

Outline

- ① An Orthodoxy and Two Problems
- ② The Expressive Dynamics of 'May'
- ③ Expressivism Redux

Expressing Choices

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Possible Worlds and Information

In Inquiry and Communication (Stalnaker 1984)

- Informational contents (*propositions*) are sets of possible worlds
 - They distinguish ways world might be (worlds in the set) from ways it isn't (worlds excluded from set)
- **Rationality:** propositions are the objects of attitudes
- **Communication:** contents 'transmitted' by assertions

State of Information (s)

As communication and inquiry unfold, a body of information accumulates. Think of this information as what the agents are mutually taking for granted. Call the set of worlds embodying this information s , short for the *state of information*. (Stalnaker 1978; Lewis 1979)

Gaining Information

And Eliminating Possibilities

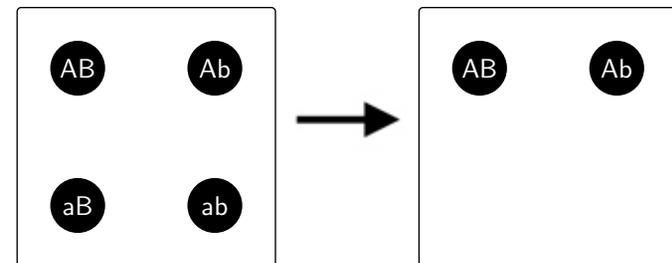


Figure: Accepting the information that A

- Inquiry progresses by using information to reduce uncertainty, i.e. eliminate worlds.
- $\{w_{AB}, w_{Ab}, w_{aB}, w_{ab}\} \Rightarrow \{w_{AB}, w_{Ab}\}$

The Role of Semantics

In the Modal Orthodoxy

Classical Picture

- 1 **Semantics:** pair sentences w/propositions
 - $\llbracket \phi \rrbracket$ is a set of worlds
- 2 **Pragmatics:** rules for rational agents
 - When presented with information, rational agents use it to eliminate possibilities (decrease uncertainty)

Modal Orthodoxy

Representational Semantics

Orthodox Possible Worlds Semantics

- 1 $\llbracket A \rrbracket = \{w \mid w(A) = 1\}$
- 2 $\llbracket \neg \phi \rrbracket = W - \llbracket \phi \rrbracket$
- 3 $\llbracket \phi \wedge \psi \rrbracket = \llbracket \phi \rrbracket \cap \llbracket \psi \rrbracket$
- 4 $\llbracket \phi \vee \psi \rrbracket = \llbracket \phi \rrbracket \cup \llbracket \psi \rrbracket$
- 5 $\llbracket \diamond \phi \rrbracket = \{w \mid \exists w': \in R(w, w') \ \& \ w' \in \llbracket \phi \rrbracket\}$
 - $R(w, w')$: w' is 'accessible' from w

Classical Truth and Consequence

Truth $w \models \phi \iff w \in \llbracket \phi \rrbracket$

Consequence $\phi \models \psi \iff \llbracket \phi \rrbracket \subseteq \llbracket \psi \rrbracket$

Two Consequences of the Orthodoxy

Possibility and Disjunction

Fact 1: $\diamond A \vee \diamond B \neq \diamond A$ and $\diamond (A \vee B) \neq \diamond A$

- 1 First would require:
 - $\llbracket \diamond A \rrbracket \cup \llbracket \diamond B \rrbracket \subseteq \llbracket \diamond A \rrbracket$
 - But this only holds when $\llbracket \diamond B \rrbracket = \emptyset$
 - 2 Second would require:
 - $\llbracket A \vee B \rrbracket \subseteq \llbracket A \rrbracket$
 - Would hold only when $\llbracket B \rrbracket = \emptyset$
- Relatedly: $\neg \diamond (A \vee B) \models \neg \diamond A \wedge \neg \diamond B$

Two Consequences of the Orthodoxy

Explaining Why $\diamond A$ and $\neg \diamond A$ are Inconsistent

Fact 2: $\llbracket \diamond A \rrbracket \cap \llbracket \neg \diamond A \rrbracket = \emptyset$

- Fact taken to explain why asserting/believing both is dysfunctional/irrational
 - **Assumption 1:** function of assertion/belief is to represent how the world is
 - **Assumption 2:** $\llbracket \cdot \rrbracket$ is the representation relation
 - **Explanation:** no world can be both how $\diamond A$ and $\neg \diamond A$ represent the world as being, so it is dysfunctional to assert/believe both
- Do all modal claims represent 'modal reality'?

