

Handout for Week 3

A Minimal, Two-Sorted Deontic, Bilateral Pragmatic Metavocabulary and the Role of Reason Relations in it

Outline:

Recap on pragmatic MVs.

Declarativism and claiming as downtown in discursive practice.

The *iron triangle* of discursiveness.

Asserting and truth.

Asserting and inference or reasoning: challenging and defending claims.

Harman: discerning reason relations.

MacFarlane: titrating the normative significance of reason relations.

Restall and Ripley bilateral normative pragmatics for implication.

The need for a *two-sorted* deontic pragmatic MV.

Precipitating reason relations out of reasoning practices.

The structure of reason relations: implication vs. incompatibility. The basic discursive bipolarity.

The structure of reason relations:

De jure symmetry of incompatibility. Simonelli's pragmatic Dutch Book argument.

Nonsymmetry of implication.

Iron triangle of discursiveness:

- **Declarative sentences, on the syntactic side,**
- **Propositional contents, on the semantic side, and**
- **Assertional speech acts, on the pragmatic side.**

Our explanatory *target* is the relations among these three aspects of *sapience* (vs. *sentience*).

Declarativism: The core speech act is *assertion* (claiming, stating) *that* things are thus-and-so.

Claim: Asserting and inferring are two sides of one coin.

Harman, G. (1984) "Logic and reasoning" *Synthese*, 60(1):107–127.

MacFarlane, John (2004) "In What Sense (If Any) is Logic Normative for Thought?"

MacFarlane: "[I]t turns out to be surprisingly hard to say how facts about the validity of inferences relate to norms for reasoning."

"We need a bridge principle of the following form:

BRIDGE PRINCIPLE: If $A, B \models C$, then (normative claim about believing A , B , and C).

The question is what the consequent should look like. We can generate a nice set of options by varying three parameters:

1. *Type of deontic operator*: Do facts about logical validity give rise to strict *obligations*, *permissions*, or (defeasible) *reasons* for belief?
2. *Polarity*: Are these obligations/permissions/reasons *to believe*, or merely *not to disbelieve*? [BB Note: in MacF's usage "disbelief" is not just not believing. It is *rejecting* or *denying*.]
3. *Scope of deontic operator*: These norms are in some sense conditional: what one ought/may/has reason to believe with respect to C depends somehow on what one believes, or ought/may/has reason to believe, with respect to A and B. Does the deontic operator govern
 - the *consequent* of the conditional $(P \rightarrow O : Q)$, or
 - both the antecedent and the consequent $(O : P \rightarrow O : Q)$, or
 - the whole conditional $(O : (P \rightarrow Q))$?

Table 1: If $A, B \models C$, then . . .

C Deontic operator embedded in consequent.

o Deontic operator is strict obligation (ought).

- Co+ if you believe A and you believe B, you ought to believe C.
- Co- if you believe A and you believe B, you ought not disbelieve C.

p Deontic operator is permission (may).

- Cp+ if you believe A and you believe B, you may believe C.
- Cp- if you believe A and you believe B, you are permitted not to disbelieve C.

r Deontic operator is "has (defeasible) reason for."

- Cr+ if you believe A and you believe B, you have reason to believe C.
- Cr- if you believe A and you believe B, you have reason not to disbelieve C.

B Deontic operator embedded in both antecedent and consequent.

o Deontic operator is strict obligation (ought).

- Bo+ if you ought to believe A and believe B, you ought to believe C.
- Bo- if you ought to believe A and believe B, you ought not disbelieve C.

p Deontic operator is permission (may).

- Bp+ if you may believe A and believe B, you may believe C.
- Bp- if you may believe A and believe B, you are permitted not to disbelieve C.

r Deontic operator is "has (defeasible) reason for."

- Br+ if you have reason to believe A and believe B, you have reason to believe C.
- Br- if you have reason to believe A and believe B, you have reason not to disbelieve C.

W Deontic operator scopes over whole whole conditional.

o Deontic operator is strict obligation (ought).

- Wo+ you ought to see to it that if you believe A and you believe B, you believe C.
- Wo- you ought to see to it that if you believe A and you believe B, you do not disbelieve C.

p Deontic operator is permission (may).

- Wp+ you may see to it that if you believe A and you believe B, you believe C.
- Wp- you may see to it that if you believe A and you believe B, you do not disbelieve C.

r Deontic operator is "has (defeasible) reason for."

- Wr+ you have reason to see to it that if you believe A and you believe B, you believe C.
- Wr- you have reason to see to it that if you believe A and you believe B, you do not disbelieve C.

