

STATEMENTS AND THEIR IDENTITY CONDITIONS

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According to Strawson in his "On Referring",⁽¹⁾ if we distinguish between (a) a sentence, (b) a *use* of a sentence to make a statement, and (c) an *utterance* of a sentence, we find that each of the following are true: (1) the same sentence may be used in different contexts of utterance to make different statements; (2) the same sentence may be used in different contexts of utterance to make the same statement; (3) different statements may be made by using different sentences; and (4) the same statement may be made by using different sentences in different contexts of utterance. I am inclined to accept as true each of these four claims, for particular instances do not seem difficult to find. Instances of (1) - (3) are obvious, and the following seems to be an example of (4). Suppose *A* utters the sentence 'You are late', referring to *B*, and *B* utters the sentence 'I am late', referring to himself. Here it seems reasonable to say the *A* and *B* have used different sentences to make the same statement. Suppose this *is* an instance of (4)⁽²⁾. Then (4), along with (1) - (3), admits of definite instances where each is satisfied as well as definite instances where they are not satisfied. But (4), unlike (1) - (3), admits of *borderline* cases, cases where we do not know what to say exactly as long as we have nothing more than an intuitive understanding of when two statements are really the *same* statement, and not different statements. Quite obviously, if we allow that two different sentences uttered in different contexts may be used to make the same statement, we should like to specify the identity conditions of statements in order to evaluate borderline cases. Unfortunately, Strawson is of little, if any,

(1) *Mind*, 59, 235 (July 1950): 320-344.

(2) There are problems with this particular case but there are obvious cases of (4), e.g. two sentences of different languages used to say the same thing.

service here. In a recent paper,⁽³⁾ however, E. J. Lemmon attempts to formulate an identity-criterion for a certain restricted class of statements. The purpose of the following remarks is to assess Lemmon's proposal.

Lemmon formulates the following criterion of identity for statements:

- (C) Let $S(a)$ be a sentence containing the uniquely referring expression a , and $T(b)$ be a sentence containing the uniquely referring expression b . For any uniquely referring expression e let $rc(e)$ stand for the reference of e in c . Then $S(a)$ in c_1 is used to make the same statement as $T(b)$ is used to make in c_2 if, and only if, $rc_1(a) = rc_2(b)$, and for any x , $S(x)$ if, and only if, $T(x)$ (p. 103).

Lemmon thinks that the intuitive notion of *same statement* is that two statements are identical if they say the same thing about the same thing, and he believes (C) makes this intuitive understanding clear. There are several points to note about (C) as it stands. For instance, (C) is intended only as an extensional identity-criterion, rather than an intensional one. Secondly, the criterion does not apply to statements made by using sentences containing more than one uniquely referring expression. Lemmon does offer a *second* criterion to meet this shortcoming (in a footnote on page 104), showing the generalization to the case of many such uniquely referring expressions is fairly straightforward, but there are obvious defects with either of the criteria. The second criterion differs from (C) only with respect to the *number* of (occurrences of) uniquely referring expressions, and there are fatal objections to each which in no way depend on the number of uniquely referring expressions.

An initial objection to (C) is that it fails to cover statements made by sentences containing no uniquely referring expressions whatever. Consider, for example, the following sentences:

- (1) The man who can outdrive A. J. Foyt does not exist.
- (2) There is no person who can outdrive A. J. Foyt.

⁽³⁾ "Sentences, Statements, and Propositions" in *British Analytical Philosophy*, (eds.), B. Williams and A. Montefiore (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

It seems reasonable to say that (1) and (2) could be used to make the same statement. But we obviously cannot employ (C) to confirm this, for if (1) is used to make a true statement, the description 'the man who can outdrive A. J. Foyt' does not occur as a uniquely referring expression. Indeed, this expression does refer only if the resulting statement is contradictory, which it obviously is not. Hence, there are perfectly ordinary statements that (C) cannot provide identity conditions for. Now Lemmon could perfectly well reply that he never intended (C) as an identity-criterion for *any* statement, but only as a restricted criterion for statements made by using sentences containing at least one uniquely referring expression. And should (C) turn out to be free of defects for such statements we would have, after all, a clear and straightforward identity-criterion for at least a certain class of statements. If so, we are better off than when we started. I shall now show that (C) is not adequate for even this restricted class of statements.

The criterion (C) has two distinct conditions. First, the uniquely referring expressions must refer to the same thing. Second, the sentences involved must be used to say the same thing about the person or thing uniquely referred to. Now consider the following pair of sentences:

- (3) The winner of the 1967 Riverside race is married.
- (4) The man who drove a white Lotus Ford at Riverside in 1967 is wed.

Suppose there was exactly one man who drove a white Lotus Ford at Riverside in 1967 and he was the winner of the 1967 Riverside race. Then, the uniquely referring expressions in (3) and (4) refer to the same person, and the first of Lemmon's two conditions is satisfied. It is obvious that anyone is married if, and only if, he is wed. Hence, where (3) is $S(a)$ and (4) is $T(b)$, these sentences satisfy Lemmon's conditions in (C). It follows, if (C) is correct, that (3) and (4) are used to make the same statement. But there is a straightforward proof that (3) and (4) are not used to make the same statement. The statement made by using (3), but not the statement made by using (4), entails that there exists someone who won the 1967 River-

side race. Conversely, the statement made by using (4), but not the one made by using (3), entails that there exists someone who drove a white Lotus Ford in the 1967 Riverside race. Thus, the two statements have different entailments and, by the transitivity of identity, are therefore different. Hence, (C) is inadequate even for the restricted class of statements resulting from sentences containing at least one uniquely referring expression.

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