Free Choice Permission

Data from Natural Language

- (1)
- a. You may vote for Anderson or Brady
 - b. You may vote for Anderson
 - c. You may vote for Brady

Narrow Free Choice Permission (NFC)

- ① $\text{May}(A \vee B) \implies \text{May} A$
- ② $\text{May}(A \vee B) \implies \text{May} B$
 - '⟹': shorthand for 'implication', neutral between semantic consequence and pragmatic implicature

(von Wright 1968:4-5, Kamp 1973)

Wide Free Choice Permission

Data from Natural Language

- (2)
- a. You may vote for Anderson or you may vote for Brady
 - b. You may vote for Anderson
 - c. You may vote for Brady

Wide Free Choice Permission (WFC)

- ① $\text{May} A \vee \text{May} B \implies \text{May} A$
- ② $\text{May} A \vee \text{May} B \implies \text{May} B$
 - '⟹': shorthand for 'implication', neutral between semantic consequence and pragmatic implicature

(Guerts 2005; Simons 2005)

Free Choice and the Modal Orthodoxy

Intermediate Conclusion

- **Recall Fact 1:** neither NFC nor WFC are entailments on orthodox approach
- Zimmermann (2000): new semantics for modal sentences containing *or*
 - And predicts NFC as an implicature
- Guerts (2005), Simons (2005): new semantics for *or*, combined w/roughly orthodox modal semantics
 - Predicts NFC and WFC as entailments
 - Predicts $\text{May}(A \vee B)$ is equiv. to $\text{May} A \wedge \text{May} B$
 - Important advantages over Zimmermann (2000)
- Problem Solved?

Dual Prohibition

More Data

- (3)
- a. You may not vote for Anderson or Brady
 - b. You may not vote for Anderson
 - c. You may not vote for Brady

Dual Prohibition (DP)

- ① $\neg \text{May}(A \vee B) \implies \neg \text{May} A$
- ② $\neg \text{May}(A \vee B) \implies \neg \text{May} B$
 - '⟹': shorthand for 'implication', neutral between semantic consequence and pragmatic implicature

(Alonso-Ovalle 2006; Fox 2007)

Dual Prohibition

The Tension between Free Choice and Dual Prohibition

- DP is predicted by orthodox semantics
 - Seems to require that semantics!
- But predicting WFC and NFC required a slightly different orthodoxy (Guerts 2005; Simons 2005)
 - $\text{May}(A \vee B)$ as equiv. to $\text{May} A \wedge \text{May} B$
 - In which case $\neg \text{May}(A \vee B)$ only gives you $\neg \text{May} A \vee \neg \text{May} B$
- Birthed new attempts to treat NFC as implicatures
 - Combined radically new way of deriving implicatures (Fox 2007; Franke 2009; van Rooij 2010)
- And radically non-orthodox semantics (Barker 2010)

Resource Sensitivity

Permission as Partial, Discrete

- (4)
 - a. You may vote for Anderson or Brady
 - b. # You may vote for both Anderson and Brady
 - c. # You may not vote for both Anderson and Brady
- (5)
 - a. You may vote for Anderson or Brady
I did vote for Anderson
I may vote for Brady

Resource Sensitivity (RS)

- b.
 - ① $\text{May}(A \vee B) \not\Rightarrow \text{May}(A \wedge B), \neg \text{May}(A \wedge B)$
 - Not satisfied by some implicature approaches (As observed by Barker 2010)
 - ② $\text{May}(A \vee B), A \not\Rightarrow \text{May} B$

Out of the Rabbit Hole

Theoretical Wishlist

Wishlist

- ① Predict (Narrow/Wide) Free Choice Implications
- ② Predict Dual Prohibition Implications
- ③ Predict Resource Sensitivity Implications

Hunch

- Tension between 1 and 2 product of purely representational semantics for modals and connectives
- 3 suggests that deontic modals incrementally build and remove partial permissions

Deontic Discourse

And Motivation



Deontic Discourse

And Motivation



Deontic Discourse

How Does a Representational Modal Semantics Motivate?



