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Is it Possible to Change the Soliciting Powers of a Contradiction? On the Plurality of Logics, Inferential Affordances and Normative Abilities

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Abstract: This paper offers an affirmative answer to the question posed in its title: it is indeed possible to change the soliciting powers of a contradiction. The paper develops a functional and naturalistic account of logic grounded in neo-pragmatist inferentialism, logical expressivism, and the ecological theory of affordances. On this view, logical systems are not metaphysical structures that represent an abstract logical order, but normative techniques that make explicit, articulate, refine, and revise the norms of inferential practices. What matters for logic is not the categorical or metaphysical basis of these inferential practices, but the functional roles they play within reasoning. Central to the proposal is the notion of inferential affordances, understood as relational opportunities for reasoning that arise from the interaction between agents' normative abilities and their conceptual, social, and material environments. Inferential affordances are multiply realizable and may be grounded in different categorical bases, such as propositions, beliefs, information states, institutional rules, or data structures, without this diversity undermining their normative role. What unifies them is their function in enabling, constraining, or reshaping conceptual activities. Drawing on Gibsonian and post-Gibsonian theories of affordances (Gibson 1986; Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014; Vetter 2023), the paper extends the notion of affordance beyond perception to the domain of inference and normativity. Focusing on paraconsistent and paracomplete logics, the paper argues that conflict and vagueness are pervasive features of our everyday inferential niches. Contradictions need not be treated as inherently explosive or epistemically catastrophic. Their soliciting powers can be modulated and revised, depending on agents' normative abilities, training and the

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purposes of reasoning at stake. Logical plurality, on this account, reflects not arbitrariness or relativism, but the adaptive management of inferential affordances within dynamically evolving conceptual landscapes.

Introduction

The central claim of this paper is that it is indeed possible to change the soliciting powers of a contradiction. Contradictions do not possess a fixed or universal normative force determined by a single, privileged logical system. Rather, their capacity to solicit specific inferential responses depends on how agents are trained to engage with them within particular conceptual, social, and material environments. The meaning and normativity[1] embedded in formal systems arise not from independent representational structures, but from a broader landscape of inferential affordances, that is, features of our conceptual environment that invite, constrain, or guide normative responses from suitably trained agents. Whether a contradiction prompts immediate rejection, cautious suspension, revision of commitments, or further inquiry is not settled once and for all by logic itself, but by historically

[1] I will not enter into the debate about whether logic is normative (Harman, 1986; Russell, 2020) about whether logic *is* normative. From an inferentialist and expressivist standpoint, following Brandom's logical expressivism and semantic inferentialism, this assumption is not controversial but analytic: if logic belongs to the family of conceptual practices, its normativity follows trivially. That broader debate deserves a separate treatment and lies beyond the scope of the present paper.

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and practically embedded norms governing inferential activity within distinct inferential niches[2].

The aim of this paper is not to defend our neo-pragmatist take as a comprehensive metaphysical doctrine, nor to convince an antagonist to abandon alternative philosophical commitments. Instead, the goal is to explore how a broadly neo-pragmatist framework, one that emphasizes practice, embodiment, and norm-governed activity, provides a productive philosophical standpoint for understanding the revision and plurality of logics. The proposal developed here is guided by a set of interconnected commitments, for instance: logical diversity rather than logical monism; the revisability and plasticity of logical systems; the dependence of logical

[2] The term "niche" originates from the Latin *nidus*, meaning "nest", that is, the shelter built to inhabit and protect life. The central idea remains: an ecological niche is the set of functional relations between an organism and its environment, relations that the organism both shapes and is shaped by. This reciprocity was explored by Richard Lewontin in *The Triple Helix: Gene, Organism, Environment* (2001), showing that organisms not only adapt to their environment but also actively construct the worlds they inhabit. In the context of this article, we extend the biological notion to the domain of inferential and conceptual practices. Analogously, just as an animal constructs the nest that sustains it, human communities construct conceptual landscapes, such as networks of inferences, rules, and values, in which they dwell. There is, therefore, a constitutive circularity: we create the structures that form us, and they, in turn, directly and indirectly shape our ways of thinking and acting. In Wittgensteinian terms, each language game is a conceptual niche; in ecological terms, it is a normative environment for survival. To build a niche, whether biological or inferential, is to construct a habitable world, a shelter, a home, and at the same time to be inhabited by it.

