

For Wlodek with admiration and affection.

**‘OBJECTIVE PRESCRIPTIONS’,
A POSSIBLE ‘PATCH’ FOR UNIVERSAL PRESCRIPTIVISM¹**

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Abstract. There is evidence that the *descriptivity* of simple ‘ought’-judgments comes to substantially more than that they universalizable. Grammatical and logical evidence that includes the matter of ‘Frege-Geach problems’ argues for this, as does evidence that their *practicality* or ‘prescriptivity’ is not exactly that of their corresponding ‘commands’. Hare had nearly, in the ‘archangelic agreement theorem’ of *Moral Thinking*, an accommodation for this evidence. He was in a position to say that corresponding to an ‘ought’-judgment is a certain descriptive proposition that states the *objective* of the person making that judgment, and that moral judgments can be taken as conjunctions prescriptive of this objective. It is explained how revisions of Universal Prescriptivism along these lines can be comfortable with that otherwise troublesome evidence.

There is evidence that the *descriptivity* of simple ‘ought’-judgments comes to substantially more than that they are universalizable in exactly the manner of simple descriptions of colours. Grammatical and logical evidence alluded to by Thomas Reid that includes the matter of ‘Frege-Geach problems’ argues for this. So does evidence concerning the action-guidance of these judgments, and their engagements with the will, which argues that their *practicality* or ‘prescriptivity’ is not exactly that of their corresponding ‘commands’.² This chapter goes into these bodies of evidence, and explains how Hare had nearly ‘in hand’ an accommodation for them based on the central argument of *Moral Thinking* of 1981, according to which argument the logic of ‘ought’-judgments as universalizable prescriptions, and of person’s identifying themselves in possible situations, entails that

archangels – “being[s] with superhuman powers of thought, superhuman knowledge and no moral weakness [such as]...partiality to self” (*MT*, p. 44) – would never disagree in *their* moral judgments.

This means, Hare could have said, that corresponding to an ‘ought’-judgment is a certain descriptive proposition that states the *objective* of the person making that judgment, and the condition of his having judged correctly, which proposition is *entailed* by the judgment. What the argument of *Moral Thinking* for archangels never

¹This is Chapter XI of *Good and Gold: a Judgmental History of Metaethics from G. E. Moore through J. L. Mackie*. Files for this work-in-perennial-progress, including a file of References for citations in chapters, are linked to a web page the URL of which is http://www.utoronto.ca/%7Eesobel/Gd_Gld.

²The theory of Universal Prescriptivism is detailed and charitably tweaked in the previous chapter. There is attention to the best grammar for the theory, in particular its ‘imperative mood’, which is extended for it to include ‘optative subjunctive forms’, and to its speech acts, in particular its ‘commands’, which are identified with the many things that can be done with sentences in this extended ‘imperative mood’.

disagreeing in their 'ought'-judgments recommends is that 'ought'-judgments should be viewed not simply as universalizable prescriptions, but as *conjunctions* of prescriptions to do as archangels would so prescribe for us, with descriptions of what archangels who prescribed for us would have us do.

The present chapter is positive for Hare. It explores the considerable potential of the argument of *Moral Thinking* to serve an enhancing revision of his metaethical theory of Universal Prescriptivism that would solve its major problems with the evidence of ordinary talk and thought. The next chapter, which studies and assesses this argument, is in negative against Hare. It finds fault with premises of the argument of *Moral Thinking*, more exactly with claims that they are 'analytic' of 'ought' and of 'I' in contexts of deliberation, thereby undercutting the solutions floated in the present chapter of those major problems, which solutions are conditional on the archangelic-agreement conclusion of that argument.

1. '*Objective Prescriptions*' According to *Sorting out Ethics* (1997)

"You will now...see the tactics of my general argument...I [have shown] that descriptivism [in ethics] of all sorts collapsed into relativism and could not yield objectivity in moral statements. Then I expressed the hope that a non-descriptivist theory could yield this...'objectivity' [by which] I mean not 'correspondence with the facts' or anything like that. I leave all that to the descriptivist: it is a dead end. I mean...by 'objectivity', 'such as any rational thinker in possession of the non-moral facts must agree to'....In this sense, though not in the sense that Mackie denied the possibility of them, I...[maintain] that there can be objective *prescriptions*."³ (*SortngEths*, p. 134)

1.1 Suppose that I think that *I ought to spend time with a troubled friend*. This 'ought'-judgment of mine will be *objective*, Hare is saying, if and only if any rational thinker in possession of the non-moral facts [and free of every human weakness, we should read], if he made a judgment concerning how I ought to spend my time, would agree with this judgment I have made. He would agree that I, as I am, in the situation in which I am in, ought to spend

³The central argument of *Moral Thinking* (1981) provides the basis for the 'objectivity' that Hare does not articulate and accord to universalizable prescriptions in his books until *Sorting out Ethics* (1997). He writes in *Moral Thinking*, when critiquing John Mackie's error theory, that "it is obvious that what is wrong with a claim that there exist authoritative objective prescriptions is incoherence, not falsity....The notion of an objective prescription is an incoherent conflation of the notions" (pp. 83-4).

time with a trouble friend. In other words available to Hare, any ‘archangel’ who made a judgment concerning how I ought to spend my time, would agree with this judgment that I have made.

Hare’s test for the objectivity of this ‘ought’-judgment of mine is *not*, “What would I do if I were an archangel and to find myself like this in all universal respects consistent with my being an archangel?” Which is good, if objectivity in my ‘ought’-judgment is to be something to which I aspire. For what would be *best* from the standpoint of my values and interests for me to do were I an archangel in this situation, might be something that it would be very bad for me to do as I am. Such differences could result from what would be differences between my *character* were I an archangel, and my character as I am. For example, perhaps, were I an archangel, spending time with my troubled friend would be best partly *because* – being free of every human weakness – I would be able to tolerate the abuse he would heap on me, and comfort him, whereas were I, as I am, to spend time with this friend I would eventually under his sustained abuse lose my temper, and say very hurtful things back, and make him feel even worse. The *test* – Hare’s test, I am saying – for ‘objectivity’, does not look to archangels for behaviour to copy. It looks to them for advice. It is not, to say again, what I would were I an archangel do, but what I would were I an archangel *advise* myself as I am such as I am to do.⁴

1.2 Hare agrees with Mackie that there are no ‘objective prescriptions’ delivered as it were the world. He agrees that there are no objective facts concerning what we ought to do, but he does not agree that ‘ought’-judgments in ordinary speech and thought purport to state such facts. *Like* Mackie, Hare is an *Antirealist* and will have nothing to do with such strange realities as ‘ought’-facts. But *unlike* Mackie he does not regard ‘ought’-judgments to be, or entail, *descriptions* of such realities. Hare and Mackie are in metaphysical agreement, and semantical disagreement here.

Hare agrees that there are no objective ‘ought’-facts, but goes to some length to show that even so ‘ought’-judgments can be ‘objective’ *in a sense*. It is a matter not of *truth* but of agreement: “rational thinker[s] in possession of the non-moral facts must agree” (*SrtngEths*, p. 134). A judgment J is objective in this way if and only if *archangels who judged of the matter of J would agree with J*. The qualification, ‘who judged of the matter

⁴Michael Smith contrasts ‘advice’ and ‘example’ models of ‘summary analyses’ of desirability, and opts for an advice-model. *Cf.*, (Sobel 2001b, pp. 65-6).

of J', is needed, since it is not a part of the idea of an archangel that he 'ought'-judges of every matter, or even of any matter. A simpler equivalent statement runs in terms of disagreement, not agreement. According to it an 'ought'-judgment is objective if and only if *no archangel would disagree with it*. What is it to disagree with an 'ought'-judgment? Take the judgment that I *ought* to return a certain book. To disagree with this judgment is either to agree with the judgment that I *ought not* to return this book (that is, that I ought to do this, not return the book), or to agree with the judgment that I *need not* return this book (that is, with the judgment that it is not the case that I ought to return the book). It is possible not to agree with a judgment without disagreeing with it. But it is necessary that if someone 'judges of the matter of it', then he either agrees or disagrees with it

1.3 Given that 'ought'-judgments are 'objective' exactly when they are judgments with which no archangel would disagree, Hare's view must be that we *aspire* to judgments with which no archangel would disagree. It would be a strange idea of 'objectivity' that did not have this property. Hare's idea of objectivity seems to demand this property, for according to this idea a judgment is objective if and only if *no one*, including none of us, *were* he of superhuman powers of thought and knowledge and without any human weakness, would disagree with this judgment. Hare could have said, though he never does say plainly and straight out, that 'ought'-judgments *entail* judgments that say they are objective in his sense, and that

a person cannot, on pain otherwise of semantic incoherence, at once *assent* to an 'ought'-judgment, and *dissent* from the corresponding descriptive-judgment that this 'ought'-judgment is *objective* in the sense that no archangel would disagree with it.⁵

Hare could have explicitly *accepted* the thesis that a simple 'ought'-judgment,

J: *It ought to be the case that A is done.*

has *two* noteworthy entailments. He could have said that it entails *both* its corresponding 'command',

Would that it were the case that A is done.

and the corresponding descriptive judgment,

⁵Archangels are only *possible* persons. There are at least as many archangels as there are actual persons. There is for each person the idealized person, the archangel, he would be if he were "a being of superhuman powers of thought, superhuman knowledge and no human weaknesses" (*MT*, p. 44).

It is the case that no archangel would disagree with J.

The next move could be that the judgment J is the *conjunction* of these entailments (or, I anticipate, a conjunction that comes to the same thing in the context of Universal Prescriptivism). He does not revise his account of simple ‘ought’-judgments along such lines. The addition begun in *Moral Thinking* and completed in *Sorting Out Ethics* is only that, for every ‘ought’-judgment, there is a *factual* condition for its *objectivity*. He does *not* suggest that an ‘ought’-judgment *entails* the factual judgment that it is objective. I propose this amendment below, and with it a conjunctive-analysis of simple ‘ought’-judgments, for the considerable theoretical advantages of this package for his metaethics.

1.4 Realism, objectivism, and ‘single truth’

1.4.1 ‘Single truths’ and ‘reality-checks’ for judgments in general in all kinds of discourse . *Kinds of ‘single truth’*:

‘*Agreement-truth*’ is a kind of ‘single truth’ that can obtain for a kind of discourse *even if there are no ‘reality-checks’* for its judgments (even if, Crispin Wright might say, ‘they lack external sanctions’ – Wright 1996, p. 17). ‘*Agreement-truth*’ here is for the particular ‘single truth’ of Hare’s ‘objectivity’ explained in terms of the condition of ‘no archangelic disagreement’.⁶

Let ‘*factual truth*’ be for that ‘single truth’ that obtains for a kind of discourse *only if there are ‘reality-checks’ for its judgments*. The two senses of ‘single truth’ are not only different, but presumably logically independent for several kinds of discourse, unless the ‘superhuman knowledge’ of archangels is stretched to omniscience for every domain that affords ‘reality-checks’.

Suppose the superhuman knowledge of archangels at a time would be confined to all evidence in principle available at this time to persons whose memories do not run beyond the collected memories of all actual persons at this time. Then there can be kinds of ‘factual truth’ in the absence of ‘agreement truth’. Witness history. There is what has happened. But it *seems* that notwithstanding their ‘superhuman powers of thought’ archangels could come to different judgments concerning the past, that they could make different things of the evidence they shared

⁶Wright’s ‘superassertability’ is another kind of ‘agreement-truth’: Section 2.1.3 of Chapter VIII above.

for it, just as the best real historians can do. Similarly for facts concerning ‘the cosmic end game.’ It is if anything clearer that there can be ‘agreement truths’ in these areas that are not ‘factual truths’: it could be that archangels working with their shared evidence would *agree* about what happened in the tower, and about how all this will end, *and be on both counts mistaken*. It is a *possibility* that *we* are constitutionally unfit to recognize some truths that are ‘out there’. It is not unlikely that our cognitive capacities are *not* well-designed for getting right matters that have throughout our evolutionary past been nothing to our business, and it is *possible* that of some matters that have never been of practical consequence, these capacities are positively skewed to get them wrong. A question is whether we might be positively skewed to get them wrong, even if we were possessed of the superhuman powers of thought of archangels. The answer to that question depends of course on what is built into the idea of superhuman thought. Hare includes enough to rule out mistakes of deductive logic. But to exclude the possibility of ‘factually false agreement-truths’ one would have to include enough to rule out mistaken inductive inferences from evidence in hand, and that is presumably itself impossible.

1.4.2 Hare has uses for ‘single agreement-truth in ethics’

1.4.2.1 It is important that his theory should entail that there is ‘agreement-truth-in-ethics’. This corollary of the argument of *Moral Thinking* for his theory’s harbouring *normative substance*, has considerable *metaethical* significance.⁷ Included are that with it he can deal with several major ‘platitudes of objectivity’ concerning *mistakes* in ethics, such as,

that when persons disagree in their simple ‘ought’-judgments – that is, when they make ‘diametrically opposed’ simple ‘ought’-judgments as when one says that I ought to X, and another says I ought not to X – *at least one is mistaken*,⁸

⁷These would be served as well by ‘super-assertibility-truth in ethics’, that is, “[m]oral truth...[as] durable justifiability in the light of the standards that discipline ordinary moral thinking” (Wright 1996, p.11), *provided* that this ‘moral truth’ would be necessarily the same for all including those who do not do much moral thinking for themselves.