Way Out?

From Accessibility to Preference

- Perhaps Modal Orthodoxy can be adapted
- Replace R with a preference relation $>$
 - $w_1 >_w w_2$: w_1 is strictly preferable to w_2 in w
- Why?
 - Preferences motivate choice
 - So if deontic modals constrain preferences, they constrain choices

How Preference Constrains Choice (One Possibility)

$Choice(>)$ is the set of w' s.t. there is no $w'' >_w w'$

- Non-dominance conception of rational choice

Adapting Standard Approach

Deontic Modality and Preference

Descriptivist Preference Semantics (Lewis, Hansson)

$[[\text{Must } \phi]]_> = \{w \mid \forall w_1, w_2: w_2 >_w w_1 \text{ if } w_2 \in [[\phi]]_> \ \& \ w_1 \notin [[\phi]]_>\}$

- $\text{Must } \phi$ is true in w just in case every ϕ -world is (strictly) preferred in w to every $\neg\phi$ -world
- Deontic propositions are **about** preferences
- Preferences are a feature of 'the world'
- **Problem:** It's not the world at large, but **agents in the world** who have preferences

Relativizing Orthodox Semantics

Deontic Modality and Preference

Subjectivist Preference Semantics

$[[\text{Must } \phi]]_{>A} = \{w \mid \forall w_1, w_2: w_2 >_{A(w)} w_1 \text{ if } w_2 \in [[\phi]]_{>A} \ \& \ w_1 \notin [[\phi]]_{>A}\}$

- **Must** ϕ is true in w just in case every ϕ -world is (strictly) preferred by A in w to every $\neg\phi$ -world
- Two variants: $A = \text{speaker}$; $A = \text{assessor}$
- Deontic propositions are **about** agents' preferences
- **Three Obstacles:**
 - 1 Makes disagreement difficult to explain (Moore 1912)
 - 2 Unclear how S informing H about S 's preferences constrains H 's preferences
 - 3 Unclear how S can inform H about H 's preferences

The Attraction of Expressivism

Deontic Claims Don't Describe Preferences, They Express Them

Expressivist Theses

- 1 **Communication:** "To express a state of mind is not to say that one is in it" (Gibbard 1986: 473).
 - 2 **Explanation:** "The semantic properties of sentences are to be explained, fundamentally, in terms of properties of the attitudes conventionally expressed by utterances of those sentences" (Silk 2014: §1).
 - 3 **Non-representation:** The states of mind expressed by sentences are non-representational, and, more specifically, motivational.
- Recall Fact 2: expressivist can't adopt *that* explanation of inconsistency

The Catch of Expressivism

What *is* Expressing a State of Mind without Describing It?

The Negation Problem

What states of mind do **Must A**, **Must $\neg A$** , and **\neg Must A** express such that jointly asserting/believing **Must A** and either **Must $\neg A$** or **\neg Must A** is dysfunctional?

- Gibbard (2003: 71-5) tries to live without a positive answer to this question
 - Consensus: you can't (Dreier 2006, 2009; Silk 2014)
- Silk (2014) and Yalcin (2012) try to adapt truth-conditional semantics to the task
- These attempts either lapse back in to descriptivism or fail to solve the problem fully (Starr 2016)

Alternative Model of Expressing Preferences

Building Partial Preference Relations

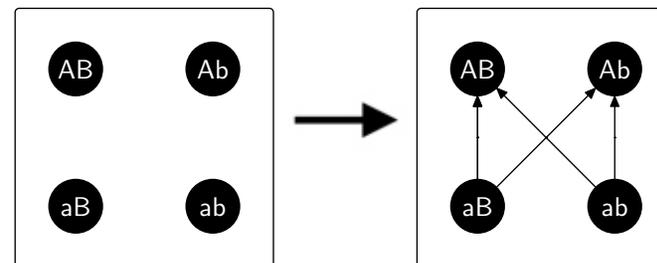


Figure: Preferences Expressed by **Must A**

- $\langle s_0, \emptyset \rangle \Rightarrow \langle s_0, \{\langle w_{AB}, w_{aB} \rangle, \langle w_{AB}, w_{ab} \rangle, \langle w_{Ab}, w_{aB} \rangle, \langle w_{Ab}, w_{ab} \rangle\} \rangle$