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change and revision on agents' abilities; the possibility of naturalizing logic within a coherent natural history; the continuity of our normative capacities with those of other non-human species; the rejection of platonism and transcendentalism as foundations of logic; and finally, a rejection of strong Carnapian conventionalism. Logical systems are not arbitrary, even if they are contingent.

We focus in particular on paraconsistent and paracomplete logics. The phenomena of conflict and vagueness are not marginal, but pervasive features of our everyday conceptual and inferential practices. They shape what we will call inferential niches, structured environments in which agents routinely reason under conditions of inconsistency, indeterminacy, informational overload, or practical constraint. Any adequate philosophy of logic must account for how rational agents successfully navigate such conditions without assuming that classical consistency and bivalence are always normatively mandatory.

This paper situates itself within a neo-pragmatist and anti-Cartesian tradition that rejects the image of the mind as an inner theater of representations (Gibson 1986; Varela et al. 1991; Hutto and Myin 2013, 2017; Di Paolo et al. 2018; Heras-Escribano 2019; Brandom 1994, 2000; Noë 2004). In this view, reasoning is not the manipulation of symbols by isolated individuals, but an embodied and socially embedded capacity for engaging in norm-governed practices (Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014; Chemero 2009; Dutilh-Novaes 2020; Rolla 2019). Rational activity unfolds through dynamic interactions among agents and environments, and its normativity is essentially public and interactive[3].

[3] Ideally, this conception could be extended beyond the human domain, allowing for a naturalistic continuity between our inferential capacities and the adaptive behaviors of other

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From this perspective, logical monism appears deeply implausible. The logical monist, who believes there is a single legitimate logic of which all others are defective variants, resembles a coach who, out of devotion to football, turns the game into a dogma. Such a coach insists that only football counts as a real sport, dismissing basketball, volleyball, or athletics as inferior or degenerate forms of games. This devotion ultimately impoverishes the very practice it seeks to preserve. What sustains the vitality of practices is precisely the plurality of games, rules, and environments in which skills can be cultivated and tested. Classical logic, like football, is a remarkable and powerful practice. It offers discipline, elegance, and coordination. Yet rational life would be severely impoverished if it were the only game we learned to play. Paraconsistent, relevant, trivalent, or substructural logics are other games of reason, each adapted to different pressures, goals, and environments. A pedagogy of rationality, like a pedagogy of the body, should cultivate curiosity, flexibility, and creativity rather than merely obedience.

A central feature of the neo-pragmatist account developed here is its emphasis on normativity understood in an inferential sense. Normativity is not moral or legalistic, but practical and conceptual. To grasp a concept is to *know how* to use it, to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate applications, and to undertake commitments and entitlements within a network of material inferences (Brandom 1994, 2000, 2008; Peregrin 2014; Schroeder-Heister 2024). Logic is

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species. While the present discussion focuses on human agents and formal logicians, it keeps open the possibility of such integration for future work.

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one of the practices through which such norms are made explicit, regimented, refined, and revised. Rationality, in this view, is not a static possession of abstract concepts but an ongoing, revisable achievement enacted within shared practices[4].

From our neo-pragmatist standpoint, rational agents are not defined by what they possess internally, such as representations or truth-tracking faculties, but by what