⁸The judgments that John ought to keep his promise, and that John ought not to keep his promise are ‘diametrically opposed’. They are not contradictory. It is not a platitude that at least one is not mistaken. The judgments that John ought to keep his promise, and that it is not the case that John ought to keep his promise, only the first of which is a simple judgment in which ‘ought’ has widest scope, are contradictory, and it is a platitude that at least one is not mistaken.

that persons who disagree in their simple 'ought'-judgments *are not always both mistaken*,
that participants in moral discourse *are not always mistaken* in their simple 'ought'-judgments,
that participants in moral discourse are *sometimes* mistaken in their simple 'ought'-judgments,

That is the main, but not the only, metaethical importance of the argument of *Moral Thinking* for his theory. He can as will be explained make good use of its corollaries to manage its 'Frege-Geach problems', and to nuance its account of the 'prescriptivity' of 'ought'-judgments as required by the evidence of their action-guidance provided by ordinary 'ought' thought and talk.

1.4.2.2 There is irony and surprise in the importance for his theory of 'single agreement-truth in ethics'. For Hare is not a realist in ethics. He is sure there are no 'ought'-facts, no moral realities towards true opinions of which, actual opinions might be expected to converge. "I leave all that to the descriptivist: it is a dead end."

(*SrtngEthcs*, p. 134.) And it is easy to suppose that only *realists* have problems with facts of ethical disagreement, and that only *realists* have reasons to think that there should be 'agreement-truth' in ethics, that there should be convergence of opinions 'in the end' amongst paragons of practical reasoning such as Hare's archangels.

Furthermore, though every Ethical Realist says that there is *factual truth* in ethics, since every Ethical Realist says there are *moral realities* to which our judgments, to be true, must answer; by no means is every Ethical Realist committed to there being 'agreement-truth' in ethics. Intuitionists who believe in fully objective ethical realities, allow that these realities can be subjects of disagreement among persons devoid of human weaknesses who are also free of errors concerning the *non-ethical* realities of a situation, and free of 'errors of logic' and shortcomings of ordinary thinking: there is, according to Intuitionists, room left for these persons to differ in their capacities to appreciate the situation's *ethical* realities, and to disagree even if they are equally capable in this capacity. Cf.:

"In many...situations, **equally good men would form conflicting judgements** as to what their duty is.

They cannot all be right, but it is often impossible to say which is right; each person must judge according to his individual sense of the comparative strength of various claims." (Ross 1939, pp. 188-9, quoted by Nowell-Smith on p. 51, bold emphasis added.)

Intuitionists are not committed by their metaethics to there being 'agreement-truth' in ethics, or to being troubled by the likelihood that there is not. The points of this paragraph can be garnered from Chapter IX, "Ethical Intuitionism: Epistemology."

The surprise is that Hare, though he does not believe in ethical realities towards which our 'ought'-opinions might converge as we eliminate errors of fact and logic and eliminate human weaknesses (most notably partialities to self and one's own), maintains that this convergence is demonstrable from principles of logic, and has metaethical problems left to solve, if this is not so.⁹

2. *There are for Universal Prescriptivism to conjure with, "all rules of grammar or rhetoric" (Thomas Reid).*¹⁰

Hare's Universal Prescriptivism as writ is only the beginning of a general theory of 'ought'-judgments. It is as writ a theory of only simple 'ought'-judgments, judgments in which 'ought' has widest scope. It is the nature of non-propositional theories of practical and moral thought that they should at least in the beginning attend only to simple declarative sentences and say what they come to 'non-propositionally'. Of the progress of his own expressivist account of practical discourse, Allan Gibbard writes, early on:

"The analysis applies to simple contexts, in which it is simply asserted or denied that such-and-such is rational. It says nothing about more complex normative assertions" (Gibbard 1990, p. 92).

It is necessary as he fully appreciates to say more, not only in the interest of completeness, but because more complex assertions pose problems for non-propositionalist theories and thus for his theory. It is the same for

⁹It is a consequence of Michael Smith's analysis of 'normative judgments' that "a convergence in the hypothetical desires of fully rational human beings is required for the truth of normative reason claims" (Smith 1994, p. 173). Smith's attitude towards this requirement is that we have "no reason for scepticism *now*" (p. 201), and that "**it is plausible to suppose** that through moral argument we can...discover what the reasons that we all share [and the hypothetical desires in which fully rational creatures would agree] really are" (p. 202, bold emphasis added). (*Cf.*, 4.1.3.2 of Chapter I above.) Hare claims in *Moral Thinking* of 1981 to *demonstrate* from necessary principles the convergence that Smith says *The Moral Problem* of 1994 is required for the truth of judgments of the desirabilities actions, and of the rightness of actions, and that he implies is *not* demonstrable. Smith does not comment on Hare's purported demonstration, and explain why it does not work for him.

¹⁰Attributing to Hume a non-proposition theory in which moral judgments express feelings of approval and disapproval, nothing more, Reid says that it is "irreconcilable" with these rules, meaning that it is irreconcilable with the grammar of these judgments, and their play in patterns of deductive inference. The line is quoted with approval by John Mackie (Mackie 1980, p. 143) and good against such theories.

Hare's theory. There are, for example, many contexts in which simple 'ought'-sentences occur within larger sentences, from which positions they cannot, if simply prescriptions, be contributing to the significance of the larger sentence. Nothing like this true of propositional theories. Though they too normally concentrate on simple contexts, this is not a problem for them.

2.1 Preliminaries. Let sentences be *stylistic variants* if and only if they *have the same meanings*. Let Π be an *extensional position* in a sentence Σ if and only if Σ' comes from Σ either by substituting for a proper name or indexical at Π of something another proper name or indexical of this thing, or by substituting at Π for a word or phrase another word or phrase that has the same meaning, then Σ and Σ' are stylistic variants. For example, every position in the sentence, 'John understands that he ought to turn himself in.' is extensional, but many positions in the sentence 'John would say, "I ought to turn myself in."' are not extensional, specifically, none of the positions between the direct quotation marks are extensional. Let a sentence-position be *intensional* if and only if it is *not extensional*. Let a sentence Σ be an '*ought*'-sentence if and only if it is a stylistic variant of a sentence in which at least one occurrence of 'ought' occupies an extensional position. Let a sentence Σ be a *simple 'ought*'-sentence if and only if there is a sentence Σ' such that , (i), Σ' is of the form,

it ought to be the case that ϕ ,

wherein ϕ is a declarative sentence in which 'ought' occurs, if at all, only in at intensional positions, and, (ii), Σ' is a stylistic variant of Σ . Every simple 'ought'-sentence is a *stylistic variant* of a declarative sentence: I am aware of no reason to doubt that the converse is true, and that simple 'ought'-sentences are one and all *themselves* declarative sentences.

Judgments are expressed by sentences. So are *questions, commands, and wishes*. If something is expressed by a sentence, then it is expressed by every stylistic variant of this sentence. Let a judgment J be an '*ought*'-*judgment* if and only if J is expressed by a declarative 'ought'-sentence. And let a judgment J be a *simple 'ought*'-*judgment* if and only if it is expressed by a simple 'ought'-sentence (all of which, as said, seem to be themselves declarative sentences).

2.2 Universal Prescriptivism contains a semantic theory of only simple ‘ought’-judgments. It says that a simple ‘ought’-judgment is a universalizable prescription: that is, it says that this judgment is universalizable, and that it entails its corresponding ‘command’. The theory needs to be extended to cover every kind of ‘ought’-judgment, as well as ‘ought’-questions, imperatives, and wishes. So far we have only what is at best the core of a complete theory of ‘ought’. Cf.:

“I shall not attempt ... to solve the manifold problems of speech-act theory; nor even to deal with all the critics’ arguments. I shall deal only with what has appeared to many to be their strongest one. This runs as follows. The words [e.g., ‘promise’ and ‘ought’] occur not only in affirmative, categorical, indicative sentences, but also in negative sentences, interrogative sentences, and subordinate clauses of all kinds, including especially conditional clauses. In all these other contexts, it is false to say that the man who utters the sentence containing the words is thereby performing the speech act [e.g., making a promise, or a universalizable prescription] which he *is* performing when he utters an affirmative categorical indicative sentence containing the word....But, the critics go on, an explanation of the meaning of a word must take into account all these contexts, and make it possible for it to have the same meaning in them all.” (Hare 1970, pp. 5-6.)¹¹

There is *much* work to be done.

2.3 Sentences that are variously challenging for the theory include:

Non-declarative ‘ought’-sentences. For example,

What do you think I ought to do?

Do what you ought to do.

Would that I should do what I ought to do.

¹¹(Hare 1970) is, to the best of my knowledge, the only sustained effort on Hare’s part to deal with the ‘Frege-Geach’ problem for his theory mounted especially in (Searle 1969, pp. 136-41). A note refers the reader also to (Geach 1960) and (Geach 1965). The reference to Peter Geach in *Freedom and Reason* 1963, p. 129 has no relation to ‘the problem’. There are no references Geach or Frege in *Moral Thinking* 1981, or *Sorting Out Ethics* 1997. The references by W. H. Hudson to Geach in *Hare and Critics* 1990, p. 16-18, have nothing to do with ‘the problem’.

Declarative ‘Ought’-sentences in which simple ‘ought’-sentences are ‘embedded’. These are sentences of ‘Frege-Geach problems’ for Universal Prescriptivism. Included are sentences for judgments that are ‘presumably’ not in its terms prescriptive, judgments that do not entail commands even conditionally. Since these sentences do not express simple ‘ought’-judgments they do not have, in the sense that has been defined, ‘*corresponding* commands’ that they might entail. Examples of embeddings:

John thinks that I ought to return this book.

I think that I ought not to return this book.

It has been said that I ought to return this book.

It is not the case that I ought to return this book (i.e., I need not return this book).¹²

Of particular interest and challenge are ‘sententially compound’ declarative ‘ought’-sentences in which simple ‘ought’-sentences are embedded.¹³ We have above one example. Others, with numbers for future reference, are:

- (1) If you ought not to lie, then you ought not to get your little brother to lie.
and,
(2) If he ought to reveal his sources, then he will do so.

There is an evident problem for Universal Prescriptivism with simple ‘ought’-sentences in antecedents. While one can ‘if’ or hypothesize statements and propositions, one cannot ‘if’ or hypothesize wishes and orders, any more than one can ‘if’ questions. There are two connected problems with these sentences, for it is not merely required that the theory say ‘in the spirit of Universal Prescriptivism’, what these complex sentences *mean*, and what simple ‘ought’-antecedents mean in them, but to say this in a way that meshes with the story of the ‘core’ simple ‘ought’-judgment expressed by,

- (3) He ought to reveal his sources.

¹²This sentence contrasts with ‘I ought not to return this book.’, which is a simple ‘ought’-sentence. It is a stylistic variant of ‘It ought to be the case that I (should) not return this book.’.

¹³There are, it may be noted, ‘sententially compound’ *non-declarative* ‘ought’-sentences in which simple ‘ought’-sentences are embedded. For example,

If you ought to go to the largest grocer in Oxford, then go to it! (Never mind the inconvenience.)

Would that you go to it, if you ought to go to the largest grocer in Oxford.

What will you do, if you ought to go to the largest grocer in Oxford?

and

A plague on you, if you ought not to lie to me! (I know you are lying to me. Perhaps, however, you ought to be.)

Required, for example, is an account of (1) that, together with the account of (3), secures the *validity* of the argument,

A1

If he ought to reveal his sources, then he will do so. He ought to reveal his sources.

∴ He will reveal his sources.

A1 is of the form *modus ponens*,

ϕ . If ϕ , then ψ . ∴ ψ

wherein ϕ and ψ are declarative sentences. It cannot be said that this form is universally valid, or that it is without known exceptions,¹⁴ but it is certain that argument A1 is not an exception. It is valid. The problem Hare has with it is to say what is going on it, especially in its second premise, (2), so that what he says to that issue ‘saves the validity argument A1’. But there is more. For the explanation of (2),

If he ought to reveal his sources, then he will do so.

that ‘saves’ A1, needs to mesh with an explanation of

(5) He will reveal his sources, *only if* he ought to reveal his sources.

¹⁴Perhaps all arguments of this grammatical form in which conditionals do not occur as either antecedents or consequents of conditional premises. But arguments of this grammatical form that are complicated in that way can fail to be valid. In 1980 there were two Republicans running for President, Ronald Reagan and John Anderson. The only other candidate was the Democrat, Jimmy Carter. Assume the abbreviations – P: a Republican is going to win the election; Q: if Reagan is not going to win the election, then Anderson is going to win the election. The sentence, (1), ‘*If P, then Q*’ expressed a true proposition. The sentence, (2), ‘*P*’ expressed a true prediction. But the sentence, (3), ‘*Q*’ expressed a false conditional. Certainly if Reagan had not won, then not Anderson, but Carter, would have won. That is a counter-example to the claim that

every argument that is expressed by a ‘sentential argument’ of the grammatical form of *modus ponens* is valid.

“But if sentence (1) is to express a true proposition, then ‘Q’ in this sentence must express one kind of conditional, and if sentence (3) is to express a true, then ‘in’ it ‘Q’ must express another kind of conditional.” (Cf., Katz 1999, p. 414.)

This is true, but not relevant to our counter-example to the emphasized claim regarding *modus ponens*. The observation shows that our argument is not a counter-example to the *related but different* claim that

every argument that is expressed by a ‘sentential argument’ of the grammatical form of *modus ponens*, for sentences ϕ and ψ ,

ϕ , (if ϕ , then ψ) ∴ ψ ,

when both occurrences of ϕ express the same thing, and both occurrences of ψ express the same thing, is valid.

that 'saves' the related argument,

A2

He will reveal his sources. He will reveal his sources, only if he ought to reveal his sources.