Alternative Model of Expressing Preferences

Building Partial Preference Relations

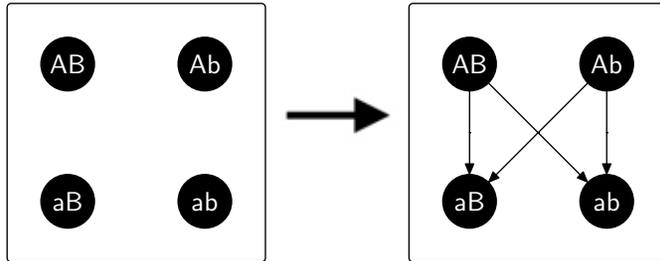


Figure: Preferences Expressed by Must $\neg A$

Alternative Model of Expressing Preferences

Explaining One Inconsistency (Dreier 2006; Starr 2013; Silk 2014)

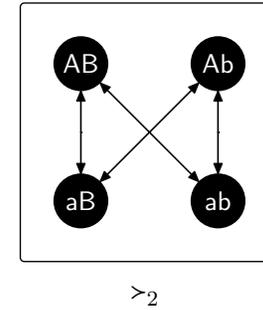


Figure: Preferences Expressed by Must $\neg A$

- Negation problem solved:
 - 1 Function of deontics is to motivate choice
 - 2 $Choice(s^{>_2}) = \emptyset$, i.e. no alternative can be chosen
 - 3 So dysfunctional to assert/believe

What It's Like



Alternative Model of Expressing Preferences

External Negation

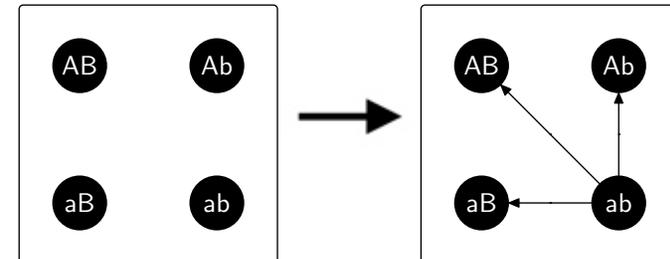
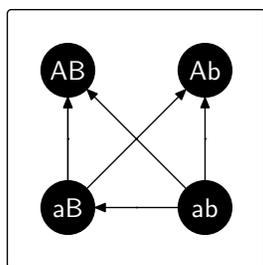


Figure: Preferences Expressed by \neg Must A?

- What semantics for \neg would deliver this?
- Not the orthodox one! (Frege 1923)

Alternative Model of Expressing Preferences

The Other Inconsistency, Not Explained



$>_3$

Figure: Preferences Expressed by Must A and \neg Must A

- Same explanation of inconsistency doesn't work!
- $Choice(s^{>_3}) = \{w_{AB}, w_{Ab}\}$

Basic Dynamic Semantics

Just Information (Veltman 1996)

Orthodox Picture

- Sentences represent by refer to regions of logical space
- Interpreters use utterances of them to shift to region of logical space within region referred to

Dynamic Semantics (Purely Informational Version)

- Sentences: recipes for moving around logical space
- Atomics: zoom in on a particular region
- Conjunction: apply each recipe in turn
- Disjunction: apply recipes separately; 'merge' results
- Negation: remove region scope would zoom to

The Dynamic Picture

In More Detail

The Basic Idea

Assign each ϕ a function $[\phi]$ encoding how it changes s :
 $s[\phi] = s'$ (I.e.: $[\phi](s) = s'$)

Dynamic Informational Semantics (Veltman 1996)

- 1 $s[A] = \{w \in s \mid w(A) = 1\}$
- 2 $s[\neg\phi] = s - s[\phi]$
- 3 $s[\phi \wedge \psi] = (s[\phi])[\psi]$
- 4 $s[\phi \vee \psi] = s[\phi] \cup s[\psi]$

A New Dynamic Picture

A Model of Competing Information and Preferences (Starr 2016)

States S

S is a set of substates.