[4] Although we draw on Brandom's logical expressivism and semantic inferentialism in developing the concepts of "inferential niches" and "inferential affordances," we reject the anthropocentrism and speciesism implicit in Brandomian philosophy, particularly in the notion of the game of giving and asking for reasons and in the central role assigned to the human act of assertion. We nonetheless maintain that a variety of non-human creatures possess abilities, albeit rudimentary, to express and infer shared social commitments, even in the absence of logical vocabulary. Shared social and normative commitments in non-human animals can be observed in the social relations of primates. For example, baboons form groups of approximately 50 to 150 individuals, organized in hierarchical structures. These groups may be based on matrilineal or patrilineal lineages, with females or males occupying central roles, respectively. Within the group, there are distinct social ranks, with individuals occupying higher or lower positions, and ranks may change over time; nevertheless, all perform specific functions essential for group cohesion and social dynamics. Alpha males or females play a pivotal role in maintaining the cohesion and organization of the group. Moreover, the grunts produced by baboons can be classified as alarm calls (for predators), threat calls, or reconciliation calls, and baboons are capable of recognizing and distinguishing the function of each type of vocalization (Cheney & Seyfarth, 2008; Seyfarth & Cheney, 2017; Fischer, 2017).

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they are able to do within structured environments. They participate in rule-governed practices, articulate norms, and revise those norms in light of changing circumstances. The expressivist capacity to make norms explicit presupposes enabling abilities that are not themselves fully normative, including sensorimotor, attentional, and affective capacities. These pre-normative abilities, which are continuous with those found in non-human animals, provide the background conditions for norm-governed activity.

At this point, a methodological clarification is crucial. This paper does not aim to provide a metaphysics of affordances. Whether inferential affordances are ultimately realized in propositions, beliefs, proofs, facts, information states, institutional rules, or data structures is not decisive for our argument. What matters are their functional roles and normative uses within reasoning. The account developed here is explicitly functionalist. Inferential affordances are theoretical tools for describing how agents engage with, manage, and reshape inferential possibilities in shared conceptual practice. In our view, inferential affordances are multiply realizable and can be grounded in different categorical bases depending on the purposes and contexts of reasoning. The same functional role may be played by different structures in different settings, and different roles may justify restricting or permitting different inferential transitions and rules[5]. This functionalist stance allows us

[5] In this paper, logic is understood as a public and normative practice concerned with articulating and assessing inferential norms. Logical systems are formal artifacts that codify, regiment, and sometimes revise such norms. Inference refers to norm-governed transitions between commitments, whether explicit or implicit. Reasoning, by contrast, is the situated cognitive, affective, and social activity through which agents

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to explain how the normative force of a contradiction can change without appealing to metaphysical reengineering.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 1 develops an inferentialist and expressivist framework in which logical vocabulary functions to articulate the norms implicit in our inferential practices. Section 2 advances an affordance-based account of logical plurality, explaining how different logical systems afford distinct modes of reasoning adapted to different inferential niches. Section 3 integrates these insights into a unified account of inferential affordances, soliciting powers, and normative abilities, showing how contradictions can acquire different normative roles through training and practice. The overarching conclusion is that logical diversity is not a theoretical failure, but a natural consequence of our embodied, historical, and practice-sensitive rational life.

Section 1. Inferentialism and Expressivism in the Revision of Logic

This section develops the inferentialist and expressivist framework that underpins the proposal of this paper and explores its consequences for the revision and plurality of logics. Throughout, we work within a Brandom-inspired inferentialist tradition, according to which logic is not a neutral or purely formal calculus but a normative technique for making explicit, articulating

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actually navigate inferential possibilities under practical constraints. Logical systems do not dictate real-time reasoning, but provide publicly assessable standards for guiding and evaluating it

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and managing rules grounded in social and conceptual practices (Brandom 1994, 2000, 2008; Peregrin 2014; Silva 2020b). Logical systems are understood as tools for making explicit, stabilizing, refining and organizing inferential norms that already operate implicitly within our reasoning practices.

At the outset, an important methodological clarification is in order. I will not enter into the debate concerning whether logic is normative, as framed by authors such as Harman (1986) and Russell (2020). From the inferentialist and expressivist standpoint adopted here, following Brandom's semantic inferentialism and logical expressivism, the normativity of logic is not a controversial substantive thesis but an analytic consequence of treating logic as a conceptual practice. If logic belongs to the family of practices that articulate rules governing correct and incorrect moves in using concepts, then its normativity follows trivially[6].