∴ (3): He ought to reveal his sources.

which valid argument is of a grammatical form that is very close to *modus ponens*. A2 is of a stylistic variant of a *modus ponens* argument, if, as I think, sentence (5) is a stylistic variant of (2),

If he will reveal his sources, then he ought to reveal his sources.¹⁵

And so on, and so forth into the unbounded web of logical entanglements. There is a lot for Hare to explain. A satisfactory general theory must explain these things systematically, not piece-meal.¹⁶

2.4 Gibbard presents an elegant systematic solution (see Gibbard 1990, pp. 94-7) to the problem of embedding along with two related problems, as these arise for his theory that "[i]n its first, rough formulation...was this: to call an act, belief, or emotion rational is to express one's acceptance of a system of norms that permits it" (p. 83).¹⁷

¹⁵It is usual in discussions of "The Problem of Embedding" to feature *modus ponens*: "The standard version begins with an instance of the argument from *modus ponens*, such as this: (1) Lying is wrong. (2) If lying is wrong, then getting one's little brother to lie is wrong. ∴ (3) Getting one's little brother to lie is wrong." (Sinnott-Armstrong 2000, p. 679.) Unlike the two arguments with which I will deal, the conditional premise of this lying-argument has both a 'normative' antecedent, and a 'normative' consequent.

¹⁶The approach in (Hare 1970) is 'piece meal'. Hare (by implication)* takes up the challenges of simple 'ought'-questions, negations of simple 'ought'-sentences, and of conditional sentences with simple 'ought'-antecedents. He hopes in this way to complete the limited argument of his paper, which was,

"first, that the appearance of a word in interrogatives, negatives, and conditional clauses provides no general argument against explaining its meaning in terms of the speech act standardly performed in categorical affirmative utterances containing it; and secondly, that once we understand the transformations which turn simple sentences in **these** more complex forms, we understand also how the words in them have meaning even though the speech acts in terms of which their meaning was explained are no longer being performed." (Hare 1970, p. 20, bold emphasis added.)

Hare adds, perhaps not only with reference to this limited argument, but to the prospects of a fully general argument:

"But it must be admitted that this whole region of meaning theory is still very obscure, and will not become clearer until much more work has been done on it." (*Ibid.*)

*'By implication', since the paper addresses explicitly speech-act theories of only of 'promise' and 'good', and not also of 'ought'.

¹⁷As sets of worlds in which declarative sentences are true can be identified with their semantic values (possibly as the 'propositions' they express), so Gibbard proposes that sets of pairs of worlds and systems of norms can be assigned to these sentences including those that 'express systems of norms'. For example, "Suppose some normative system...[declares] capital punishment wrong if and only if it supplies no significant deterrent effect; that system will be paired in the content of (4) ['If capital punishment is wrong, then we ought to abolish it.'] with

I will not explore the possibility of adapting Gibbard's solution to serve Hare's Universal Prescriptivism.

Gibbard's solution to his problem with embeddings is *not* also a solution to the problem of the 'platitude' of objectivity that says that when persons disagree in their normative judgments at least one of them is mistaken. He does not get to the area of this problem in "Normative Objectivity" (pp. 153-253). Also, Gibbard's 1990-solution to the Frege-Geach problem for his expressivism is not a solution to *all* of this problem for his theory, if a solution to all of this problem includes explanations of 'what is going on' in assertive uses of sentences in which 'rational' is variously embedded.¹⁸

We want to know what to make of simple sentences, when they are embedded. *Cf.*:

"[T]hough I do not pretend to a command of all the most recent expressivist manoeuvres...[it seems to me] that we do not...yet...have [from expressivists]...any clear and workable idea of how to construe discourses which exhibit all the overt syntactic trappings of assertion – negation, the conditional construction, embedding within propositional attitudes, hypothesis and inference and so on – in such a way that the contents involved are not assertoric [in illocutionary force] but are presented with illocutionary force of a quite different kind, apt to the expression of attitude [and not to any statement about attitudes]." (Wright 1996, pp. 3-4.)

To gesture towards a response to be developed for Hare, perhaps the embedded contents are, after all, not without assertoric force when on their own, and when embedded retain the assertoric force they have when on their own.

all and only those worlds in which capital punishment doesn't significantly deter crime." (Dreier 1996, p. 45.)

¹⁸Gibbard offers an account "of how the state of mind a complex normative sentence expresses depends on the state of mind **that would be expressed by its components alone**" (Gibbard 1991, p. 92, bold emphasis added, see Section 2.6.1.2 below). "Gibbard-contents [see previous note] work just the way Possible World propositions do in explaining truth-functional complexes. Disjunctions of normative sentences have as their contents the unions of the Gibbard-contents of their conjuncts, and so on." (Dreier 1996, p. 45.)

That *seems* to leave a question what its components are doing in their embedded places. When a declarative sentence, that expresses on its own a descriptive proposition, is in an antecedent, it expresses a possible condition, the one whose fulfilment it expresses when it is on its own. The question I go back to is what a declarative sentence, that expresses on its own a *prescription*, is doing when it is in an antecedent. Can we say it is expressing a possible prescription? "Philosophers will want to know what (1) [Lying is wrong], (2) [If lying is wrong, then getting one's little brother to lie is wrong.], and (3) [Getting one's little brother to lie is wrong.] mean....there seems to be a gap in expressivism....When expressivists add a formal semantics like Gibbard's..., they still do not succeed in analyzing the meanings of evaluative sentences." (Sinnott-Armstrong 2000, pp. 688 and 690.)

That could be the way to an account “of how the state of mind a complex sentence expresses [or of how the illocutionary force this sentence has] depends on the state[s] of mind that would be expressed by its components alone [or on their illocutionary forces when on their own]” (Gibbard 1991, p. 92). Cf.:

“...I articulate a new version of expressivism...which can avoid the Frege-Geach problem altogether. A crucial idea is that expressivism can and should embrace the thesis that moral utterances express both desires and beliefs.” (Ridge 2006, p. 302.)

Similarly, I think, for Hare’s prescriptivism which can and should embrace the thesis that simple ‘ought’-sentences express on their own not only universalizable prescriptions, but certain propositions about these. Perhaps in some embeddings, doing the most they can, these sentences express only these propositions. Simple ‘ought’-sentences are I assume all declarative sentences (though they are ‘by definition’ only all stylistic variants of declarative sentences). Henceforth all ‘ought’-sentences under consideration will be declarative, whether or not this qualification is made explicit. Extensions of analyses considered to non-declarative forms would seem to be straightforward.

3. *Universal Prescriptivism can claim the wherewithal to heal and make whole itself*

3.1 It could be ‘the argument of *Moral Thinking* to the rescue’. Hare does not in his books deal with Frege-Geach problems. But there is, in the central claim of his third book, *Moral Thinking*, a premise for a solution to them. He writes that we can see when we attend to the ‘logic’ of ‘ought’-judgments themselves, and in particular “the requirement to universalize our prescriptions...how in principle unanimity can be reached by our method of [moral] reasoning [among those who go in for this reasoning, do it well, and are without human weaknesses], once each fully represents to himself the situation of the other” (p. 111). He says that

“morality [the ‘logic’ of it] compels us to accommodate ourselves to the preferences of others, and this has the effect that when we are thinking morally and doing it rationally [either free of human weakness, or without our weaknesses mattering] we shall prefer [and accept] the same moral prescriptions about matters which affect other people” (p. 228)

This consequence of Universal Prescriptivism could be said by Hare to put the theory’s would-be problems with the evidence of objectivity in ethics in a new light, and to persuade even before every ‘i’ is dotted and ‘t’ crossed that

they are, as he has always supposed, not *serious*. Hare did not say this, so I will say it for him and provide what he could describe as a good outline to solutions to those tiresome problems, the details of which anyone should be able to provide for himself. (Cf., *Nicomachean Ethics* 1098a20.) Hare's solution to these problems, I am suggesting, would lay in its being demonstrable from 'platitudes' of its concepts, that there is 'objective truth in ethics' *in the sense* that "any rational thinker in possession of the non-moral facts must agree" (*SrtngEths*, p. 134), or better in the sense that no such thinkers would *disagree* in their judgments.

3.2 The appearances would not be at all misleading. Simple 'ought'-judgments are not descriptive judgments, they are universalizable prescriptions. But, according to the argument of *Moral Thinking*, they are importantly like certain descriptions not only in their universalizability, which they share with every description, but also in their being *objective* in a sense in which these selected descriptions are objective. They are like very *fortunate* descriptions, *if any there be*, that are objective in the sense that, in the absence of mistakes or oversights of fact, shortcomings of logic, and human weakness, these judgments, simple 'ought'-judgments, *cannot* be the subjects of disagreements! There are no 'ought'-facts, Hare says, no 'ought'-*realities* we might say, but it is *as if* there were. It is, indeed, *as if* there were 'ought'-realities that would in the end be *accessed directly*, realities that we would reach in the end *without* exercises of reflective judgment and inference (*pace* Prichard and company).

According to Hare, *all that is demonstrable*. All that is a strict logical consequence of principles of 'the logic of morality and of self-identification', principles that Smith (if he agreed with Hare about them) would term 'platitudes' of the concept of 'ought', and 'I' in practical contexts. Hare would say that they are all rather obvious 'platitudes'. But then the consequence, that it is *as if* there were in principle accessible, and in the end *unmistakable* 'ought'-realities for every issue, and that there is 'agreement-truth' throughout ethics is a 'platitude', albeit not obviously so, along the lines of which we are "disposed to make inferences and judgments along lines" for that is the way of 'platitudes' (Smith 1994, p. 30). "No wonder," Hare could say, "'ought'-judgments 'look like' factual judgments. No wonder it is in *every* grammatical way, and in our semantic vocabulary for them, as if they were factual judgments. No wonder all of this, even though they are not factual judgments, since sincere assents to them consist not in believing, but in willing, and in certain circumstances in doing. Their grammatical looks and the semantic terms of 'true' and 'false' and so on that go with these looks are not the least bit misleading. What

would *be* misleading would be a special mood for these judgments and speech that encouraged views of them as simply very *serious* 'commands,' and so *not* constrained by the understanding that there is for them a 'single agreement-truth'. It is this, the everywhere possible objectivity in the sense of 'agreement truth' of 'ought'-judgments, not their universalizability, that *explains* their assertoric grammar and logic. Yes, given the argument of *Moral Thinking*. But it still remains to say exactly how it explains this.

3.3 Revisiting simple 'ought'-judgments. Given the agreement-theorem of *Moral Thinking*, these judgments should entail in Hare's sense not only their corresponding 'commands,' but also corresponding agreement-propositions. Hare does not say that they do. I am saying it for him, on the way to a theory of all 'ought'-judgments.

3.3.1 Agreement-propositions. For a simple 'ought'-sentence ϕ in which 'ought' has widest scope let *the corresponding agreement-sentence of ϕ* be the sentence,

archangels would agree that ϕ ,

or more exactly and explicitly, the sentence,

someone, were he to suffer no mistakes or shortcomings of logic, mistakes or oversights of fact, or human weakness, would agree that ϕ , and anyone – in the absence of mistakes and shortcomings of logic, of mistakes and oversights of fact, and of every human weakness – who judged whether or not ϕ , would agree that ϕ ,

or equivalently,

someone, were he free of mistakes and shortcomings of fact and logic, and of every human weakness, would agree that ϕ , and no one who was in that condition would disagree with ϕ .

Let

archangels would agree that ϕ

be short for these equivalent conditions for the 'agreement-objectivity' – the 'agreement-truth' – of the judgment that ϕ .

3.3.2 Entailments of simple 'ought'-judgments. Let ***Ought(J)*** be a simple 'ought'-judgment, let ***ArchAgr***[*Ought(J)*] be this judgment's agreement-proposition, and let ***Would(J)*** be this judgment's corresponding

'command.' According to Universal Prescriptivism, *Ought(J)* entails *Would(J)*. Given the 'ultimate-agreement' theorem that he claims to establish in *Moral Thinking*, he should say that *Ought(J)* also entails ArchAgr[*Ought(J)*]. He should say that *Ought(J)* 'contains' both that command, and this descriptive proposition.

Hare's argument in *Moral Thinking* 'says' that anyone with an understanding of relevant concepts, in particular, those of 'ought' and of 'I', who can follow this argument, can know that there is, in the absence of logical and factual errors and shortcomings of human weakness, ultimate agreement regarding every simple 'ought'-judgment. This fact of 'ultimate agreement' is, in Hare's view, *possible conceptual knowledge*. It is for him a not so obvious 'platitude'. It is, in his view, possible common knowledge of a speaker and auditor in conversation. Were it *actual common knowledge* for them, so that each knew it, knew that each knew it, and so on, then the auditor would be 'nonplussed' were the speaker to dissent from ArchAgr[*Ought(J)*] 'hard on the heels' of assenting to *Ought(J)*. He would not know what to make of this person's words – "He *can't* mean what he is saying." – much as he would not know what to make of words that would express what are for all the English-speaking world contradictions, such as would 'rotating' and 'standing still' said of a disc that can rotate (*SrtngEthcs*, p. 22). Which is to say, according to the refined statement of Hare's theory of entailment coming in the next section, that, assuming the correctness of the argument of *Moral Thinking* – assuming that it does reach its ultimate agreement conclusion from premises all of which are platitudes of 'ought' and related terms – *Ought(J)* entails ArchAgr[*Ought(J)*].

3.3.3 Hare-entailment again (the first time was in Section 3.1.2 of the previous chapter) .

3.3.3.1 He tells us that:

"'Entailed' ...for my present purposes...may be defined accurately enough as follows: A sentence P entails a sentence Q if and only if the fact that a person assents to P and dissents from Q [i.e., positively refuses to assent to Q] is a sufficient criterion for saying that he has misunderstood one or other of the sentences."
(*LofM*, p. 25).

By 'misunderstood one or other of the sentences' I take Hare to mean 'not *fully* understood both sentences', where to fully understand would involve not merely assent to all of the *more or less obvious* platitudes surrounding concepts of their words, but comprehending *all* of the platitudes surrounding these concepts. To extend the

account from entailments of single sentences to entailments by finite sets of sentences, for the entailment of a sentence Q by a *finite set* of sentences *Prs* we may, using Hare's explanation of entailment of a sentence by a single sentence, say that

Prs entails Q if and only if $\text{Conj}(Prs)$ entails Q.

where $\text{Conj}(Prs)$ is a conjunction of the sentences in *Pr*.