Substates s^{\succsim}

A substate s^{\succsim} is a triple consisting of:

- 1 s an information state, set of worlds
- 2 $>$ a preference ordering on worlds
- 3 \sim an indifference ordering on worlds

Notation: any set-theoretic operations applied to s^{\succsim} are really applied to s , e.g. $s_0^{\succsim} \cap s_1^{\succsim} := (s_0 \cap s_1)^{\succsim}$

A New Dynamic Picture

The Connective Semantics

Dynamic Connective Semantics (Starr 2016)

- 1 $S[A]$: eliminate $\neg A$ -worlds from each substate
 - 2 $S[\neg\phi]$: for each substate,
 - a. Eliminate worlds that would survive update w/ ϕ
 - b. Remove preferences ϕ would add to empty ordering
 - 3 $S[\phi \wedge \psi] = (S[\phi])[\psi]$
 - 4 $S[\phi \vee \psi] = S[\phi] \cup S[\psi]$
- Disjunction will create substates for each disjunct

A Simple Case

Updating with May A

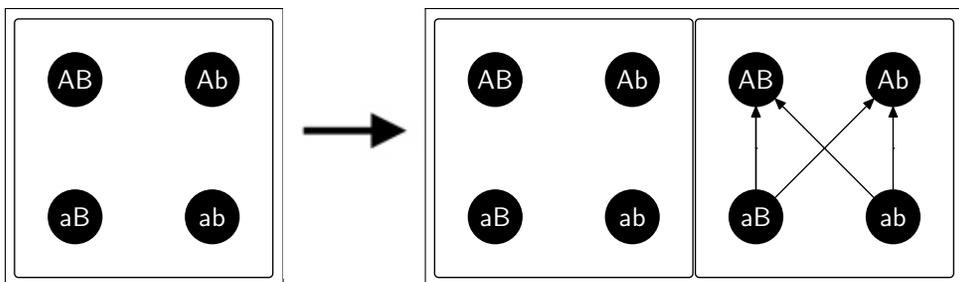


Figure: $\{s_0^\emptyset\}[\text{May } A]$

- $\{s_0^\emptyset\}[A] = \{\{w_{AB}, w_{Ab}\}^\emptyset\}$ and $\text{Choice}(s_0^\emptyset) = s_0$; test \checkmark
- Add a substate w/info s_0 and a preference only for those A-worlds over rest from s_0

A New Dynamic Picture

Deontic Semantics for May

May

- $S[\text{May } \phi]$: for each substate $s_i^{\tilde{z}^j}$ in S
- Take each $s_l^{\tilde{z}^k}$ in $\{s_i^{\tilde{z}^j}\}[\phi]$, and test whether the Choice worlds in $s_i^{\tilde{z}^j}$ are consistent with s_l
 - If passed, take each s_l and create a substate as follows and add it to S
 - Let $s = \cup(\{s_i \mid s_i^{\tilde{z}^j} \in S\})$ be the information and $>_{s_l}$ an ordering with preferences only for each s_l world over each $s - s_l$ world
 - If failed, return state $\{\emptyset^{>_{s_l}}\}$

A More Complex Case

Updating with May ($A \vee B$)

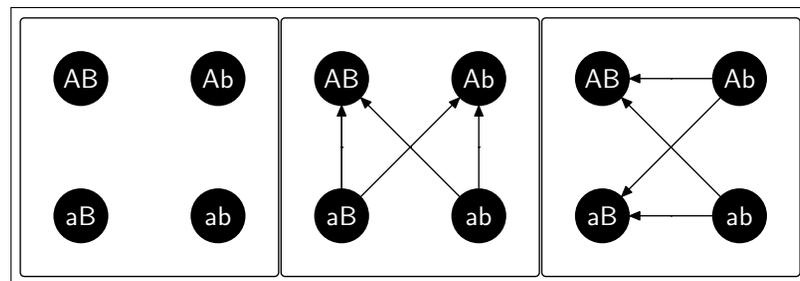


Figure: $\{s_0^\emptyset\}[\text{May } (A \vee B)]$

- $\{s_0^\emptyset\}[A \vee B] = \{\{w_{AB}, w_{Ab}\}^\emptyset, \{w_{AB}, w_{aB}\}^\emptyset\}$; tests \checkmark
- From first one, create new substate with preference for A-worlds and info s_0 ; same for second one and B-worlds
- Add each to $\{s_0^\emptyset\}$