This clarification helps to dissolve a recurrent source of misunderstanding in debates about the normativity of logic. A legitimate concern raised by critics such as Russell (2020) is how a normative conception of logic can accommodate views according to which logic is not normative for reasoning. The present account addresses this concern by drawing a principled distinction between logic and reasoning. Logic is understood here as a public and socially instituted practice of formulating, evaluating, and systematizing inferential norms, typically through the construction and assessment of formal systems. Reasoning, by contrast, is the cognitive,

[6] The broader debate about whether logical principles are normative for reasoning in the sense of directly guiding belief revision deserves a separate and careful treatment, which lies beyond the scope of the present paper.

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affective, and social activity performed by agents under a variety of practical constraints, including time pressure, incomplete or conflicting information, limited resources, and institutional demands.

In line with Harman's influential distinction, deductive logic and reasoning are different enterprises, and logical principles are not to be understood as direct rules for belief revision or real-time cognition (Harman 1984, 1986, p. 107). Nothing in the present proposal challenges this point. Logical systems do not dictate how agents must reason in concrete situations. Instead, they function as publicly assessable normative frameworks that can guide, evaluate, and criticize reasoning without being reducible to it. The relation between logic and reasoning is mediated by embodied and normative abilities, shaped through a long and complex history of interaction among agents and between agents and their environments. These historically developed abilities enable agents to perceive, take up, and regulate inferential affordances. While this history is contingent and could have developed otherwise, it is not arbitrary: it is constrained by material, social, and institutional pressures that stabilize certain inferential practices as more reliable, effective, or appropriate than others.

Within semantic inferentialism, the content of a concept is determined by its role in material inferences, that is, by what its use licenses, precludes, and presupposes (Brandom 1994, 2000, 2008). Logical vocabulary does not represent independent metaphysical structures but serves to make these inferential roles explicit. Logic, in this view, is not primarily about describing abstract forms or delineating a priori categories of thought, but about articulating and systematizing the norms that govern actual reasoning practices (Peregrin and Svoboda 2017). Conceptual mastery is therefore a form of practical know-how, acquired through participation in social practices, rather

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than through prior grasp of explicit rules (Dutilh-Novaes 2013, 2020). Agents typically learn to distinguish correct from incorrect uses of concepts well before they can articulate the rules that govern them.

Logical expressivism builds directly on this insight. According to expressivist accounts, logical vocabulary functions to elevate implicit practical mastery into explicit normative articulation (Brandom 1994; Peregrin, 2014; Peregrin and Svoboda 2017). Logical operators, rules, and systems do not represent facts or states of affairs; rather, they express inferential commitments that are already operative within discourse and embedded in our language games. Their role is to make explicit the normative structures that govern the use of concepts in practice.

A mundane but instructive illustration can be found in the use of deictics in Brazilian Portuguese. Native speakers competently employ "aí" and "lá" in accordance with subtle pragmatic conventions, where "aí" typically refers to the interlocutor's location and "lá" to a third, distal location, without ever having been taught these rules explicitly. In doing so, speakers exhibit what may be called semantic consciousness, understood as skillful and norm-sensitive use, without semantic self-consciousness, understood as explicit awareness of the rules that govern such use. Logical vocabulary functions in an analogous way. Logicians can construct logical systems that extract, regiment, idealize, and refine linguistic practices, sometimes in ways that diverge from the patterns implicit in everyday language use, for example, in how Portuguese deictics are ordinarily deployed. Crucially, such regimentation proceeds by bootstrapping on the meaning and normativity already present in current conceptual and inferential practices, rather than by imposing an external representational structure upon them.

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On a logical expressivist account, logical rules and vocabulary are not representational devices but tools for making explicit the normative structure of reasoning and description (Brandom 1994; Peregrin, 2014). Different logical systems should therefore be motivated by specific material inferential practices rather than by attempts to mirror an antecedent formal structure allegedly hidden in natural language (Peregrin and Svoboda 2017). Logical systems codify public commitments, idealize inferential patterns and stabilize conceptual practices. Their intelligibility depends on their use within rule-governed interaction. A "logic" detached from practice, such as Prior's connective tonk, illustrates the point: syntactic well-formedness without a coherent inferential role yields normative incoherence. To grasp logical vocabulary is to understand how it functions within different language games, not to relate it to extra-linguistic entities.