Standard entailment is a relation between propositions, and derivatively between sentences that express propositions. In this sense a sentence ϕ entails a sentence ψ if and only if, (i), ϕ and ψ express propositions, let these propositions be Φ and Ψ respectively, and, (ii), it is impossible that both Φ is true, and Ψ is false. Henceforth to distinguish Hare's sense from this standard sense, I will use 'plain entails' for the standard sense, and 'Hare-entails' for Hare's sense. Similarly for 'entailment' and 'validity'. When it is a matter of metaethical opinion concerning the correct semantics of 'ought'-judgments whether an argument that is 'for all the world' valid, is plain valid or only Hare-valid, I will describe it as 'for all the world' valid. To illustrate, the repetitious argument,

I ought not to tell a lie. \therefore I ought not to tell a lie.

is 'for all the world'-valid, without a doubt. Prichard would say it is plain valid. Hare must say it is only 'Hare-valid'.

3.3.3.2 General assumptions concerning Hare-entailments for sentences. If an argument is plain valid, if its premises plain entail its conclusion, then it is Hare-valid and its premises Hare-entail its conclusion. Principles of transitivity are Hare-valid, principles that license the ordinary practice of establishing plain entailments between premises and some conclusion not just by 'staring at' them collected into a conjunction, and at it, until one 'sees' that it is not possible for them to be true and the conclusion false, but instead by *deducing* the conclusion from them. The procedures of conditional proof and indirect proof are Hare-valid.

These and other conditions are contentious for validity as Hare explains it, without assumptions concerning persons involved in conversational exchange. To secure them for his theory I propose to strengthen his idea of entailment, to that of what might be termed 'idealized' or 'in principle' Hare-entailment. Using the term 'archangel' defined in *Moral Thinking*,

a *sentence* ϕ shall henceforth be said to *Hare-entail* a *sentence* ψ if and only if, were we all *archangels* and thus persons without logical deficiencies and free of every human weakness, and one of us assented to ϕ but dissented from ψ , this would be a sufficient condition for saying he had misunderstood one or other of the sentences, i.e., this would be sufficient to ‘non-plus’ were his speech or thought of assent and dissent to be known to us, and for us to say in that case, “But we thought you were one of us.”

3.3.3.3 And now for propositions, prescriptions, approbations, questions, and such. The ‘primary relata’ of entailment relations are not sentences, but things that can be expressed by sentences such as propositions, commands, and wishes. We need a term for things that can be expressed by sentences: let such things be *sentions*. The important thing about sentions is that their relation to sentences is one-many. For example, the proposition that it is raining here in Uppsala this day, can be expressed here and now with the sentence ‘It is raining.’ [It was raining when I typed this in Uppsala.], and indeed can now be expressed anywhere by this sentence provided context suffices to make clear that the answer to the question what location for rain is intended to be Uppsala. Yesterday this proposition could have been expressed in contexts that settled appropriately the answer to the where-question by the sentence ‘It will rain tomorrow.’; tomorrow it will be expressible by the sentence ‘It rained yesterday.’ And so on. Similarly for the proposition that I believe it is raining, which I can express with the sentence ‘I believe it is raining.’, and you could express by ‘He believes it is raining.’ in a context that settled that you were talking about me. With the term ‘sentions’ in hand we can say that

a *sention* S shall henceforth be said to *Hare-entail* a *sention* S' if and only if, if we were we all *archangels* and thus persons without logical deficiencies and free of every human weakness, and any one of us were to assent to S but dissent from S' , this would be a sufficient condition for saying that he had misunderstood one or other sentences of the sentences he used for his assent and dissent, that is, it would be sufficient for his speech or thought to ‘non-plus’ were it to be known to us.

According to Hare, the judgment that I ought not to go out today entails in this sense the ‘command’ that I not go out today.

The proposition, please note, that it is raining today *does not* Hare-entail the proposition that I believe it is raining today, for *you* can assent to the first proposition and, with the sentence ‘He does not believe that it is

raining today.’ dissent from the second, without ‘non-plussing’ anyone. It is sometimes said that accounts of entailment such as Hare’s that are not in terms of truth and falsity threaten to run together classical or *bona fide* entailment relations with relations of pragmatic implication, conversational implication, contextual implication, and so on. It can now be seen that the threat is not daunting.¹⁹

4. Revisions from within to complete Universal Prescriptivism

4.1 A conjunctive analysis of simple ‘ought’-judgments

4.1.1 You may call them conjunctions, prescriptive/descriptive conjunctions. Yes, but there is a question regarding exactly with which such conjunctions Universal Prescriptivism might, as an act of self-revision, identify simple ‘ought’-judgments.

4.1.1.1 A tempting conjunctive-analysis. Since simple ‘ought’-judgments would Hare-entail not only their corresponding commands, but their corresponding archangelic agreement-propositions, since they would in this sense *contain* these prescriptions *and* these descriptions, it is *tempting* to think that they should *consist* of them, that they should be exactly *conjunctions* of these prescriptions and descriptions. An ‘conjunctive-analysis’ that tempts is this: for a simple ‘ought’-judgment, *Ought(J)*,

$$Ought(J) = Would(J) \& ArchAgr[Ought(J)].^{20}$$

But this is not tenable. There is a sense in which it is ‘circular’, *viz.*”

$$Ought(J) = Would(J) \& ArchAgr[Ought(J)]$$

To bring out the difficulty, consider that according to this identity-analysis,

$$(Would(J) \& ArchAgr[Ought(J)]) = Would(J) \& ArchAgr(Would(J) \& ArchAgr[Ought(J)]),$$

¹⁹*Cf.*, “The inconsistency [of accepting the premises while denying the conclusion of a valid argument] must be distinguished from pragmatic inconsistency found in kinds of sentences famously discussed by Moore (e.g., ‘I believe that p, but not-p.’) since those so-called paradoxes do not involve outright contradiction.” (Ridge 2005, p. 313.) This is true. It is necessary to distinguish these inconsistencies, which is not to say there is any great difficulty in this.

²⁰In other words: for any declarative sentence ϕ in which ‘ought’ does not occur at an extensional location, the sentence

$$Ought(\phi),$$

means the same as the conjunctive sentence,

$$Would(J) \& ArchAgr[Ought(J)].$$

so that (from this and the previous identity, by transitivity of identity),

$$\text{Ought}(\mathbf{J}) = \text{Would}(\mathbf{J}) \ \& \ \text{ArchAgr}(\text{Would}(\mathbf{J}) \ \& \ \text{ArchAgr}[\text{Ought}(\mathbf{J})])$$

Consider ‘that we are just getting started here,’ and that there is no end to the process of spelling out, in its own terms’ this would-be conjunctive-analysis of ‘*Ought*(**J**)’.

It is plausible that the argument of *Moral Thinking* entails that the judgment expressed by the sentence

‘*Ought*(**J**)’

not only Hare-entails, but is Hare-entailed by, the prescriptive/descriptive conjunction express by

‘*Would*(**J**) & ArchAgr[*Ought*(**J**)’.

But for the reason given this conjunctive sentence is not available as an ‘analysis’ of that simple ‘ought’-sentence: for the reason given it is not a possible ‘analysis’ of it.

4.1.1.2 A tenable conjunctive-analysis. What can recommend itself at this juncture is a ‘conjunctive-analysis’ of simple ‘ought’-judgments that supposes that archangels would agree not only in their simple ‘ought’-judgments, but also in the universalizable prescriptions that we can now say correspond to simple ‘ought’-judgments though they are not identical with them (we can now say this since we are about to say that there is more to these judgments than universalizable prescriptions).

That simple ‘ought’-judgments Hare-entail their corresponding commands, and that they are universalizable, is held by Hare to exhaust the meaning of simple ‘ought’-sentences. In saying that these judgments also Hare-entail corresponding archangelic agreement-propositions, I have revised Hare’s theory for him in a manner to which he could have no objection: the revision comes from within the theory as developed in *Moral Thinking*. The suggestion that these judgments may be conjunctions of their ‘core’ Hare-entailments would build on that revision. The problem is to say exactly how it can do that. A solution can be that a simple ‘ought’-judgment is a conjunction of, (i), its corresponding *universalizable prescription* (Hare is of course committed to these judgments Hare-entailing such prescriptions – his own stated theory *identifies* them with such prescriptions), or equivalently its corresponding *universalized prescription* (soon to be spelled out), and, (ii), a proposition reporting what would

be archangelic-assent to (or better, some archangelic-assent to, and no archangelic-dissent from) this universalized prescription.

Let ψ be a simple ‘ought’-sentence: that is, let ψ mean the same as

it ought to be the case that ϕ ,

for some declarative or assertoric sentence ϕ in which ‘ought’ occurs, if at all, only at intensional locations.

Availing ourselves of the extended imperative mood prepared for Hare in the previous chapter, we can let the sentence,

would that ϕ , and , for each case C’ that is similar in all universal respects to the case C to which ϕ is addressed, would that ϕ' , where ϕ' differs from ϕ only in its non-universal terms for times, places, persons, and things as required by differences between cases C’ and C in these dimensions.

express the universalized prescription that corresponds to the judgment expressible by ψ , which just displayed ‘imperative’ sentence shall be abbreviated by,

$\square(\phi)$.²¹

Then there is, for the archangelic agreement-proposition corresponding to this universalized prescription, the declarative sentence,

archangels would assent to the universalized prescription expressed by $\ulcorner \square(\phi) \urcorner$,

or more exactly and explicitly, the sentence,

someone, were he free of mistakes and shortcomings of fact and logic, and of every human weakness, would assent to the universalized prescription expressed by $\ulcorner \square(\phi) \urcorner$, and no such person would dissent from this universalized prescription.

Let

ArchAssnt $[\square(\phi)]$

²¹Corresponding *universalized* prescriptions have been introduced to finesse the problem that there is no ready English *precisely* for the universalizable prescriptions entailed by simple ‘ought’-judgments, if, as is being proposed on Hare’s behalf, these judgments come to *more* than their corresponding universalizable prescriptions. Alternative jargon for the revision under way leaves intact the identification of *simple ‘ought’-judgments* with ‘*universalizable prescriptions*’, and identifies simple ‘ought’-judgments, or ‘universalizable prescriptions’, with prescriptive/descriptive conjunctions the prescriptive conjuncts of which are corresponding *universalized* prescriptions of these judgments.

abbreviate this expression of the condition of ‘agreement-objectivity’ or ‘agreement-truth’ for the universalized prescription expressed by ‘ $\Box(\varphi)$ ’.

In these terms, there is for a simple ‘ought’-sentence, ‘*Ought(J)*’, the tenable identity-analysis,

$$Ought(J) = \Box(J) \& ArchAssnt[\Box(J)].^{22}$$

This identity-analysis is not ‘circular’: ‘*Ought(J)*’ does not occur to the right of the identity sign. It is a ‘reductive’ analysis of the simple ‘ought’-sentence ‘*Ought(J)*’: ‘ought’ occurs, if at all, only at intensional positions in the conjunctive-analysis to the right of the identity sign.

Regarding the prefix ‘*ArchAgr*’, which is short for something like ‘Archangels *agree that*’, and the prefix ‘*ArchAssnt*’, which is short for something like ‘Archangels *assent to*’, it is a matter of English grammar which is in order for a given sentence Σ . If Σ is a declarative sentence, for example, a simple ‘ought’-sentence, *both* prefixes are in order, and the two sentences ‘*ArchAgr*(Σ)’ and ‘*ArchAssnt*(Σ)’ are stylistic variants of one and other. If Σ is not declarative or ‘grammatically truth-apt’, then only ‘*ArchAssnt*’ is in order for Σ . Note that when in order each prefix makes a *declarative* sentence that expresses a proposition true or false.

4.2 Testing this tenable analysis on ‘core’ Hare-entailments of simple ‘ought’-judgments . The simple ‘ought’-judgment expressed by

$$Ought(\varphi)$$

is to Hare-entail according to Universal Prescriptivism as presently revised, its corresponding command expressed by,

$$Would(\varphi).$$

and its corresponding archangelic-agreement proposition expressed by,

$$ArchAgr[Ought(\varphi)].$$

It is thus necessary, for a conservative revision of Universal Prescription, that the proposed revised analysis of simple ‘ought’-sentences should preserve these Hare-entailments.

²²This conjunctive-analysis improves on the analysis,

$$Ought(J) = Would(J) \& ArchAssnt[\Box(J)],$$

which simpler analysis would ‘lose’ the universalizability of the judgment that *Ought(J)*. The conjunction expressed by ‘*Would(J) & ArchAssnt[\Box(J)]*’ does not Hare-entail that similar prescriptions for cases similar to J.

For the first Hare-entailment, we have that the simple ‘ought’-judgment that is identical with the conjunction expressed by,

$$\Box(\varphi) \ \& \ ArchAssnt[\Box(\varphi)],$$

Hare-entails the command expressed by,

$$\mathbf{Would}(\varphi).$$

The first conjunct of this conjunction Hare-entails this command by something like universal instantiation: please consider the sentence that consider above the sentence that $\lceil \Box(\varphi) \rceil$ abbreviates, and observe that φ itself of course addresses a case that is similar in all universal respects to the case addressed by φ .

