
THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

VOLUME CXV, NO. 10, OCTOBER 2018

ALTERNATIVES AND TRUTHMAKERS IN CONDITIONAL SEMANTICS*

My starting point is a classical puzzle about counterfactuals in natural language. Counterfactuals seem to satisfy three logical constraints that are individually plausible, but jointly inconsistent.

Constraint #1. Counterfactuals invalidate Antecedent Strengthening. That is, one cannot replace the clause appearing in a counterfactual antecedent with a stronger one and preserve truth value.

Failure of Antecedent Strengthening $\phi \Box \rightarrow \psi \not\equiv \phi^+ \Box \rightarrow \psi$
(with $\phi^+ \models \phi$, $\phi \not\models \phi^+$)

The classical argument for this constraint¹ is that discourses that exemplify violations of Antecedent Strengthening—so-called Sobel sequences—can be heard as consistent.

*For conversations and useful feedback, thanks to Ana Arregui, R. A. Briggs, Fabrizio Cariani, Ivano Ciardelli, Andreas Haida, Matthias Jenny, Chris Kennedy, Matt Mandelkern, Clemens Mayr, Dilip Ninan, Luís Alonso-Ovalle, Malte Willer, and audiences at the University of Edinburgh, the University of Leeds, the 2014 Philosophy of Language and Linguistics Conference in Dubrovnik, the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, the Linguistics and Philosophy Workshop at the University of Chicago, the Society for Exact Philosophy 2016 conference, the 2016 Pacific APA conference, and the semantics seminar at New York University. Luís Alonso-Ovalle deserves to be singled out for his outstanding feedback, both in qualitative and quantitative terms. The research leading to these results has received funding from the People Programme (Marie Curie Actions) of the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013/under Career Integration Grant agreement n. 334359 ("The Probabilistic Construal of Modality").

¹For classical arguments against Antecedent Strengthening, see Robert Stalnaker, "A Theory of Conditionals," in Nicholas Rescher, ed., *Studies in Logical Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968); David Lewis, *Counterfactuals* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); and David Lewis, "Counterfactuals and Comparative Possibility," *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, II, 4 (October 1973): 418–46.