Because we adopt an inferentialist picture in which logic is one conceptual practice among others, the claim that logic is normative is analytic within this framework. Brandom's inferentialist intuition can be seen as a generalization of Gentzen's proof-theoretic insight (Schroeder-Heister 2024), according to which introduction and elimination rules codify the use of logical connectives rather than their reference to metaphysical objects. Logical practice involves the cultivation of normative abilities, including the capacity to recognize, follow, challenge, and revise rules and concepts. These abilities are embodied, socially acquired, and historically situated. Logic is therefore not merely a matter of formal manipulation but a practical competence in navigating a great diversity of rule-governed activities.

While aligning ourselves with Brandom's inferentialism, we also maintain a critical distance from aspects of his expressivism. The notion of a "space of

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reasons" remains difficult to naturalize, as it tends to rely on a residual culture–nature dualism and an intellectualist conception of rationality. Brandom's framework is also strongly anthropocentric, centered on assertion as the downtown of language, and thus sets an excessively high cognitive threshold for participation in rational practice. Pre-linguistic children and some non-human animals display some conceptual abilities that such a framework struggles to accommodate (Pauen 2002, 2008; Kingo 2008; Thompson and Oden 2000; Pepperberg 2002; Zentall et al. 2008; De Waal 2022). Moreover, Brandom's picture of a unified normative community can appear politically sanitized, neglecting the normtive fractures, power asymmetries, and injustices that structure real discursive spaces and forms of life (Praxedes and Silva 2025; Santana and Silva 2025). Our aim is to preserve the inferentialist core while developing a more functional, pluralistic, and naturalizable account of reasoning.

Our functional perspective also dissolves the illusion of a single true logic. Within a neo-pragmatist framework, asking for the uniquely correct conjunction or conditional is a philosophical mistake. There are multiple conjunctive, disjunctive, and conditional practices in our language games that can be regimented in different ways. Elevating one formally elegant system to the status of the sole canon or standard of rationality is no more justified than claiming there is a single true way of playing football or a uniquely correct version of chess. Yet logical practices, like games, are not unconstrained. We do not play football with a smoke ball, nor chess without memory of past moves. Stability of objects, surfaces, and shared expectations, for example, are required for play to be possible at all. Similarly, reasoning depends on stable inferential patterns, embodied skills, and institutional norms that anchor our practices. Objectivity here is not a matter of

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representational correspondence but of constraint-governed reliability shaped by material, affective, habitual, and institutional pressures.

To counter intellectualism and anthropocentrism, we propose thinking in terms of conceptual or inferential niches. These are structured zones of practice in which agents learn to track and respond to afforded inferential moves under local constraints. Inferential niches vary across domains, institutions, and even species (Sayfarth et al. 1980; Lewontin 2001; Odling-Smee and Laland 2011; Cheney and Sayfarth 2008; Sayfarth and Cheney 2017; Fischer 2017; De Waal 2007, 2022; Chittka 2022). This framework accommodates abstract affordances, including rules, games, and institutions, because it adopts a functionalist stance. Whether an inferential affordance in our conceptual niches is borne by proofs, beliefs, propositions, facts, concepts, information, bytes, or data structures is irrelevant for present purposes. What matters are the functions and normative roles these structures play within reasoning. As neopragmatists, we are not committed to providing a metaphysical inventory of bearers. Functional and normative explanation suffices.

The historical emergence of nonclassical logics illustrates this functional inferentialism. Brouwer's intuitionistic rejection of the law of excluded middle, Priest's defense of true contradictions (2014), and da Costa's formalization of inconsistency (1974) differ in method and philosophical motivation but share a sensitivity to the normative pressures generated by distinct inferential practices. Logical plurality mirrors the plurality of inferential norms operative in human reasoning. Rules constrain individual freedom while simultaneously constituting a shared horizon of rationality. Diversity across domains is not a threat to logic but evidence of its dynamic and context-sensitive character. Our neo-pragmatism does not deny reference

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or representation altogether. It denies their centrality. A concept is as objective as the rule that governs its use. Objectivity arises from the stability of rules under material, affective, habitual, and institutional constraints, not from access to metaphysical reference (Silva 2026).