The ‘proximate target’ for the second Hare-entailment is,

$$ArchAsst\{\Box(\varphi) \ \& \ ArchAssnt[\Box(\varphi)]\}.$$

which, according to the present identity-analysis of $\lceil Ought(\varphi) \rceil$, Hare-entails

$$ArchAsst[Ought(\varphi)]$$

or equivalently

$$ArchAgr[Ought(\varphi)].$$

For this ‘proximate target’, we have that the conjunction expressed by,

$$\Box(\varphi) \ \& \ ArchAssnt[\Box(\varphi)],$$

Hare-entails the archangelic-assent proposition expressed by the second conjunct of its sentence,

$$ArchAssnt[\Box(\varphi)]$$

And *this* entails the archangelic-agreement statement expressed by,

$$ArchAsst\{\Box(\varphi) \ \& \ ArchAssnt[\Box(\varphi)]\}.$$

For we are talking about archangels here, and no one who understood the idea of an archangel could say that though archangels who either assent to, or dissent from, some universalized prescription, all assent to it; not all of those who either assent, or dissent from, the conjunction of this universalized prescription and the proposition that those who either assent to, or dissent from, this universalized prescription all assent to it, assent to this conjunction. (My apologies for that involution.) They, these archangels, know that they all know the logic of universalized prescriptions and have in hand all the facts of this universalized prescription’s case, and so they know, for they can figure this out, that those amongst them who assent to, or dissent from this universalized prescription all assent to it.

4.3 Semantics for 'ought'-sentences. A part of the Frege-Geach problem is to say 'what is going on' in 'ought'-sentences in which simple 'ought'-sentences and formulas are variously embedded. Now comes a semantical rule for 'ought'-sentences to say that about variously embedded simple 'ought'-sentences given the conjunctive analysis of them of Section 2.7.1.2. It would be a part of revised Universal Prescriptivism's solution to what Sinnott-Armstrong has cast as, "The Deepest Problem of Embedding" (Sinnott-Armstrong 2000, p. 688). It would say not of 'ought'-sentences of *every* complexity what they mean, and what their embedded 'ought'-components mean, but it would say this of every 'ought'-sentence of only sententially compound complexity for 'ought', that is, it would say this of every 'ought'-sentence Σ such that every occurrence in Σ of 'ought' at an extensional position stands in an occurrence of a simple 'ought'-sentence. Left for further study is the form of an extension of the rule to cover sentences such as 'Someone ought to straighten this picture.' and 'Everyone ought to get to bed early.', when these are *not* idiomatic for the simple 'ought'-sentences, 'It ought to be the case that someone straightens this picture.' ('*Ought* (x)Sx') and 'It ought to be the case that everyone gets to bed early.' ('*Ought* (x)Gx'), but for 'There is someone who ought to straighten this picture.' $[(\exists x)(\textit{Ought Sx})]$ and 'Everyone is such that he ought to get the bed early.' $[(x)(\textit{Ought Gx})]$. The formulas '*Ought Sx*' and '*Ought Gx*' feature free occurrences of variables and are not sentences.

4.3.1 Let a *canonical form* for an 'ought'-sentence Σ , be a sentence Σ^* such that, (i), every occurrence of 'ought' at an extensional position stands in a simple 'ought'-sentence or formula, and, (ii), Σ^* is a stylistic variant of Σ . I assume that every 'ought'-sentence has a canonical form. A canonical form of the 'ought'-sentence,

If John and Mary are late, then they ought to call home.

is the sentence,

If John and Mary are late, then John ought to call home, and Mary ought to call home.

Another is,

If John and Mary are late, then John and Mary together ought to call home.

These canonical forms are not stylistic variants of one another. They correspond to non-equivalent interpretations of the initial sentence which is, with regard to the scope of 'ought', amphibolous. Let an 'ought'-determinant interpretation of a complex 'ought'-sentence be an interpretation that settles scopes of occurrences of 'ought' in

extensional positions. All subsequent references to ‘ought’-sentences are short for references to ‘ought’-determinant interpretations of ‘ought’-sentences.

4.3.2 The promised semantical rule is, as said, for ‘ought’-sentences that have stylistic variants in which every occurrence of ‘ought’ in an extensional position stands in a simple ‘ought’-sentence. The rule explains what an interpretation of a complex ‘ought’-sentence of that sort means by explaining what a canonical-form-stylistic-variant of it means. It does this by letting the *sense* of agreement-sentences *take over* in some embedded contexts. This rule distinguishes for different treatment, contexts in which simple ‘ought’-formulas can ‘express’ prescriptions,²³ and contexts in which they cannot do that. Here is the rule. It includes an explanation of these ‘cans’ and ‘cannots’. Simple ‘ought’-sentences,

- (i), at positions in which they can express prescriptions, express conjunctions of universalized prescriptions and agreement-propositions that correspond to these prescriptions;²⁴
- and,
- (ii), at positions in which they cannot express prescriptions, they express only the agreement-propositions for the universalized prescriptions they express when they are in positions in which they can do that.²⁵

Clause (i) covers positions in which simple ‘ought’-sentences *stand alone*, unembedded, and can be used to make simple ‘ought’-judgments. It covers also embeddings of simple ‘ought’-sentences in *consequents* of ‘if’-conditional sentences, where they can express prescriptions: not only descriptions but also prescriptions can be conditionally expressed.²⁶ Clause (ii) covers, for example, embeddings of simple ‘ought’-sentences in *antecedents*

²³Scare-quotes to signal the hedge “if **prescriptions** can...be expressed” (Sinnott-Armstrong, p. 679), though this hedge is idle for us given decisions of the previous chapter which extend the imperative mood to include optative subjunctive forms and count as ‘commands’ and thus ‘prescriptions’ all things that can be conveyed in this mood.. There is no question but that wishes and advised are *expressible*.

²⁴The drafting problem to be solved for an extension of the rule to embedded simple ‘ought’-formulas that are not sentences, is that such formulas cannot express prescriptions period, anymore than ‘descriptive formulas that are not sentences’, for example, ‘*x* is mortal’, can express propositions.

²⁵Restrictions of (i) and (ii) to extensional positions are idle, if, as I think, simple ‘ought’-sentences in intensional positions cannot express prescriptions.

²⁶Expressing a prescription and description *conditionally* is what the whole ‘if’ conditional ‘ought’-sentence does, when its consequent is a prescription or description. The ‘ought’-sentence in the consequent ‘contributes’

of conditional 'ought'-sentences: one cannot 'if' a prescription (for example, a wish or order), any more than one can 'if' a promise or question.

4.3.3 In what circumstances can an embedded simple 'ought'-sentences express a prescription? Here is an answering rule.

A simple 'ought'-sentence *O* that occurs in a sentence *S* can express a prescription in *S* if and only if expression that comes from *S* by replacing *O* by a 'corresponding imperative' of *O* is a grammatically correct sentence.

Now come illustrations of this rule.

Negated simple 'ought'-sentences cannot express prescriptions. For example, the simple 'ought'-sentence in, It is not the case that you ought to sit down, cannot express a prescription, since

It is not the case that sit you down.

Simple 'ought'-sentences in *consequents of 'if'-conditionals sentences* can express prescriptions. For example, the simple 'ought'-sentence in,

'If you want to go to the largest grocer in Oxford, you ought to go to Grimby Hughes.'

can express a prescription, since the sentence

'If you want to go to the largest grocer in Oxford, go you to Grimby Hughes.'

is grammatically correct. In contrast, simple 'ought'-sentences in *antecedents of 'if'-conditional sentences* cannot express prescriptions. For example, the simple 'ought'-sentence in,

'If you ought to do to Grimby Hughes, then you will find that it is the largest grocer in Oxford.'

cannot express a prescription, since the sentence

'If go you to Grimby Hughes, then you will find that it is the largest grocer in Oxford.'

is not grammatical.

Remarkably, the situations are exactly reversed for 'only if'-conditionals sentences. For example, the simple 'ought'-sentence in the consequent of

prescription and description; the sentence in the antecedent 'contributes' conditionality to what the sentence as a whole expresses. For sentences ϕ and ψ , both 'If ϕ , then ψ ' and ' ψ , if ϕ ' are 'if'-conditional sentences.

‘You want to go to the largest grocer in Oxford, only if you ought to go to Grimby Hughes.’

cannot express a prescription, since the sentence

‘You want to go to the largest grocer in Oxford, only if go you to Grimby Hughes.’

is not grammatically correct. And the simple ‘ought’-sentence in the antecedent of

‘You ought to go to Grimby Hughes, only if you will that it is the largest grocer in Oxford.’

can express a prescription, since the sentence

‘Go you to Grimby Hughes, only if you will find that it is the largest grocer in Oxford.’

is grammatically correct.

4.4 On making sense of indefinitely complex ‘ought’-sentences, as we evidently can do.

“Sentences of indefinite complexity can be built recursively from simpler elements, and these meanings from the meanings of their elements, in systematic ways....A normative sentence, the expressivist says, expresses a state of mind; its [whole] meaning is explained not by giving truth conditions but by telling what state of mind it expresses. When a normative term appears in a complex context, can we still say what state of mind is being expressed? Can we give a systematic account of how the state of mind a complex normative sentence expresses depends on the states of mind that would be expressed by its components alone?” (Gibbard 1991, p. 92.)

“Yes!” I am saying here on prescriptivist Hare’s behalf, “we can do that at least for ‘ought’-sentences that are stylistic variants of ‘ought’-sentences of only sententially compound complexity for ‘ought’ .” The conjunctive-analysis for simple ‘ought’-sentences, in league with the semantic rule for occurrences of these sentences, embedded and unembedded, does that.²⁷

4.5 To save the logical appearances. The account given by Universal Prescriptivism as revised of the ‘meanings’ of ‘ought’-sentences, simple and otherwise, is *adequate*, only if arguments involving ‘ought’-judgments that are

²⁷In addition to the ‘drafting-problem’ of extending the rule to embedded simple ‘ought’-formulas that are not sentences, there are what will be problems with applications of the extended. is not only a drafting problem. For example, it is to my mind a difficult question whether the words ‘Someone x is such that *would that x should* straighten the picture.’ are grammatical or make an English sentence. Similarly for the words, ‘Everyone x is such that would that x should go to bed early.’.

‘for all the world’-valid, and Hare-validated by it. I understand this requirement in this way. Given premises of such an argument that include ‘ought’-sentences, it must be possible to proceed to the argument’s conclusion *without recourse* to these ‘ought’-sentences to the argument’s conclusion by using instead of these ‘ought’-sentences ‘translations’ of them that are licensed by the conjunctive-analysis of simple -‘ought’-sentences, and the semantic rule for complex ‘ought’-sentences of the theory as presently revised. Additionally, if the conclusion of the argument is an ‘ought’-sentence, it must be reached by way of a ‘translation’ of that sort.

To illustrate, argument A1 of Section 2.2 above, assuming the abbreviation, R: he will reveal his sources.

(3) He ought to reveal his sources: *Ought*(R).

(2) If he ought to reveal his sources, then he will reveal his sources: if *Ought*(R), then R.

∴ (4) He will reveal his sources: R.

Can be Hare-validated as follows.

- | | |
|--|--|
| (5) $[\Box(R)] \ \& \ ArchAsst[\Box(R)]$ | (3), ‘translation’: conjunctive-analysis |
| (6) If $ArchAsst[\Box(R)]$, then R. | (2), ‘translation’: conjunctive-analysis, semantic rule |
| (7) $ArchAsst[\Box(R)]$ | (5), Hare-entailment |
| (4) R | (6), (7), plain entailment (<i>modus ponens</i>), therefore, Hare-entailment |

That was easy!²⁸ It is not always so. *Indeed*, it is not always *possible*, with the ‘resources’ of Universal Prescriptivism as presently deployed. We go now to a case in which it is not possible, and then, (i), to a rather different fix that I think perfects the theory for present purposes of ‘saving the logical appearances’, along with, (ii), an upgrade of the present proposal that I think is equivalent to this coming different fix.

4.6 A remarkable ‘reversal of circumstances’ for simple ‘ought’-sentences in ‘if’-conditionals and ‘only if’-conditionals has been noted in Section 2.8.2 for conditionals concerned with the grocer of times past Grimbley Hughes.²⁹ When antecedents of ‘if’-conditionals simple ‘ought’-sentences cannot express prescriptions, though

²⁸“But think what you are doing?! The argument (3), (2), therefore (4) is of the form *modus ponens*. If ‘he ought not to reveal his sources’ is used with different meanings in premises (3) and (2), as you say, “there is here a fallacy of equivocation” (Ridge 2006, p. 311). The argument is not valid if treated as proposed, ‘since then... it commits a fallacy of equivocation’ (Sinnott-Armstrong, p. 679).” Strange that such things should be said.

The argument, and similar arguments in the Frege-Geach literature, are of the sentential form *modus ponens*: each is of the form, for declarative sentences ϕ and ψ ,

$$\phi, (\text{if } \phi, \text{ then } \psi) \therefore \psi.$$

I have assigned to ϕ *qua* stand-alone first premise, a different ‘meaning’ (a different illocutionary force) from that which I have assigned to ϕ *qua* antecedent of the second premise – different, yes, but logically unrelated, no. When these different ‘meanings’ are spelled out in ‘translations’ (5) and (6), the result is premises that ‘for all the world’-entail (4). ‘We’ can adapt words that Hare used to describe something he claimed to have accomplished.

“We have...shown that it is possible to take a sentence whose meaning [when it stands alone has it expressing something that it does not express when it is an antecedent]..., and transfer it into a conditional clause in which [that part is perforce not expressed] **without altering its meaning in any sense that would be damaging to *modus ponens***.” (Hare 1970, p. 18, *cf.*, 19, bold emphasis added.)

‘We’, however, have shown this while saying what the sentences of interest to us ‘mean’ in terms of illocutionary forces or what they express when antecedents, and what the whole conditionals mean. The meaning of a sentence-type can be understood to determine the illocutionary forces of, and what is expressed by, sundry tokens of this type. *Cf.*, (Horwich 2005, p. 82) for a conjecture along these lines for meanings of ‘word-types’.

