemic practice, and you will find that some sort of all-or-nothing acceptance is a phenomenon too prominent to be ignored.

The decision what theory to accept may be likened to other decisions—which train to take, which economic strategy to pursue, or the like. (Granted, epistemic decisions are less voluntary than others. But if we think of the canons of rational decision as standards of evaluation, not as advice to decision-makers, then they can apply both to voluntary and involuntary decisions.) There are various desiderata, more or less weighty. There is uncertainty about the extent to which a given alternative will satisfy the

desiderata. We must therefore be guided by probabilities. More precisely, according to Bayesian canons of rationality, we must choose the alternative with the best expected utility according to our subjective probabilities and the weights we attach to the desiderata.

How does this apply to the choice of a theory to accept? One epistemic desideratum is *truth*. Other things being equal, choose a theory which is probably true. But that's too easy. You could always play it safe and accept a trivially weak theory, such as the one comprising only the truths of logic, but that choice would be a bad one. So another epistemic desideratum is *strength*—non-triviality, content, informativeness, prior improbability. Trade off these two desiderata and maximize expected epistemic utility according to your subjective probabilities. Then the theory it is rational to accept is, roughly, the one that achieves the best combination of posterior probability and prior improbability.

The hard work comes in making this somewhat more precise. Hilpinen's paper is devoted to investigating both the motivation and the consequences (very bad in some cases) of several proposed ways of measuring strength and trading it off against truth. That is a good problem—not too easy, but easy enough to permit the impressive progress described in the paper. But let it be understood that this tractable problem is only the first step in a decision-theoretic approach to acceptance. Surely there are other epistemic desiderata than truth and strength. (1) There is simplicity, whatever that is. (2) Proximity to previously accepted theories is another desideratum, at least according to such epistemic conservatives as Quine. (3) It seems that one false theory is better to accept than another, *ceteris paribus*, if it is at least closer to the truth and richer in strong true consequences. (This virtue of "truthlikeness" has been studied by Hilpinen himself, in a subsequent unpublished paper.) (4) On the other hand, gross errors tend to be more easily refuted than near misses, and the school of Popper plausibly claims that it is a virtue of false theories to be easy to refute. So there are far more problems of measurement and trade-off than have been tackled so far. Decision-theoretic acceptance theory will not be built in a day.

Should it be built at all? We do have one serious misgiving, and it concerns the postponed question why we bother with non-quantitative, all-or-nothing acceptance when quantitative subjective probability would meet our needs. That question has a rather obvious answer, as follows. Information-processing power is by no means a free good in unlimited supply, and we must resort to non-quantitative all-or-nothing belief as an economy measure. A full subjective probability distribution is too rich in information for us. Our puny minds cannot cope with the task of remembering, updating, and retrieving it. Our puny channels of communication cannot convey it to others. Ideal rationality may require us to assign subjective probabilities to all propositions, but that is a luxury beyond our means. The best we can do in practice is to coarsen the continuum of probabilities into a few discrete grades: "part of what I accept", "consistent with what I accept but not part of it", or "contrary to what I accept". Instead of covering the space of possibilities with continuously varying shades of grey, we are forced to make do with black and white.

If that's the reason why we bother with all-or-nothing acceptance, then it is hard to see how decision-theoretic rules of acceptance could be of any possible use. Such rules tell us what it is rational to accept when one has a given subjective probability distribution. CASE 1: our mental powers do not suffice to permit us to have subjective probability distributions at all. Then the rules are worthless because we do not have what it takes to apply them. CASE 2: our mental powers do suffice. Then the rules are worthless because we have no need for all-or-nothing acceptance. Once you have the shades of grey, there is nothing to gain by also having a coarse approximation in black and white.

We find this objection formidable. Unless it can be met, we fear that a lot of ingenuity has gone to waste. The most decisive rejoinder would be to think of some other reasonable purpose, besides economy of mental power, for all-or-nothing acceptance to serve. Unfortunately, we have no idea what that other purpose might be.

The best way to defend decision-theoretic rules of acceptance, we think, is to concede much of the force of the objection but to

coped with. One is sorely tempted to posit an ideally rational copier dealing not with his own limitations but with those of his inferior *alter ego*; but that would be wrong. The trouble with decision-theoretic accounts of acceptance is that they fit so well into this misguided schizophrenic approach. The right approach is to forget ideal rationality and look at a less-than-ideal copier doing a less-than-ideally rational job of coping with his limitations. If the decision-theoretic approach to acceptance has a future, we think it must be as part of some theory of imperfect rationality. As part of the theory of perfect rationality it is either useless or incoherent.

We apologize for complaining to Hilpinen that the situation is more complicated than he says. Saying that is parrot's work; it can be said to *any* philosopher who is not paralytically timid and it will be right every time. What matters is that the theory Hilpinen presents succeeds on its own terms, and that we think we see dimly how it is a step toward some more realistic future theory.

4

In his paper *The criminal law and morals* INGEMAR HEDENIUS goes to war against the dogma that what the criminal law prescribes is *ipso facto* the right thing to do. His campaign is act-utilitarian. The fact that an optimific course of action is against the law is, by itself, of no weight whatever; it is our duty to act for the best, and if that involves violating the law then our duty is to violate the law. If prosecuting a crime has worse results than not prosecuting it, then it is the prosecutor's duty not to prosecute. If he does prosecute he acts immorally.

Such conditionals separate utilitarians from deontologists in the familiar way. But other, and less boring, disputes arise within the utilitarian camp over particular claims that this or that illegal act really is optimific. These claims turn on matters of fact. They require marshalling the consequences of the various available options, or the foreseeable consequences, or the probabilities of the various possible consequences (depending on the exact version of utilitarianism that the marshaller favors); attaching utility values to these consequences; and cranking out the values of the

options. Attaching utilities to consequences is presumably controversial but these controversies seem to make little difference to real-life questions about what is optimific. The real trouble is with the facts about what consequences are to be expected.

The literature is rich in arguments that obeying the law always, or very nearly always, turns out to be the best thing to do. There is the "slippery slope" argument: the first violation tends to debauch the violator, so that he is apt to violate the law again and again with feebler and feebler utilitarian justifications. (We're back in the problematic area of rational coping with one's limited rationality.) There is the argument that secret violations are not worth the benefits they may appear to have, since they are not likely to remain secret and will debauch others by force of example. Both these arguments claim that the facts are such that single violations threaten the utility conferred by general accord with the law.

These arguments are bad; they smack of the *a priori*. The legalistic utilitarian's premises are hard to support (or to undermine, we grant) by evidence; he makes them up to suit the conclusion he already believes. It is too easy to think, though, that because they are bad arguments their conclusions are false. The question is still open.

Hedenius's arguments for the possible utility of violations are tighter than the contrary arguments just considered. He avoids the problem about the debauching effect upon the violator's character by taking some plausible examples in which the circumstances won't be repeated. (We also wonder why it should have any debauching effect on his character to do what he takes to be his utilitarian duty.) The question of leaving an offense unprosecuted is of special concern to Hedenius, and he gives several cases where that seems clearly optimific. The result is a vigorous defense, as good as any we have seen, of a position that too often is either just taken for granted or written off for bad reasons.

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