Determining a canon of deduction should therefore not be mistaken for identifying the one true logic, nor reduced to arbitrary choice. Formal systems are abstractions that express and systematize historically developed inferential commitments arising from material interaction and normative exchange. Logical vocabulary makes explicit the rules implicit in our conceptual practices (Brandom 1994, 2000, 2008). These inferential relations can be revised and transformed as the practices that sustain them evolve. A logic wholly detached from use would lack both meaning and normative force, which is precisely the moral of tonk.

Inferential abilities grounded in attention, discrimination, and sensitivity to environmental pressures are acquired skills cultivated through social training among both human and some complex non-human species. Developmental psychology shows that one-year-old infants are already capable, in rudimentary ways, of conceptual discrimination and inference, for example, distinguishing between real and virtual objects (Kingo 2008, p. 6). Research in animal cognition also documents some inferential capacities. The chimpanzee Ayumu, for instance, demonstrated remarkable numerical and memory abilities, accurately identifying numerical sequences under extreme temporal constraints (De Waal 2022, p. 174). The African grey parrot Alex learned to distinguish concepts such as “same” and “different” and “smaller” and “larger,” responding appropriately to verbal queries about objects’ colors, shapes, and materials (Pepperberg 2002, p. 60).

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Inferential abilities are neither innate faculties nor purely internal processes[7]. Logical competence arises from embodied engagement and participation in shared practices (Dutilh-Novaes 2020; Silva 2026). This practice-based perspective frees us from both mentalism and Platonism. Logic is neither the unfolding of private cognitive mechanisms nor the discovery of timeless truths, but the articulation of communal norms.

[7] Although we draw on Brandom's logical expressivism and semantic inferentialism in developing the concepts of "inferential niches" and "inferential affordances," we reject the anthropocentrism and speciesism implicit in Brandomian philosophy, particularly in the notion of the game of giving and asking for reasons and in the central role assigned to the human act of assertion. We nonetheless maintain that a variety of non-human creatures possess abilities—albeit rudimentary—to express and infer shared social commitments, even in the absence of logical vocabulary. Shared social and normative commitments in non-human animals can be observed in the social relations of primates. For example, baboons form groups of approximately 50 to 150 individuals, organized in hierarchical structures. These groups may be based on matrilineal or patrilineal lineages, with females or males occupying central roles, respectively. Within the group, there are distinct social ranks, with individuals occupying higher or lower positions, and ranks may change over time; nevertheless, all perform specific functions essential for group cohesion and social dynamics. Alpha males or females play a pivotal role in maintaining the cohesion and organization of the group. Moreover, the grunts produced by baboons can be classified as alarm calls (for predators), threat calls, or reconciliation calls, and baboons are capable of recognizing and distinguishing the function of each type of vocalization (Cheney & Seyfarth, 2008; Seyfarth & Cheney, 2017; Fischer, 2017).

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From this standpoint, the diversity of logical systems reflects the diversity of inferential affordances available to agents embedded in different contexts. Classical reasoning is powerful but not universally applicable. It can be restricted, adapted, or restructured under pressures of, for instance, vagueness, inconsistency, limited resources, or temporal uncertainty. Vague predicates motivate the restriction of excluded middle, yielding paracomplete logics. Inconsistent but non-trivial information motivates restricting explosion, yielding paraconsistent logics. Demands of relevance motivate constraints on material implication. Resource-bounded reasoning motivates substructural systems. Reasoning about open futures challenges bivalence. These developments are not arbitrary deviations but responses to objective pressures arising from our material, conceptual, social, and epistemic environments. Logicians extract, idealize, formalize and refine these patterns, designing systems that articulate distinct inferential landscapes. Persistent disagreement among trained logicians reflects not confusion but the richness of our normative life, inviting different pragmatist methodologies, such as metalinguistic negotiation and reflective equilibrium, for instance, to clarify the practical commitments and theoretical virtues at stake (Silva and Ferreira 2022; Silva 2020a, 2023).

