UNIVERSAL PRESCRIPTIVISM REVISED;
or: THE ANALYTICITY OF THE GOLDEN RULE

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Resumo: Para Hare, uma frase deôntica, usada como um juízo de valor, é prescritiva na medida em que implica o imperativo correspondente; contudo, a definição de implicação lógica usada por Hare é incorrecta. É possível melhorar esta definição dentro da linha de pensamento de Hare; mas, nesse caso, verifica-se que a implicação, por parte de um juízo ‘devo’ — do tipo adequado, de um imperativo não é uma consequência lógica mas aquilo a que se poderia chamar uma implicação ‘catapragmática’. Contudo, é possível convencernos de que um juízo deôntico implica também o correspondente juízo intencional de uma outra forma, a saber, ‘pragmaticamente’. Este facto apresenta-se como uma base promissora para uma variante mais eficiente do prescritivismo universal; pois existe uma relação íntima entre a implicação lógica e a pragmática que nos permite construir uma paráfrase formal de um juízo deôntico e derivar dela, através daquilo a que gostaríamos de chamar um cálculo pragmático-bulético da dedução natural, a contra-parte formal de um enunciado ‘tenho a intenção de’ —. Nesta base, é possível mostrar que uma reconstrução deôntica muito genérica da regra de ouro (‘Se não aprovo o comportamento de alguém, tenho a obrigação moral de não me comportar assim’) é analiticamente verdadeira.

Summary: For Hare, an ‘ought’-sentence which is being used as a value-judgement is prescriptive in that it entails the corresponding imperative; however, Hare’s definition of entailment, i. e., logical implication, is inadequate. An improvement of this definition along Hare’s lines is possible; but then the implication, by an ‘ought’-judgement of the relevant sort, of an imperative turns out to be not entailment but what may be called ‘catapragmatic’ implication. However, we can convince ourselves that a relevant ‘ought’-judgement also implies the corresponding ‘I intend’-statement in yet another way, namely, ‘pragmatically’. This fact proves to be a promising basis for a more efficient variant of universal prescriptivism; for there is an intimate relation between pragmatic and logical implication which enables us to construct a formal paraphrase of a moral ‘ought’-
judgement and to derive from it, in what I propose to call a pragmatic-bulectic calculus of natural deduction, the formal counterpart of an 'I intend'-statement. On this basis it is also possible to show that two highly general deontic reconstructions of the golden rule, viz., 'If I disapprove of someone's behaviour, I [everybody] morally ought not to behave like this', are analytically true.

1. Why Hare's universal prescriptivism needs revision

1.1. In a great number of papers, but especially in his three books on The Language of Morals (1952), Freedom and Reason (1963), and Moral Thinking (1981), Richard M. Hare has developed a system of metaethics to which he often refers as "universal prescriptivism" — a combination, that is to say, of universalism (the view that moral judgements are universalizable) and prescriptivism (the view that they are, at any rate typically, prescriptive).

As to the first view — the view that moral judgements are universalizable — he emphasizes that it is not a moral but a logical thesis, universalizability being a feature that moral judgements share with descriptive (and also with aesthetic) judgements: 'by calling a judgement universalizable I mean only that it logically commits the speaker to making a similar judgement about anything which is either exactly like the subject of the original judgement or like it in the relevant respects. The relevant respects are those which formed the grounds of the original judgement.'

I further subscribe to Hare's view that moral judgements are, 'at any rate typically', prescriptive. We disagree, however, in the question of how to interpret the prescriptivity of moral 'ought'-judgements. For Hare, an 'ought'-sentence which is being used as a genuine value-judgement, i.e., as a judgement by means of which someone gives utterance to one of his very own deontic attitudes, is prescriptive in that it entails the corresponding imperative; and in order to be able to speak of entailment

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1 Hare 1963: sect. 2.5, p. 16.
2 Ibid.: sect. 8.2, pp. 139-140, cf. sect. 2.2, p. 11.
3 For exceptions, see esp. Hare 1952: sect. 7.5; 1963: sect. 10.2; 1981: sect. 3.7 ('inverted-commas' use, 'conventional' use, etc.), and Hoche 1983: sect. 2.4-6.5; 1992: p. 234 fn. 313 (judgements of moral permission).
4 Hare 1952: sect. 11.1-3. Since, in English and many other current languages, there are no natural imperative forms for the first person singular and the third person, Hare uses instead such forms as typified by 'Let me [him; etc.] do so-and-so' (cf. the general form of sentence (24) in sect. 2.4, below), thus extending the use of the customary first person plural form 'Let us do so-and-so'. See, esp., Hare 1963: sect. 4.3.