Another Case

Updating with $\text{May } A \vee \text{May } B$

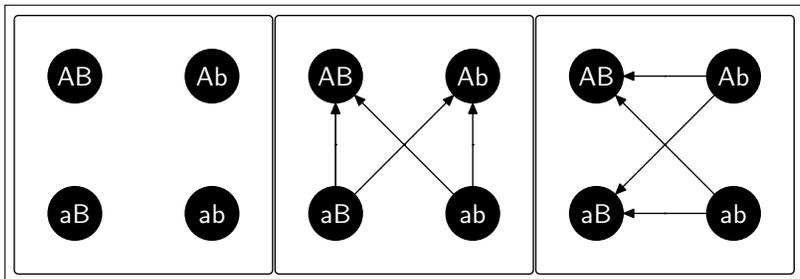


Figure: $\{s_0^\emptyset\}[\text{May } A \vee \text{May } B]$

- Just $\{s_0^\emptyset\}[\text{May } A] \cup \{s_0^\emptyset\}[\text{May } B]$

Another Case

Updating with $\neg \text{May } A$

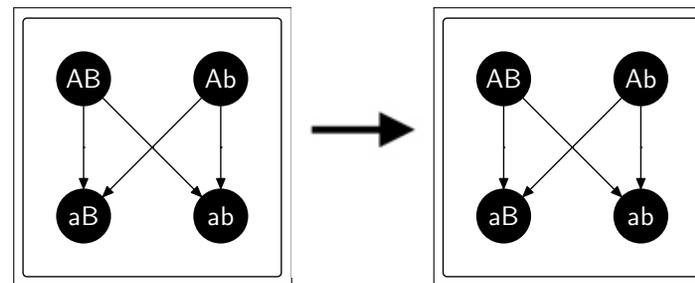


Figure: $\{s_0^{\neg A}\}[\neg \text{May } A]$

- Removes worlds that would survive update w/ $\text{May } A$
 - None would survive since test fails
- Removes any input preferences $\text{May } A$ would add to empty ordering; also idles, no A -worlds preferred in $\succeq_{\neg A}$

Another Case

Updating with $\neg \text{May } (A \vee B)$

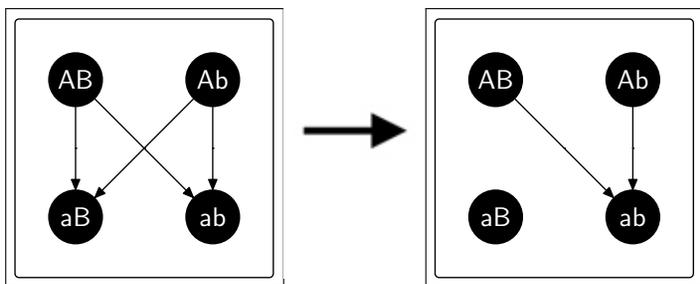


Figure: $\{s_0^{\neg a}\}[\neg \text{May } (A \vee B)]$

- Removes worlds that would survive update w/ $\text{May } (A \vee B)$, but none would
 - Test fails on A -worlds
- Removes any input preferences $\text{May } (A \vee B)$ would add to empty ordering; removes B -worlds preferred in \succeq_a

Updating with $\neg \text{May } (A \vee B)$

What Kind of State Does it Fit?