Logic, in this inferentialist and expressivist perspective, is a public, norm-articulating practice. Its plurality is not a failure of reason but an index of its vitality. Logical systems arise from the effort to manage our inferential and conceptual lives. Their success depends not on mirroring metaphysical structures but on fulfilling the functional and normative roles that enable reasoning within our conceptual and inferential niches.

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Section 2. A Philosophy of Affordances for the Plurality of Logics

In our neo-pragmatist account of logical plurality, the normative structure of inference is not exhausted by social or institutional features alone. While much of our inferential activity is indeed shaped by participation in shared practices, this fact by itself does not explain stability, correctness, or objective constraint. If normativity were grounded solely in intersubjective agreement, the view would risk collapsing into an unpalatable form of conceptual relativism and antirealism. To avoid this outcome, inferential abilities must be constrained not only normatively but also objectively, in a material sense broadly understood. An inference, conceived here as a kind of cognitive action, presupposes at least two conditions: first, a capacity or ability on the part of the agent; and second, environmental affordances or material and institutional conditions that make the inference feasible, appropriate, or salient by soliciting it.

Following Vetter (2023), an inferential ability can be understood as a stable form of practical know-how, namely, the capacity to competently navigate norm-governed transitions between informational commitments. Such abilities consist not in the mechanical extraction of information, but in the reliable uptake of inferential relations within a shared practice, under the constraints and affordances of a given environment. Ability alone, however, is insufficient. It must be coupled with the dispositions and structures of the environment that invite or resist particular inferential moves. These structures include not only physical arrangements, but also institutional frameworks, affective patterns, habitual regularities, and other material constraints in the extended sense adopted here (Frijda 1986, 2007; Carvalho 2020, 2022; Friston

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2018, 2022; Silva 2026). Inferential normativity, on this view, emerges from the interaction between what agents are able to do and what their environments make possible, solicit or demand.

This raises a methodologically delicate question: how can we account for objectivity in inferential practice without reverting to traditional representational semantics, such as truth-makers or state-of-affairs ontologies? Within the inferentialist framework adopted in this paper, objectivity is not conceived as an external tribunal that stands over practice. Instead, it arises from material constraints that guide, enable, limit, and solicit reasoning. These constraints may be physical, social, affective, habitual, conceptual or institutional. While we do not deny that reference and representation can play roles in particular explanatory contexts, we deny that they are explanatorily central for understanding logical normativity.

To articulate this alternative conception of objectivity, we draw on ecological psychology and enactivism. Gibson (1986) famously defined affordances as "what the environment offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, for good or ill" (p. 127). Affordances are possibilities for action relative to an agent's abilities. They are neither purely environmental properties nor subjective projections, but relational features that emerge from agent–environment coupling. When extended to inference, inferential affordances should be taken as relational features of social, linguistic, material, or informational contexts that solicit engagement and make certain inferences possible, salient, or appropriate for agents with the relevant conceptual skills. They are not mere causal triggers. They are normative invitations that become effective only through trained know-how in diverse material pressures and constraints.

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As Rietveld and Kiverstein (2014) emphasize, taking affordances to depend on the abilities available within a form of life opens new avenues for understanding higher cognition in non-intellectualist terms:

> Once, however, we take seriously the idea that affordances are dependent on the abilities available in a form of life, we believe this opens up new possibilities for tackling the problem that "higher" cognition has presented to embodied cognitive science so far. It raises the possibility of accounting for "higher" cognitive capacities in terms of skillful activities in practices and in terms of the material resources exploited in those practices (p. 346).

This insight motivates a functionalist stance toward affordances. The metaphysical basis of an affordance is not important for logic. Whether a contradiction is realized as a relation among beliefs, facts, propositions, pieces of information, rules, database entries, bits, or bytes is not strictly relevant for the present discussion. What matters is the function of incompatibility and what follows from what that the structure plays within reasoning, independently of its bearer, physical realization, or concrete instantiation. Understanding inferential affordances therefore requires attention not only to formal rules but also to the material, social and pragmatic conditions under which reasoning occurs, including contexts in which non-classical reasoning is normatively appropriate.

