

An Analysis of Contrary to Duty Imperatives and Conditional Obligations

Meha Mishra*

A. V. Ravishankar Sarma[†]

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Abstract

Contrary to duty obligations are special kind of conditional obligations, where a moral agent and subsequently an agent become duty bounded to commit to an alternative obligation, usually violating the primary obligations. In other words, contrary to duty imperatives are imperatives in which a secondary obligation comes into effect when the primary obligation is violated. Deontic logic has been supplied with a wealth of puzzles - usually referred to as deontic paradoxes. In the 20th century, deontic logic counterexamples to the consequence principle reappeared in various forms, as Ross paradox (the paradox of disjunctive obligation), free choice permission (the paradox of disjunctive permission), the paradox of the Good Samaritan, and the paradox of Epistemic Obligation. Indeed, a well-known problem in the study of deontic logic is the proper representation of contrary-to-duty structures, also known as Chisholm paradox. To make standard system of deontic logic more functional, independent, and free from paradoxes, led to the development of some of the prominent models such as Augmented deontic logic, Dyadic deontic logic, Andersonian Kangerian approach, and the Defeasible deontic logic. In this paper, we critically evaluate different semantics used in the analysis of contrary to duty imperatives, while addressing the possible resolutions of some of these important paradoxes.

Keywords

Deontic Logic, Conditional Obligation, Contrary to duty imperative, Chisholm paradox.

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*PhD student, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Kanpur, India

[†]Associate Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Kanpur, India

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