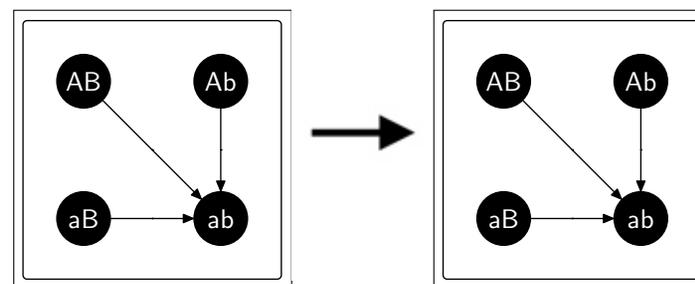


Figure: $\{s_0^{\neg ab}\}[\neg \text{May } (A \vee B)]$

- Removes worlds that would survive update w/ $\text{May } (A \vee B)$, but none would since both tests fail
- Removes any input preferences $\text{May } (A \vee B)$ would add to empty ordering; but there are none

Towards a Logic

Two Kinds of Support

Informational Support

$$S \models \phi \iff i_S = i_{S[\phi]}$$

- $i_S = \bigcup \{s \mid \exists \succ: s^\succ \in S\}$

Preferential Support

$$S \Vdash \phi \iff Pref_S = Pref_{S[\phi]}$$

- $Pref_S = \{\succ \mid \exists s \neq \emptyset: s^\succ \in S\}$

Towards a Logic

Two Kinds of Consequence

Informational Consequence

$$\phi_1, \dots, \phi_n \models \psi \iff \forall S: S[\phi_1] \dots [\phi_n] \models \psi$$

Preferential Consequence

$$\phi_1, \dots, \phi_n \Vdash \psi \iff \forall S: S[\phi_1] \dots [\phi_n] \Vdash \psi$$

- More simply: $\phi \Vdash \psi \iff \forall S: S[\phi] = S[\phi][\psi]$

Dual Prohibition is Valid

Updating with $\neg \text{May}(A \vee B)$ Preferentially Supports $\neg \text{May} A$ and $\neg \text{May} B$

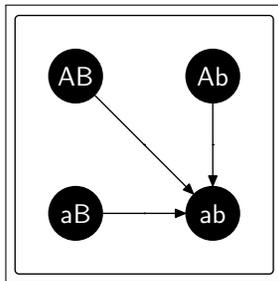


Figure: $\{s_0^{\succ ab}\}[\neg \text{May}(A \vee B)]$

- $\{s_0^{\succ ab}\}[\neg \text{May}(A \vee B)] = \{s_0^{\succ ab}\}[\neg \text{May}(A \vee B)][\neg \text{May} A]$
- $\{s_0^{\succ ab}\}[\neg \text{May}(A \vee B)] = \{s_0^{\succ ab}\}[\neg \text{May}(A \vee B)][\neg \text{May} B]$

Free Choice is Valid

Updating with $\text{May}(A \vee B)$ or $\text{May} A \vee \text{May} B$...

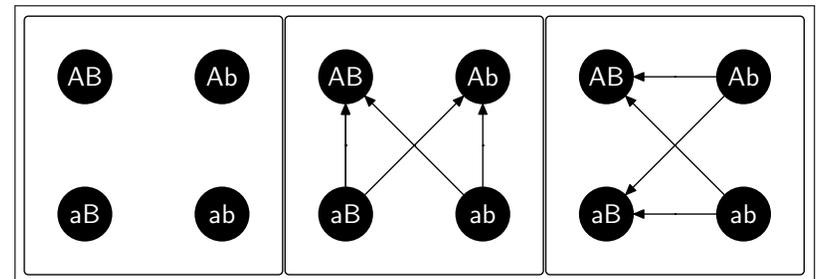


Figure: $\{s_0^\emptyset\}[\text{May}(A \vee B)]$

- $\{s_0^\emptyset\}[\text{May}(A \vee B)] = \{s_0^\emptyset\}[\text{May}(A \vee B)][\text{May} A]$
- And $\text{May} A \vee \text{May} B$ was the same as $\text{May}(A \vee B)$
- Both NFC and WFC valid!

Dynamic Expressive Deontic Logic

Interesting...

