PERMISSIONS AND DEONTICALLY PERFECT WORLDS

Kornél SOLT

Let us suppose that in our actual world w there is only a single normative code C. Let C be consistent. We suppose that C's addressees are able to perform every norm of C. Thus, we can imagine a series of possible phantasy-worlds $w_1 - w_n$ whose 'inhabitants' always perform every norm of C. The worlds $w_1 - w_n$ are *deontically perfect* alternative worlds to the actual world w. (C's norms are sometimes violated at w.) Thus, if a norm A! is valid, *i.e.* the corresponding proposition OA is true at w according to C, then A is true at every world $w_1 - w_n$.(1)

This conception of deontically perfect worlds was suggested at first by J. HINTIKKA. ([2], [3]) His deontic model proved enormously successful. With its help, a lot of difficult problems got their solutions in deontic logic.

There are not only norms in C (*i.e. commands* or *prohibitions*), but also sentences of the form PA ('A is permitted'), and IA ('A is indifferent'). The P- or I-sentences are either explicitly given in C or are derivable from C.

Regarding the P-sentences there is a well-known standpoint in deontic logic which we can formulate in this way:

(1) PA is true at w iff A is true at least at a w_i among $w_1 - w_n$.

E.g. Jean-Louis GARDIES wrote recently: "α est permis dans le monde originaire si et seulement s'il existe de moins un monde admissible dans lequel α est vrai;" ([1], p. 81. – This is, of course, only one example picked out from a lot of similar statements in the contemporary literature.) As far as I know, (1) is generally accepted by logicians, but, I think, it is false.(2)

(1) I tried to show in [5] that the generally accepted thesis:
(*) A ! is valid (OA is true) at w iff A is true at every deontic alternative world to w is false. Only a weakened form of (*) is true. If (*) were true, then (1), (2) were also necessarily true.

(2) *E.g.* G. KALINOWSKI criticizes GARDIES' standpoint in [4]. He holds (1) to be circular.

In standard deontic logic the biconditional $IA \equiv (PA \,\&\, P\sim A)$ is valid, therefore, if (1) holds, then the following statement automatically holds too:

(2) IA is true at w iff A is true at least at a w_i, and false at least at another w_j among $w_1 - w_n$.

In my view (1) and (2) are both erroneous. This is what I try to show here.

I believe, (1) and (2) have two motivations. Firstly, they intend to deontically ground PA's and IA's respective truths at w. Secondly, they intend to regulate how a deontically perfect world has to behave facing C's sentences of the form PA, IA, respectively, in order to preserve its deontic perfectness. But both motivations are mistaken. My arguments against (1) and (2) are as follows.

Let us suppose that the PA-sentence: "It is permitted to do gymnastics daily" is derivable from C. Then (1) excludes that nobody does gymnastics daily at every deontically perfect world to w. Is this requirement acceptable? No, it is not. PA's truth at w does not depend on A's falsity at every $w_1 - w_n$. It depends exclusively on the ways of regulation by C at w, on *what is given* in w itself. If it is true at w, according to C, that it is permitted to do gymnastics daily, this permission also remains true if nobody does anywhere, at any $w_1 - w_n$ gymnastics daily.(3) – Furthermore, would it diminish the supposed deontic perfectness of $w_1 - w_n$ if nobody did in them what he was allowed to do? It would, certainly, not.

Let us now suppose that the following IA-sentence is derivable from C: "It is permitted to take a walk daily, and it is permitted not to take a walk daily." By (2) two variants are excluded: (*i*) that everybody takes a walk daily at every $w_1 - w_n$, and (*ii*) that nobody takes a walk daily at every $w_1 - w_n$. Do these exclusions hold? I do not believe they do. – The truth of the sentence in quotationsmarks at w does not depend on whether the 'inhabitants' of a deontically perfect world take a walk daily or do not, namely, whether they in fact exercise their liberty or not. Further, neither (*i*) nor (*ii*) would touch $w_1 - w_n$'s supposed deontic perfectness.

(3) HINTIKKA stated: "It is obvious that there need not be anything in the actual world which suffices to show that p is permitted..." ([3], p. 69.)

Only norms, that is sentences of the form '*OA*', '$O \sim A$' have a model in deontically accessible worlds, but sentences of the form '*PA*' or '*IA*' have none, because they are not norms.

Assumed: (1) and (2) are both false. They are erroneous 'transpositions' from alethic modal logic into the realm of deontic logic. *PA*'s and *IA*'s truth-conditions respectively are not analogous to the truth-conditions of *MA* ("*A* is possible") and *CA* ("*A* is contingent") respectively. Deontic logic is not a simple copy of alethic modal logic.

Kornél SOLT

Budapest
IX. Kinizsi u. 22.
H – 1092
Hungary

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