Hare did not do *these* things for the sentences of interest to him (for example, for his sentence ‘That movie is good’), anymore than Dreier does in his ‘hiyo’ experiment. With ‘hiyo’ established as an expression for accosting, that is, for getting a persons’s attention (as ‘yo’ and ‘hello’ are established), Dreier stipulates, (i), that “we may always write or say, [for example] ‘Bob is hiyo,’ and this means nothing more nor less than ‘Hiyo Bob’,” and, (ii), that “the meaning of

(11) ‘If a dingo is near, then Bob is hiyo’

is given, as usual” by the inference rules for ‘if...then’ and the meanings of ‘a dingo is near’ and ‘Bob is hiyo’ (Dreier 1996, p. 43). “So now you know, don’t you, what (11) means. No, you don’t. It doesn’t mean anything intelligible.” (P. 43.) ‘Bob is hiyo’ in the *consequent*, has not been given a meaning. It cannot be *there* an accosting formula. Similarly for the ‘atomic’ sentence when it is an antecedent, as in ‘If Bob is hiyo, then a dingo is near’. And that, so far, is *all* that we know about ‘Bob is hiyo’. We know that on its own it is an alternative to ‘Hiyo Bob’ for accosting Bob, for getting his attention. And what, we may wonder, could a nice formula like that be doing in the antecedent of an ‘if’-conditional.

²⁹It was, as I recall, on the west side of The Cornmarket towards Carfax from Elliston and Cavell’s, then the largest store in Oxford, next to Woolworth’s. The stores, along with Grimbley Hughes, now gone.

they do that when they are consequents. For contrast, they can do that when antecedents of ‘only if’-conditionals, though not when they are consequents. This reversal is presently remarkable because ‘if’-conditionals and ‘only if’-conditionals with the same antecedents ‘for all the world’ entail one another. This yields a demonstration of the *inadequacy* of resources of Universal Prescriptivism as presently revised ‘to save the logical appearances’. Thus, the argument,

(9) He will reveal his sources, only if he ought to reveal his sources.

∴ (10) If he will reveal his sources, then he ought to reveal his sources.

is ‘for all the world’-valid. These sentences would be symbolized alike in every sentential calculus. But their ‘translations’,

(11) R, only if $ArchAsst[\Box(R)]$ (9), ‘translation’: conjunctive-analysis, semantic rule

(12) If R, then $[\Box(R)] \ \& \ ArchAsst[\Box(R)]$ (10), ‘translation’: conjunctive-analysis, semantic rule

are not similarly related: that is, (11) does not Hare-entail (12). (11) does plain entail, and therefore Hare-entail,

(13) If R, then $ArchAsst[\Box(R)]$.

which, like (11) is a declarative sentence that expresses a proposition. Therefore (11) *would* Hare-entail, *if* $ArchAsst[\Box(R)]$ Hare-entailed the conjunction $\Box(R) \ \& \ ArchAsst[\Box(R)]$. But it does not. A person can *assent* to the archangelic agreement-proposition expressed by ‘ $ArchAsst[\Box(R)]$ ’ and, without incoherence or ‘non-plussing’, *dissent* from the universalized prescription expressed by ‘ $\Box(R)$ ’. Such a person could explain himself thus: “I am not ‘into’ prescribing for all and sundry. I leave that to my maiden aunt!” Alternatively, he could explain himself by saying that perhaps he *would*, if an archangel, not be especially concerned with himself and those near to him, and want persons without exception to reveal their sources, but that, if so, we should know from his personal biases alone that he is *not* an archangel. As for the prescription, he does *not* want that without exception, for, given how near and dear *his* sources are to *him*, and the trouble that he would make for them, if he were to reveal them, he does not want it for himself.³⁰

³⁰Hare would say that a premise expressed by a sentence abbreviated by ‘ $ArchAsst[\Box(S)]$ ’ cannot Hare-entail a conclusion expressed by the conjunctive-sentence ‘ $([\Box(S)] \ \& \ ArchAsst[\Box(S)])$ ’, because if it did, then a premise expressed by the *non-imperative* sentence ‘ $ArchAsst[\Box(S)]$ ’ would Hare-entail a conclusion expressed by a sentence abbreviated by the *imperative* sentences ‘ $[\Box(S)]$ ’ and ‘ $Would(S)$ ’, and it is a general principle to which there are no exceptions that, “*No*

This person might, Hare would remind us, make a more interesting disclosure. He might tell us that he is a complete *amoralist* who wants nothing to do with ‘ought’-judging, and the universalized prescribing with intent to match archangelic universalized prescribing, that Hare has convinced him that ‘ought’-judging would get him into. Hare is concerned to maintain the

“logical possibility of consistent whole-hogging amoralism...[though it] may seem a defect in our theory....[I]t carries one advantage; for it establishes my *bona fides* as a non-descriptivist....[who does not endorse as valid violations of] Hume’s Law (No ‘ought from an ‘is’).” (*MT*, p. 186.)

He understands how his particular ‘judgment-internalism’, could, if believed by a person, provide him with reasons to stay away from moral thinking and speaking. This compares positively with what has been said of ‘cocaine internalism’ in Chapter XI, Section 4.1.³¹

4.7 Another conjunctive-analysis, this time for every ‘ought’-judgment. To solve the problem of the previous section for the conjunctive-analysis for simple ‘ought’-sentences and semantics for embedded simple ‘ought’-sentences that I have offered Hare, I will make him a better offer! It is an offer that, given what he takes to be the success of the argument of *Moral Thinking*, he is no position to refuse.

4.7.1 On the object of ‘moral discourse’. A person who sincerely assents to an ‘ought’-judgment, that is, a judgment expressed by a sentence in which ‘ought’ occupies an extensional position, is ‘into moral discourse’ and committed to the *object* of this discourse whatever it is. But according to Hare it must be

imperative conclusion can be validly drawn from a set of premisses which does not contain at least one imperative.” (*LofM*, p. 28.) Here is a likely exception to this principle, dressed with some bracketed context-setting chatter. Its imperative conclusion is ‘sandwiched’ between its indicative premisses.

You want to go the largest grocer in Oxford. [Right? Correct me if I wrong about this.] Well then [words of inference], go to Grimbly-Hughes. For Grimbly Hughes is the largest grocer in Oxford. [You can trust me on this.]

The challenged inference from *ArchAsst*[$\Box(R)$] to the conjunction [$\Box(R)$ & *ArchAsst*[$\Box(R)$]] would not be an exception to that principle strictly interpreted. This conclusion is no more an imperative than an indicative sentence: it is ‘half imperative’ and ‘half indicative’. However, this conjunction does Hare-entail its imperative first conjunct, and if its second conjunct Hare-entailed it, the conjunction, it would Hare-entail its first conjunct.

³¹Of possible interest is the package of a similar semantic rule and the conjunctive-analysis according to which ‘I promise’ means the same as ‘I promise, and I will’. This analysis does not generate a ‘vicious regress’, if for any sentence ϕ , the conjunction ‘(ϕ and ϕ)’ means the same as ϕ .

making 'ought'-judgments that agree with the judgments that, along with all other archangels who made 'ought'-judgments, one would make oneself if one were an archangel,

where this making *includes*

making the universalized prescription that, along with all other archangels who made universalized prescriptions, one would make were one an archangel.

That this is the object of moral thinking and discourse is a hardly resistible inference from the grand result that Hare claims for the argument of *Moral Thinking*.

Given that there is this demonstrable object of moral thinking and discourse, assent to, or dissent from, an 'ought'-judgment should Hare-entail *acceptance of this object* and entitle persons to think that that is what the assenter or dissenter is up to. This can make a difference to combinations of assents and dissents that are possible without semantic incoherence once a person has assented to an 'ought'-judgment and entered into 'ought' thinking and discourse. This, Hare tells us, an alert and consistent amoralist will never ever do, except perhaps, Hare allows uncertainly, to make "judgments of moral indifference" (*MT*, p. 183), and "to use the moral words in sentences beginning, 'it is not the case that' " (p. 184).

The theory is that the object of this activity is to make the universalized prescriptions that, along with all other archangels, one would make, were one an archangel. To *accept* this object would *include* assenting to the 'command' expressed by the imperative,

Would that it were the case that ϕ , if an archangel would assent to, and no archangel would dissent from, the universalized prescription, $\Box(\phi)$.

ϕ a declarative sentence; or, more succinctly

Let the universalized wills of archangels rule!

which shall be abbreviated by '**ArchRule!**'.

The theory is, though Hare never says this explicitly, that

the command ArchRule! is Hare-entailed by every 'ought'-judgment.

That this is so has emerged as yet another *theorem* of Universal Prescriptivism the main *axioms* of which are Prescriptivity and Universalizability, which say that simple 'ought'-judgments entail corresponding 'commands'

and are universalizable, and ‘Conditional Reflection’ (so named by Allan Gibbard, and explained for archangels in Section 2.2 of the next chapter) which states consequences for a person’s preferences for sundry logically possible in which he plays a rôle of his identifying himself in these situations.

4.7.2 This theorem suggests a rather different conjunctive-analysis which different analysis is not for only simple ‘ought’-sentences, but for all ‘ought’-sentences: this analysis is complete without aid of a semantic rule for embedded simple ‘ought’-sentences (and, eventually, formulas that are not sentences). Now comes this general analysis.

For any ‘ought’-sentence Σ , the sentence,

ArchRule! & Σ' ,

is a stylistic variant of Σ , wherein Σ' comes from a canonical form for Σ by replacing, for each sentence or formula ϕ , each occurrence of the simple ‘ought’-sentence or formula,

it ought to be the case that ϕ ,

by an occurrence of the declarative sentence or formula,

an archangel would assent to, and no archangel would dissent from,

the universalized prescription $\Box(\phi)$.

This replacement sentence or formula is a stylistic variant of the archangelic-agreement form that we will continue to abbreviate by,

ArchAsst $[\Box(\phi)]$.³²

³²I owe the idea of the form of this general conjunctive-analysis to Michael Ridge. He writes: “...perhaps we should understand atomic uses of mora predicates as follows:

[Ecumenical Expressivism’.] ‘There is a moral reason to X’ expresses (a) an attitude of approval of a certain kind toward actions insofar as they have a certain property and (b) a belief that X has this property.” (P. 315)

A difference between the substance of the general conjunctive-analysis I propose for Hare, and that of Ridge’s ‘Ecumenical Expressivism’, is that the prescriptive conjunct of the former is *the same for all speakers and thinkers*, whereas the latter analysis leaves open that it should not be the same.

Suppose I am a utilitarian. Then ‘the certain property’ is for me that of maximizing utility. (Cf., p. 326.) Suppose you are an ‘equalitarian utilitarian’. Then ‘the certain property’ for you, let us say, is maximizing equal utility. This speaker/thinker relativity of the attitudinal conjunct makes Ridge’s analysis *ecumenical* in a sense *additional* to the sense that consists in its accommodating both descriptivists that would have moral utterances express beliefs, and expressivists that would have them express attitudes. The additional ecumenicalism of his account which distinguishes it from the account I offer Hare, does in Ridge’s account an analysis of the ‘moral reasons’ of ordinary thought and talk. By its speaker/thinker relativity it quite loses to the ‘platitude of objectivity’

To illustrate, the new conjunctive-analysis of,

If he ought to reveal his sources, then he will reveal his sources.

assuming still the abbreviation – R: he will reveal his sources – is,

ArchRule! & (if *ArchAsst*[\Box (R)], then R.

This conjunctive-analysis for all ‘ought’-sentences, like the previous one for simple ‘ought’-sentences, is ‘reductive’. The analysis, ‘*ArchRule!* & Σ ’ of the ‘ought’-sentence Σ is not itself an ‘ought’-sentence. Nor does it harbour an ‘ought’-sentence.

To distinguish, let the conjunctive-analysis of Section 2.7.1.2 for simple ‘ought’-sentences together with the semantic rule of Section 2.8.2 for embedded simple ‘ought’-sentences be the *simple-case conjunctive-analysis*, and the just explained analysis, the *general conjunctive-analysis*. ‘Translations’ according to the simple-case conjunctive-analysis exist only for ‘ought’-sentences of all sententially compounded complexity for ‘ought’, whereas ‘translations’ according to the present general conjunctive-analysis exist for all ‘ought’-sentences. ‘Translation’ according to the simple-case conjunctive-analysis and the semantic rule for embedded simple ‘ought’-sentences yields conjunctions only for simple ‘ought’-sentences, and ‘ought’-sentences that are themselves conjunctions. And such ‘translation’ of an ‘ought’-sentence can yield a declarative sentence. ‘Translation’ according to the general conjunctive-analysis yields a conjunction in every case. It yields a conjunction the first conjunct of which is an ‘imperative’, and the second conjunct of which is a declarative sentence. The result is thus never a declarative sentence. The ‘imperative’ conjunct is one and the same in these ‘translations’.

4.7.3 An ‘*in-between*’ analysis would give ‘translations’ in two steps. First, for an ‘ought’-sentence, ‘translate’ according to the simple-case conjunctive-analysis and the semantics for embedded simple ‘ought’-formulas that are sentences, extended appropriately somehow to all embedded simple ‘ought’-formulas. Second, conjoin to the result the imperative, ‘*ArchRule!*’ To illustrate, the ‘translation’ according to this ‘in between’ analysis of the ‘ought’-sentence, ‘If he will reveal his sources, then he ought to reveal his sources.’ is, assuming the abbreviation, R: he will reveal his source,

that when persons disagree whether or not there is a moral reason to X, at least one of them is mistaken.

[ArchRule! & (if R, then $\Box(R)$ and ArchAsst[$\Box(R)$])].

Sometimes ‘translations’ according to the simple-case and general conjunctive analyses are identical. This is so for the ‘ought’-sentence, ‘He will reveal his sources, only if he ought to reveal his sources.’, the ‘translation’ of which according to each analysis is,

[ArchRule! & (R, only if ArchAsst[$\Box(R)$])].

And *generally*, ‘translations’ according to these analyses are *Hare-equivalent* for every ‘ought’-sentence that is a stylistic variant of an ‘ought’-sentence of only sententially compound complexity for ‘ought’.

