Dynamic "Might" and Symmetric Disagreement

Abstract

According to *inconsistentism*, a disagrees with b in virtue of the fact that a believes some content that is inconsistent with the content believed by b. A consequence of adopting a classical notion of inconsistency together with inconsistentism, is that disagreement is symmetric. This is to say that a disagrees with b if and only if b disagrees with a. Lennertz 2019 develops an account of *asymmetric disagreement* wherein it is possible for a to disagree with b while b does not disagree with a. To do this, Lennertz 2019 maintains inconsistentism while crucially appealing to a nonclassical account of inconsistency often associated with the popular and influential test semantics for epistemic modals introduced in Veltman 1996. This account of inconsistency is colloquially called *dynamic inconsistency*, and one of its relevant features is that it is order sensitive. This is to say that a certain string of formula may be dynamically consistent, while a string of the same formula in a different order may not be. Accordingly, it is possible for b to have a belief that is inconsistent with what a believes while a's belief is consistent with b's.

   Lennertz 2019 provides some compelling reasons to think that there are indeed cases of asymmetric disagreement, but is careful to make explicit that these claims do not constitute a sustained argument for the presence of asymmetric disagreement. Rather, Lennertz 2019 attempts to show that such a position is plausible and perhaps desirable. Of course, defending the presence of asymmetric disagreements is at least a somewhat exotic position, with Lennertz himself admitting that many may find the presence of such disagreements "surprising." It may, perhaps pessimistically, be worried that such an account of disagreement simply falls out from the adoption of inconsistentism and the test semantics, and that asymmetric disagreement is merely a bullet that the proponent of these positions must bite. The present paper argues that this is not the case, and that adopting inconsistentism and the test semantics does not require commitment to cases of asymmetric disagreement. My argument appeals to yet another notion of inconsistency, colloquially called *incoherence*, that is commonly, albeit less famously, associated with the test semantics. I then demonstrate that adopting inconsistentism in terms of incoherence does not result in cases of asymmetric disagreement. I then argue that that such a position is not only possible, but preferable to the proposal defended in Lennertz 2019. Lastly, I argue that incoherence in fact does a great deal of explanatory work often attributed to dy-

namic inconsistency with respect to related puzzles involving epistemic modals that motivate the test semantics in the first place.