The Logic

- 1 (Narrow/Wide) Free Choice Valid
- 2 Dual Prohibition Valid
- 3 Resource Sensitivity Valid (not discussed)

Wishlist

- 1 Predict (Narrow/Wide) Free Choice Implications
- 2 Predict Dual Prohibition Implications
- 3 Predict Resource Sensitivity Implications

Explaining Inconsistency

From an Expressivist Perspective

Informational Consistency

ϕ_1, \dots, ϕ_n are informationally consistent

$$\iff \exists S: i_S \neq \emptyset \ \& \ S \models \phi_1, \dots, S \models \phi_n$$

Preferential Consistency

ϕ_1, \dots, ϕ_n are preferentially consistent

$$\iff \exists S: Ch(S) \neq \emptyset \ \& \ S \models \phi_1, \dots, S \models \phi_n$$

- Where $Ch(S) = \bigcup \{ Choice(s, z) \mid s^z \in S \}$
- Recall: if $Choice(s, z) = \emptyset$ then z is dysfunctional, i.e. fails to motivate a choice.
 - E.g. if z is cyclic over s , $Choice(s, z) = \emptyset$

Explaining Inconsistency

Preferential Inconsistency (Starr 2016)

- **Must** ϕ and **Must** $\neg\phi$ are preferentially inconsistent
 - Only irrational states support them, i.e. ones with cyclic preferences
- But **Must** ϕ and \neg **Must** ϕ are preferentially inconsistent in a different way — same for **May** ϕ and \neg **May** ϕ
 - If S contains preferences **Must** ϕ would add, \neg **Must** ϕ will remove them
 - If S doesn't contain any of the preferences \neg **Must** ϕ would remove, **Must** ϕ will add them back
- They are **dynamically** inconsistent: no single perspective can incorporate both simultaneously

Inconsistency, Expressivism and Negation

How Connected to Free Choice?

The Key Link

- To fully solve the negation problem, one needs an expressive account of negation
 - One where negation operates on preferences, rather than propositions
- Precisely that account of negation resolves the tension between Free Choice and Dual Prohibition
- When modals aren't involved connectives behave exactly like classical ones!

Inconsistency, Expressivism and Negation

How Connected to Free Choice?

Varieties of Expressivism

- 1 Global vs. Local Expressivism
 - Caveat about non-modal language, and other kinds of modality
- 2 Psychological vs. Social
 - Do deontic modals motivate because they activate preferences?
 - Or because agents are responsive to each other's commitments?
 - Room for a hybrid answer...

Thanks!

(Slides available at <http://williamstarr.net/research>)

Connective Semantics

In Full Detail

Connective Semantics

- 1 $S[\mathbf{p}] = \{\{w \in s \mid w(\mathbf{p}) = 1\}^{\succ} \mid s^{\succ} \in S\}$
- 2 $S[\neg\phi] = \{s^{\phi(\succ)} - \cup(\{s^{\succ}\}[\phi]) \mid s^{\succ} \in S\}$
 - $\phi^-(\succ) := \langle \succ - \{\langle w, w' \rangle \in \succ_i \mid \{W^{(\phi,=)}\}[\phi] = \{s_0^{\succ}, \dots, s_n^{\succ}\} \ \& \ 1 \leq i \leq m\}, \sim \rangle$
 - $\phi^-(\succ)$ removes from \succ any pairs that updating with ϕ would add to an empty ordering. For non-expressive discourse this will idle. If $\phi = \text{Must}(\psi)$ this will extract preferences for ψ -worlds over $\neg\psi$ -worlds.
- 3 $S[\phi \wedge \psi] = S[\phi][\psi]$
- 4 $S[\phi \vee \psi] = S[\phi] \cup S[\psi]$

Deontic Semantics for *Must*

In Full Detail

$$S[\text{Must}(\phi)] = \begin{cases} \{s^{\phi^+(\succ)} \mid s^{\succ} \in S\} & \text{if } \forall s^{\succ} \in S: \text{Choice}(s^{\phi^+(\succ)}) = s^{\succ} \\ \{\emptyset^{\phi^+(\succ)} \mid s^{\succ} \in S\} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

- $s_{\phi}^{\succ} := \cup(\{s^{\succ}\}[\phi])$
 - s_{ϕ}^{\succ} is the set of ϕ -worlds in s
- $\phi^+(\succ) := \langle \{\langle w, w' \rangle \in s \times s \mid w \succ w' \text{ or } w \in s_{\phi}^{\succ} \ \& \ w' \in s_{-\phi}^{\succ}\}, \sim \rangle$
 - $\phi^+(\succ)$ adds to \succ a preference for each $w \in s_{\phi}^{\succ}$ over each $w' \in s_{-\phi}^{\succ}$.

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