■ **Confirmation.** First, for simple ‘ought’-sentences, negations of these, and weak disjunctions involving these.

SIMPLE ‘OUGHT’-SENTENCES. For any such sentence,
 $Ought(\varphi)$,
 its simple-case conjunctive analysis ‘translation’ is,

ArchRule! & ($\Box(\varphi)$ & ArchAss[$\Box(\varphi)$])

and its general conjunctive-analysis ‘translation’ is,

ArchRule! & ArchAss[$\Box(\varphi)$].

It is evident that these are *Hare-equivalent*, for it is evident (when the abbreviations are expanded) that

ArchRule! & ArchAss[$\Box(\varphi)$] $\therefore \Box(\varphi)$

is Hare-valid.

NEGATIONS OF SIMPLE ‘OUGHT’-SENTENCES. For any such sentence,

$\sim Ought(\varphi)$,

‘translations’ according to simple-case and general conjunctive ‘translations’ are *identically*,

ArchRule! & \sim ArchAss[$\Box(\varphi)$].

Regarding in particular the simple-case analysis and its semantical rule for embedded simple ‘ought’-sentences, for any imperative sentence $i\chi!$, the construction,

$\sim i\chi!$,

is ungrammatical: Consider, for example, ‘It is not the case that shut the door!’, ‘Is not the case that let the door be shut.’, ‘It is not the case that would that it should be the case that the door is shut.’, and so on.

DISJUNCTIONS INVOLVING SIMPLE ‘OUGHT’-SENTENCES. There are two cases to be considered.

First, for any disjunction,

$$\text{Ought}(\varphi) \vee \text{Ought}(\psi),$$

its simple-case analysis 'translation',

$$\text{ArchRule!} \& ([\Box\varphi \& \text{ArchAss}(\Box\varphi)] \vee [\Box\psi \& \text{ArchAss}(\Box\psi)]),$$

can be seen to be Hare-equivalent to the general conjunctive-analysis 'translation',

$$\text{ArchRule!} \& [\text{ArchAss}(\Box\varphi) \vee \text{ArchAss}(\Box\psi)].$$

Second, for any disjunction,

$$\text{Ought}(\varphi) \vee \psi$$

wherein φ is a declarative sentence and ψ is not an 'ought'-sentence, there is a question regarding its simple-case analysis 'translation' that turns on whether or not, for any imperative sentence $i\chi!$, the construction

$$i\chi! \vee \psi$$

is grammatical: Regarding which question one may consider, for example, 'Either shut the door, or the window is closed.', 'Either let the door be shut, or the window is closed, or both.' and so on. I think that the displayed construction is *not* grammatical, and that therefore the simple-case analysis 'translation' of $\ulcorner[(\text{Ought}(\varphi) \vee \psi)]\urcorner$ is,

$$\text{ArchRule!} \& [\text{ArchAss}(\Box\varphi) \vee \psi],$$

which is *the same as* the general conjunctive-analysis 'translation'. Furthermore, *if* the construction $\ulcorner(i\chi! \vee \psi)\urcorner$ is grammatical, then the simple-case analysis 'translations' of $\ulcorner[(\text{Ought}(\varphi) \vee \psi)]\urcorner$,

$$\text{ArchRule!} \& ([\Box\varphi \& \text{ArchAss}(\Box\varphi)] \vee \psi)$$

can be seen to be Hare-equivalent to the just previously displayed 'translation' according to the general conjunctive-analysis.

With these findings for simple 'ought'-sentences, negations, and disjunctions conjoined for its basis, a mathematical induction can establish that these 'translations' are Hare-equivalent for 'ought'-sentences that are stylistic variants of 'ought'-sentences *of only sententially compound complexity for 'ought'*.

Relevant here is that every sententially compound sentence is equivalent to a sentence in which the only sentential 'connectives' are negation and weak disjunction. A key *lemma* for the induction can be that, for any sententially compound sentences φ and φ' , if sentences ψ and ψ' are Hare-equivalent, and φ' comes

from ϕ by replacing one or more occurrences of ψ by occurrences of ψ' , then ϕ and ϕ' are Hare-equivalent, which lemma can be, I trust, established by a mathematical induction. ■

Furthermore, without settling problems acknowledged in note 24 above regarding *application* of the semantic rule of the simple-case conjunctive analysis when it is extended to all simple 'ought'-formulas, it can be observed that however they are settled, Hare-equivalence is general for stylistic variants of 'ought'-sentences *of every quantificational and sentential compound complexity for 'ought'* that are expressible in first order predicate logic. Relevant here is that every sentence of quantificational or sentential complexity that is expressible in this logic is equivalent to a sentence in which the only sentential 'connectives' are negation and weak disjunction, every 'phrase of quantity' is existential. ■ For the basis of a mathematical induction to establish this more extensive Hare-equivalence of simple-case and general-conjunctive-analysis 'translations', one may observe that an 'ought'-sentence,

Someone x is such that x ought to Y.

would have either the simple-case 'translation'

ArchRule! & Someone x is such that $(\Box(x \text{ ought to } Y) \ \& \ \text{ArchAsst}[\Box(x \text{ ought to } Y)])$

or the simple-case 'translation'

ArchRule! & Someone x is such that $\text{ArchAss}[\Box(x \text{ ought to } Y)]$.

Supposing, however, that not only the second of these, but also the first, is grammatical, these 'translations' are Hare-equivalent. The second is identical with a 'translation' according to the general conjunctive-analysis. ■ That 'translations' according to the two analyses of 'ought'-sentences *of every quantificational and sentential complexity for 'ought'* that are expressible in first order predicate logic are Hare-equivalent, is evidence that – it indeed establishes a reasonable presumption that – 'translations' according to these two analyses of 'ought'-sentences of every complexity for 'ought' are Hare-equivalent.

4.8 On saving the logical appearances, this time all of them. Now come two illustrations of the prowess of the general conjunctive-analysis, and grounds for the conclusion that it works always works, and works *easily*, to save the logical appearances.

4.8.1 As said, the argument,

(9) He will reveal his sources, only if he ought to reveal his sources.

∴ (10) If he will reveal his sources, then he ought to reveal his sources.

is ‘for all the world’-valid. And it is *easily* Hare-validated given the general conjunctive-analysis. ‘Ought’-sentences (9) and (10) have, respectively, the following ‘translations’ according to the general conjunctive-analysis.

(14) *ArchRule!* & [R, only if *ArchAsst*[$\Box(\phi)$]].

(15) *ArchRule!* & (if R, then *ArchAsst*[$\Box(\phi)$]).

(14) Hare-entails (15). The point can be laboured, but is I trust obvious. Someone who assented to (14) and dissented from (15), would be known to assent to both conjuncts of (14), and to dissent from at least one conjunct of (15). Dissent from either of these conjunct would ‘nonplus’, given his assent to both conjuncts of (14). In particular, dissent from the second conjunct would non-plus given that the second conjunct of (14) *plain entails* the second conjunct of (15).³³

4.8.2 For a second illustration, let us take from Section 2.2 argument A2,

³³*Cf.*, (Ridge 2006, pp. 329-30). I believe that Michael Ridge misses the play of something like Hare-entailment in his result. Connectedly, he adopts an account of validity that is only *close* to Hare’s.

“Standard accounts hold that an argument is valid just in case it is impossible for its premises to be true while its conclusion is false....[S]ome versions of Ecumenical Expressivism hold that moral utterances are not truth-apt....We can, however, adopt a close cousin: An argument is valid just in case any possible believer who **accepts** all of the premises but at one and the same time **denies** the conclusion would thereby be guaranteed to have **inconsistent beliefs**.” (P. 326.)

To illustrate “how [his] account [of sentences in which ‘moral reason’ is used] can explain the validity of arguments with moral predicates quite generally,” Ridge considers “the standard [in Frege-Geach literature] case of modus ponens: (1) There is moral reason not to lie. (2) If there is moral reason not to lie, then there is moral reason not to encourage your little brother to lie. [Therefore] (3) there is moral reason not to encourage your little brother to lie.” According to his account, sentence (3) for the conclusion,

“expresses (a) an attitude of [disapproval] of a certain kind towards actions insofar as they have a certain property and with a certain property, and (b) a belief that [encouraging your little brother to lie] has that property” (p. 315).

Ridge writes:

“To deny the [conclusion] ...would be to believe that not encouraging [your] little brother to lie does not have that...property.” (P. 329-30.)

However, presumably* ‘denying’ the conjunction (a)-attitude and (b)-belief expressed by sentence (3), does not necessarily involve ‘denying’ the *belief*. It can presumably* consist of ‘denying’ the *attitude of disapproval*. Of course, this attitude cannot ‘consistently’ be both ‘denied’ when the conclusion expressed by (3) is ‘denied’, and ‘accepted’, as it must be, when the premises expressed by sentences (1) and (2) are accepted. *That is*, to gloss in Hare’s fashion this ‘**inconsistency of attitudes**’, ‘assent’ to words for that disapproval in one breathe, and ‘dissent’ from them in the next breathe, would certainly ‘nonplus’ interlocutors. [*‘Presumably’]. I am assuming that ‘denying’ here is like Hare’s ‘dissenting’, and that it can consist in a positive refusal to assent, as in the answer to a question whether one assents: “So you think that you ought not to encourage your little brother to lie, that that would be wrong?” *No*. Please see Section 3.1.2 of Chapter XII above.]

(4) He will reveal his sources.

(9) He will reveal his sources, only if he ought to reveal his sources.

∴ (3) He ought to reveal his sources.

This argument is again ‘for all the world’-valid, and easily Hare-validated assuming the general conjunctive-analysis. Its sentences have according to this analysis the ‘translations’, respectively,

(16) R

(14) *ArchRule!* & (R, only if *ArchAsst*[$\Box(\varphi)$]).

(17) *ArchRule!* & *ArchAsst*[$\Box(\varphi)$]

This argument is Hare-valid for the reasons *mutatis mutandis* that the ‘translation’-argument of the previous illustration is Hare-valid. In particular, the inference from (16) and the second conjunct of (14), to the second conjunct of (17) is plain valid.

4.8.3 The general case (for ‘ought’-sentences that are only sententially compound complex for ‘ought’. Start with

a canonical form, *A*, of an argument with ‘ought’-premises and an ‘ought’-conclusion that is ‘for all the world’ valid:

P_1

·

·

·

P_n

∴ C

This argument has the general-conjunctive-analysis ‘translation’ *A**:

ArchRule! & P_1'

·

·

·

ArchRule! & P_n'

∴ *ArchRule!* & C'

wherein, for i , $1 \leq i \leq n$, P_i' comes from P_i by replacing, for each sentence φ , each occurrence of the simple ‘ought’-sentence,

it ought to be the case that (φ),

by an occurrence of the declarative sentence,

an archangel would assent to, and no archangel would dissent from, the universalized prescription, $\Box(\varphi)$.

Argument A^* is Hare-valid for the reasons *mutatis mutandis* that the ‘translation’ arguments in the previous illustrations are Hare-valid. I rely here on the assumption that, for any declarative sentences $\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_n$, and χ , if the argument

$$\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_n \therefore \chi$$

is ‘for all the world’ valid (i.e., either Hare-valid or plain valid), and its ‘translation’ according to the general conjunctive-analysis is,

$$(ArchRule! \& \varphi_1'), \dots, (ArchRule! \& \varphi_n') \therefore (ArchRule! \& \chi')$$

then the argument,

$$\varphi_1', \dots, \varphi_n' \therefore \chi',$$

is plain valid. That is the key. Given it, for any ‘for all the world’ valid declarative argument, its ‘translation’-argument according to the general conjunctive-analysis can be ‘Hare-validated’ using the principle that, for any imperative φ and declarative ψ , the inferences,

$$(\varphi \& \psi) \therefore \varphi,$$

$$(\varphi \& \psi) \therefore \psi,$$

and

$$\varphi, \psi \therefore (\varphi \& \psi)$$

are Hare-valid.

Conclusions

We can explain the meanings of ‘ought’-sentences of every complexity. The general conjunctive-analysis does that. The ‘in between’ analysis – if as I think its ‘translations’, and general conjunctive-analysis ‘translations’, are equivalent for ‘ought’-sentences of every complexity for ‘ought’ – solves Sinnott-Armstrong’s ‘deepest problem of embeddings’ as it arises for Universal Prescriptivism. For then it gives the meanings ‘ought’-components not only of stylistic variants of ‘ought’-sentences of every sentential and quantificational complexity for ‘ought’ that is expressible in first order predicate logic, but for ‘ought’-sentences of every complexity for ‘ought’. In any case, the general conjunctive-analysis ‘saves the logical appearances’, it saves these ‘on the cheap’, Michael Ridge might say: *cf.*, (Ridge 2006, p. 324ff).³⁴ These analyses serve Universal Prescriptivism in these ways, *provided*, as Hare

³⁴Similarly for the ‘in between’ analysis, if it is, as I think, equivalent to the general conjunctive-analysis.

maintains, that it *is* a theorem of his theory of Universal Prescriptivism that there would be no disagreement amongst archangels regarding simple 'ought'-judgments. I have tried to explain how, given this theorem, Universal Prescriptivism has the wherewithall to make itself over to those ends.

5. *To enhance Universal Prescriptivism's account of the practicality of simple 'ought'-judgments*

5.1 Universal Prescriptivism says that two conditions *exhaust* the 'prescriptivity' of simple 'oughts'-judgments and their special relations to desires and actions. There is a *logical condition*. Simple 'oughts' are said to entail commands. Moral questions, "What ought I to do?," are *practical* questions. In *this* they are exactly like questions, "What shall I do?" (*Cf., LofM*, p. 1). That they are asked with 'ought'-interrogatives, rather than 'shall'-interrogatives, makes *no* difference to their *practicality*, their relation to actions. 'Answers' to the *practical* 'parts' of corresponding 'ought'- and 'shall'-question what to do are *the same*: "This." one can say in response to each, *meaning* something like *do this* (a 'command'). (P. 29.)