-k (As suffix to one of the above:) antecedent of bridge principle is “If *you know that* $A, B \models C \dots$ ” Adding the “knowledge” condition *k* turns these 18 alternatives into 36.

MacFarlane’s considerations for assessing the different bridge principles are these:

1. EXCESSIVE DEMANDS. Wo^+ implies that you ought either to cease believing the axioms of Peano Arithmetic or come to believe all the theorems as well.
2. THE PARADOX OF THE PREFACE.
3. THE STRICTNESS TEST. Broome 2000 argues that “The relation between believing *p* and believing *q* [a logical consequence of *p*] is strict. If you believe *p* but not *q*, you are definitely not entirely as you ought to be” (85). The Wr ’s do not capture this strictness. They allow that one might believe *p* but not its logical consequence *q* and still be just as one ought to be.
[Skip (4), which is about knowledge.]
5. LOGICAL OBTUSENESS. Suppose someone believes *A* and believes *B* but just refuses to take a stand on their conjunction, $A \wedge B$. Intuitively, there is something wrong with her: she is being illogical.

MacFarlane’s conclusion:

“My own temptation is to go for a combination of Wo^- and Wr^+ .”

Wo^- : **You ought to see to it that if you believe *A* and you believe *B*, you do not disbelieve *C*.**

Wr^+ : **You have reason to see to it that if you believe *A* and you believe *B*, you believe *C*.**

The Restall-Ripley normative pragmatic reading of implication is:

1. Γ **implies** *A*, written “ $\Gamma \sim A$ ”, iff any position that includes accepting all of Γ and rejecting *A* is normatively incoherent or “out of bounds”—one cannot be entitled to such a constellation of commitments.

And similarly for incompatibility:

2. Γ is **incompatible** with *A*, written “ $\Gamma \# A$ ”, iff the position resulting from concomitant commitment to *accept* all of Γ and to *accept* *A* is normatively *incoherent* (“out of bounds”)—a constellation of commitments to which one *cannot* be entitled (entitlement to which is precluded).

In the normative pragmatic vocabulary put in play here, we can define the reason relations so:

Implication (IMP):

$\Gamma \sim A$ iff commitment to accept all of Γ precludes entitlement to *reject* *A*.

Incompatibility (INC):

$\Gamma \# A$ iff commitment to accept all of Γ precludes entitlement to *accept* *A*.

Pragmatically Implicit Acceptance (PIA):

Any set of commitments that *precludes entitlement to reject* *A* thereby *implicitly* commits one to *accept* *A*.

Pragmatically Implicit Rejection (PIR):

Any set of commitments that *precludes entitlement to accept A* thereby *implicitly* commits one to *reject A*.

Claim: These definitions satisfy MacFarlane's preferred flavors of normativity of reasons:

IMP (and INC) is a version of MacFarlane's Wo-, and

PIA (and PIR) is a version of MacFarlane's Wr+.

Finale: Simonelli's pragmatic argument for the necessary *symmetry* of *incompatibility* reason relations:

- a) Strategy: The basic dialogic significance of showing that someone's position is "out of bounds" or that they are not entitled to one of their commitments is presumably to oblige them to change those commitments. In the case we are addressing, this means withdrawing a commitment shown to be incompatible with others that interlocutor has undertaken. It turns out that nonsymmetric incompatibilities cannot serve this purpose.
- b) Suppose $A\#B$ but not $B\#A$: commitment to accept A precludes entitlement to accept B, but commitment to accept B does not preclude entitlement to accept A.
- c) Now consider an objection to a speaker S who is already committed to accept A and who then asserts B. It is pointed out that S's commitment to accept A is incompatible with commitment to accepting B, so that S cannot be entitled to that commitment. S might repair his normatively "out of bounds" situation in response to this objection by withdrawing the commitment to accept B. Or, S could hold onto the acceptance of B and withdraw commitment to accepting A. If S does either of these things, S will be back normatively "in bounds" as far as this incompatibility is concerned.
- d) But if S makes the repair by withdrawing commitment to accept A, in the case where A is incompatible with B but B is not incompatible with A, he can immediately reassert A, committing to accept it once again. Then it is not open to the objector to point to his acceptance of B as making this move illegitimate, a commitment to which S cannot be entitled. For that he is already committed to accept B is by hypothesis no objection to his acceptance of A. It does not preclude entitlement to that acceptance.
- e) Conclusion: The upshot is that nonsymmetric reason relations of incompatibility would be of no practical use in criticizing the commitments of any interlocutor. For any lack of entitlement they invoke can be repaired just by withdrawing the antecedent commitment and then endorsing it once again.