"The prescriptivity of moral judgments can be explained formally as the property of entailing at least one imperative (*LofM* 11.2; *FR* 2.8)." (*MT*, p. 21; *cf., LofM*, pp. 163 and 179.)

A person's assenting to a simple 'ought' while dissenting from its corresponding 'command' "is a sufficient condition for saying that he has misunderstood one or the other of the sentences" (*LofM*, p. 25).

To complete its account, Universal Prescriptivism adds a pragmatic condition. Sincere assents to 'first-person' simple 'ought'-judgments are said to entail commitment and a readiness to act.

"A speech act is prescriptive if to subscribe to it is to be committed, on pain of being accused of insincerity, to doing the action specified in the speech act, or, if it requires someone else to do it, to willing that he do it." (Hare 1991, p. 458, bold emphasis added, *cf., MT*, p. 21.)

'Commands' are prescriptive in this sense. We cannot sincerely assent to 'commands' addressed to us and 'at the same time not be prepared to act on them' (*cf., LofM*, p. 20). We cannot sincerely assent to 'commands' addressed to others, unless we are willing that these others act on those 'commands.'³⁵ Simple 'ought'-judgments Hare-entail

³⁵Hare is comfortable with the thesis that simple 'ought'-judgments express wishes in a sense in which a person can express a wish that he does not have. (*Cf., LM*, p. 9-10.) He *may* have thought that a person's expression of a wish is sincere if and only if he has the wish expressed. He says that a 'command' is sincere if and

'commands.' This is immediate and obvious *on the theory*. No one can sincerely assent to a judgment, without sincerely assenting to what it is obvious to all that this judgment Hare-entails, and according to the theory, it is obvious to all that simple 'ought'-judgments Hare-entail their corresponding 'commands' (this is the 'logical condition' above). Therefore simple 'ought'-judgments satisfy this pragmatic condition. Sincere assent to a simple 'ought'-judgment Hare-entails being *quite* willing that it be enacted: "it is to have an *orexis* (a desire in a wide sense) that it should be acted upon" (Hare 1968, p. 439; *cf.*, *F&R*, p. 170, and *MT*, p. 185), which, if it calls for an action on your part, is not a mere tendency but a *determination* of your will to act, it is a *decisive* desire in a wide sense of desire. And act you *will*, if "it is in [your] (physical and psychological) power to do so" (*LofM*, p. 20; *cf.*, *MT*, p. 21).

So says Hare of simple 'oughts', but does he say true? Do simple 'ought'-judgments satisfy these conditions for prescriptivity? I think not. Simple 'oughts' do not Hare-entail 'commands'. Nor does sincere assent to them Hare-entail desires to enactments. Far from it, in the case of simple first-person 'ought'-judgments. Perhaps, however, sincere assents to 'first-person present' simple 'ought'-judgments do Hare-entail determinations of the will, and enactments of these barring 'deadness or weakness of will.'

5.2 Sampling the evidence. There is against Hare's practicality theses logical and pragmatic, the coherence and possible unqualified sincerity of the following speeches. *Shoplifter to clerk*: "Yes, **you ought to report me**. I don't deny it. But **please don't!** Please, give me a break."

Here I *dissent* from the corresponding 'command', and make, in the words, 'Please don't!' a contrary 'command', a polite one, but a 'command' nevertheless expressed in the imperative mood narrowly drawn. And there is not the least *orexis* on my part, that you actually do, as I say you ought to do. "Ah, but is your assent to that judgment *sincere*?" No one would ask that question, except for the sake of a losing philosophical argument. In the story, I clearly 'mean' what I say.

only if the person who makes it *intends* that it should be act upon, 'commands' for Hare include (some) wishes, and perhaps he would say that to intend that a 'command', any 'command', be enacted is to wish in a broad sense that it be enacted.

A competitor for a job to a confidante: "Certainly **she ought to take the job**. No question. She'll never get a better one. *If only*, however, *she does not realize that*. **Would that she turns it down!** For then – call me selfish, but I won't lie – it will go to dear *me*."

Again, the corresponding 'command' is evidently *not* Hare-entailed. My will is *against* her doing what I see, and say, that she ought to do. I express the hope that she does not do this. *And there is no problem understanding what I am saying, or why I am saying it*. "But is my simple 'ought'-judgment *sincere*?"

Again, why would anyone not engaged on the losing side of a philosophical argument, think to ask?

Nothing in the story suggests that I do not believe what I say. On the contrary, for in the story I hope that she does not *realize* that she ought do what I say she ought to do.

Father to daughter: "Yes, **you ought to eat your soup**. And I have said why. It is because it is good for you. No, I am not ordering you to eat it – **I am not telling you to eat it**. I am saying only that, for your own good, you *ought to* eat it. Again, this is not for me, and because I want you to eat it (which I do, of course), but for you because it is good for you."

There is desire enough here on Father's part, for the 'oughted' act. Father wants daughter to eat that soup. And *there is no dissent* on his part *from* the corresponding 'command'. Certainly *there is no assent to* a contrary 'command'. But there is *refusal to assent to* the corresponding 'command'. There is here explicit refusal to make it. Father has said that he will *not* use either the plain imperative, or the optative subjunctive, for it: he says that he will not tell her to eat her soap, and he makes clear that is not coaxing her to it, 'for him'. This unpuzzling entirely coherent speech challenges again the idea that a command expressed imperatively or optatively is *Hare-entailed* by the judgment Father has made. And again, no issue of sincerity is raised by

5.3 'Ought's' are for **guiding only**, whereas 'commands' can be used to **goad**. Cf., "Goading and Guiding" (Falk 1953). Not only do such 'ought'-judgments fail to *Hare-entail* corresponding 'commands'. They are *at odds* with their corresponding 'commands.'

To go back to the soup, once having said to Sweetie, "You ought to eat your soup," Father is not in a position comfortably to conclude his speech in the words, "So eat it, I'm losing my patience!" In using 'ought' he has, one

wants to say, claimed that there are reasons in the facts, and not just in his will, for her eating her soup. He has furthermore implied a readiness to indicate, and perhaps to discuss, them. He has indicated in that choice of words, never mind the rest that he says, that he is willing to let the facts speak for themselves for this soup-eating. Whereas in that imperative coda he would speak with presumed authority, without necessary regard to the facts.

Father has indicated in his assent to that simple 'ought'-judgment, is ready to let the facts, and the balance of reasons based on them, fall where they may. He has indicated that he is ready to be talked out of his judgment, though he does not expect that to happen. This readiness is *not consistent* with his, in the next breathe, going over to an exercise in the imperative of his authority or power. Far from its corresponding 'command' being Hare-entailed by his 'ought'-judgment, assent to this 'command' is not even consistent with (sincere) assent to that judgment. His implied readiness to let *all* the facts speak for themselves, is also not consistent with his adding, after his judgment, the special plea, "Do it for me." He *could* say, having failed to persuade with facts, "Trust me, I know what is good for you," which would express a 'command', but not one to eat the soup

We have so far sampled only the evidence of spoken second person and third person simple 'ought'-judgments against Universal Prescriptivism's account of their 'practicality'. Reserved for separate attention have been typically only thought first-person simple 'ought'-judgments.

5.4 "The first-person 'ought' is Hare's Waterloo." (Written by David Falk, some time ago. I have not re-located the place.) Take as an example, a *thought* – present tense and first person – *that I ought to be paying attention*. On typical occasions for this thought I am *not* paying attention, and am *not* already willing – at least I am not *quite* willing to pay attention. If I were quite willing, I would presumably be paying attention, and it typically the thought that I *ought* to be doing something is entertained when I am not doing it. 'I *ought*' though not exclusively words for 'the *conflicted* and *not yet engaged*', are especially for them: *not exclusively* – they can persons who are 'hesitantly engaged', as well consciously self-satisfied persons who are fully engaged.

Hare reports that "[i]t can be argued...that Plato...Aristotle...Hume...Kant...and Mill...all thought that moral judgments were *typically* prescriptive [in his sense]." (*SrtngEthcs*, p. 130.) The point that I am retailing is that first-person 'ought'-judgments are typically *not* prescriptive in his sense. They are *typically* used by persons who

are *not* quite willing, though they are sometimes used by the at least ‘on balance’ willing, and the ‘largely’ willing

Consider:

You wonder: “Why are you doing this to me?” I say: “Because I am persuaded that it is what I ought to do, that it is what I *have* to do, as a *real* friend.”

Even here, however, there is the suggestion that ‘I’ would rather not be doing ‘this’ to my friend, that I would not do it, if I did not think that I have to do it.

“Ought,” Falk used to say, consciously echoing Kant, “is a ‘conflict-notion’” : *cf.*, “[t]he ‘ought’ is...out of place” in the consciousness of the already willing (*Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 414, translated by Lewis Beck). “If ‘I ought’ vented anything,” Falk wrote, “it would vent a lament” (Falk 1960, p. 676), a plaintive sometimes despairing wish. Hare holds that sincere assent to the *judgment* that I ought to do something is possible, only when I am ‘*quite willing*’ to do the thing. Presumably this means that the *thought* that I ought to do something is possible only in that circumstance, since there is little if any room for thoughts, any thoughts, being *insincere*.³⁶ But when I am quite willing to do something, the thought that I ought to do it is not needed to get me going, and that – getting me to do it – seems to be the only practical point that Hare’s account leaves for this thought.

A problem for a theory of ‘ought’ “is to explain how [the first-person ‘ought’]...can be practical in its issue *to just the extent that it is* [and in just the way that it is]” (Smith 1994, p. 136). Hare’s saying that the first-person ‘ought’-thought is an *orexis* or desire *in a wide sense* does not make room for solutions to his problems with it. For the ‘desires’ covered by this wide sense differ ‘qualitatively’, and the first-person problem is largely ‘quantitative’. Typically I am *not*, when I say I ought, already *sufficiently* motivated: typically, I am looking for a boosting and stiffening thought. The words ‘I ought’ are *just* the words for occasions on which there is an absence of sufficient desire, though I am persuaded that there *are* sufficient *reasons*, and that there is, by detailing and reflecting on them, the possibility of sufficient *desire and motivation*. The words ‘I ought’ are of course words for when one who is persuaded that there are *sufficient reasons*. This is one thing they clearly *Hare-entail*: Try thinking, “I

³⁶Certainly there is no room for *consciously* insincere thoughts. *Perhaps*, however, the description ‘unconsciously insincere thought’ has natural applications.

ought to do this, though I believe there I do not have sufficient reasons for doing it.” But what can *reasons* to do with universalizable prescriptions?

5.5 It can be ‘the argument of *Moral Thinking* to the rescue’ here too. The evidence – this time of the exact ‘practicality’ of these judgments – points to ‘ought’-judgments *not* entailing ‘commands’, but in being *otherwise* prescriptive. This they can be by being, *inter alia*, *descriptive* of facts that can be reasons themselves and reasons that one’s situation harbours: facts of what, were one an archangel (!), one would want oneself, and would advise oneself, *as one is*, to do could be such reasons.

Words as if from Hare

“It is the fact all but demonstrated in *Moral Thinking* and made explicit in *Sorting Out Ethics*, that simple ‘ought’-judgments can be ‘objective prescriptions’. Each as a consequence entails a description – *an inherently interesting description* to the perplexed and undecided – that is about the universalized prescription that it, the simple ‘ought’-judgment also entails. Each entails a description that says that that prescription is in a certain manner ‘objective’, though *not*, of course, in the sense of corresponding to some extraordinary demanding objective reality, and being true. These entailed descriptive propositions tell us what we would prescribe for ourselves, as we are, were we in perfect command of logic and the facts and devoid of every human weakness that can enervate, and occasion biased sentiments and partialities.

“It is only these entailed descriptions, and not first-person prescriptions themselves, that we have invariably in mind when we think ‘first-person’ simple ‘ought’-judgments. And sometimes it is only these descriptions that we have in mind when we make simple ‘ought’-judgments. For sometimes we do not know the particular reasons, and are only retailing simple ‘ought’-judgments that we accept on the words of people we trust and believe are ‘in the know’ regarding the particular subject of the judgment. The prescriptions of second-person simple ‘ought’-judgments can be down-played, and, we may now see, are ‘*cancellable implications*’ – *cf.*, ‘No, in saying that you ought to do it, I am not telling but only advising you to do it.’ – and so are not ‘strict entailments’. And we can see that assents to them, imply in this cancellable manner a *qualitative range* of ‘desires’ that, for one thing, can coexist with laments for their inadequacy when they attend thoughts of what we ourselves ought to do. (It is all very complicated!)

The argument of *Moral Thinking* (1981) can with work serve revisions of Universal Prescriptivism that explain the *objectivity* of ‘ought’ thought and talk and ‘all the rules of grammar and rhetoric,’ and perfect its account of the *practicality* of this thought and talk. The argument – Hare could have claimed – all but *delivered* analyses of this thought and talk that, if then delivered, would have solved the problem of Michael Smith’s *Moral Problem* (1994) thirteen years before he posed it.

A querulous coda

Great? Well, that depends, *all* of that – the part that goes to Frege-Geach problems and ‘all the rules of grammar and rhetoric,’ and the part that goes to the prescriptivity or practicality of ‘ought’ – depends, on whether the demonstration of *Moral Thinking* is *good*. It all depends on whether its steps are valid, and its premises are true in the manner Hare would have them be, namely, as analytic and practical concepts, most prominently, that of ‘ought’, and of ‘I’ in contexts of ‘ought’-judging. We had best think about that to see whether it does, as Hare would have it do, solve Smith’s ‘moral problem’, and squaring the ‘objectivity’ of ‘ought’-judgments with their ‘practicality’.