Crucially, affordances are multiply realizable. As Vetter (2023) notes, "like the corresponding dispositions and abilities, [affordances] can have many different categorical base properties, so that information about the affordance... does not specify which, if any, categorical

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basis is instantiated" (p. 47). This flexibility applies directly to inferential affordances. A written proof, a conversation, a dataset, a memory system, an abstract proof or an institutional procedure can each instantiate the same inferential affordance, inviting a reasoner to exercise her normative skills in different ways. The inferential landscape is therefore not only conceptually diverse but also ontologically heterogeneous, consisting of a network of affordances distributed across material, social, and epistemic structures.

This ecological orientation dovetails naturally with niche construction theory (Laland, Odling-Smee, and Feldman 2000; Odling-Smee and Laland 2011). Organisms both shape and are shaped by their environments through reciprocal processes. Analogously, agents co-construct inferential niches: historically layered contexts of concepts, norms, constraints, and possibilities for reasoning. These niches are not static. They are revisable and situated, reflecting social sedimentation, institutional scaffolding, material limitations, ecological pressures and affective orientations that influence what appears inferentially available, obligatory, permissible, adequate or problematic. From this perspective, logical and normative capacities are not uniquely human abstractions but evolved extensions of broader abilities of situated responsiveness to norms.

Where the classical metaphor of logical space suggests a timeless and uniform lattice of possibilities, the notions of conceptual and inferential landscapes offer a more dynamic (and organic) picture. These landscapes are objective but alive. They are historically embedded, uneven, entangled and open to transformation. As Vetter (2018) summarizes the ecological insight, "the object of perception... is accordingly not that which is projected by light rays onto our retina but that which is specified to active beings through their moving in the world, and

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that which is relevant to their actions. We see not just shapes and colours; we... directly pick up information about our environment in all its complexity, including what it affords us" (p. 1). By analogy, inference involves the normative uptake of inferential affordances, structured possibilities for reasoning that arise within the conceptual niches articulated by our language games.

Because affordances are relational and modal, they function as invitations or solicitations. As Vetter (2018) emphasizes, "When a chair affords sitting on, it is possible to sit on that chair; when a cliff affords falling-off, it is possible to fall off that cliff..." (p. 3). Mutatis mutandis, when a premise affords a conclusion, that conclusion must be inferable for an appropriately trained agent in a suitable context. At the same time, not everything is possible. Rietveld and Kiverstein (2014), revisiting Gibson's example of the cliff, stress that there are always constraints imposed by the material layout of the environment and by the practices and abilities of agents. "There are also certain things the cliff does not afford" (p. 344). These resistances shape our conceptual landscapes and inferential niches[8] as well. Paradoxes,

[8] In this paper, conceptual landscape and inferential niche are closely related but not equivalent notions. The conceptual landscape refers to the relatively broad, historically sedimented network of concepts, inferential relations, norms, and meanings that structure a form of life. It encompasses the repertoire of concepts available within a linguistic and social community, together with the material inferences, incompatibilities, and normative expectations that articulate their use across domains of practice. The conceptual landscape is thus a shared, public, and diachronic structure, shaped by collective history, institutional stabilization, and long-term patterns of use. By contrast, an inferential niche denotes a more local, situated, and task-sensitive configuration within that broader landscape. Inferential niches are structured

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impossibilities, and contradictions can be understood as cognitive cliffs, points at which our inferential abilities encounter conceptual resistance. Recognizing this anchors objectivity without platonism. Rules have authority because they remain stable and functional under material, institutional, and historical pressures, not because they mirror a metaphysical logical order.

This framework also clarifies by holding inferential affordances as objective relational opportunities for reasoning. Inferential niches and conceptual landscapes constrain which opportunities genuinely solicit uptake. Affordances are opportunities under discipline. The conceptual landscape renders some moves salient, others licensed but costly, and still others defective or unintelligible. When inference strays too far from the niche that gives it sense, dysfunction ensues, just as

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environments in which specific agents or communities operate, characterized by particular constraints, goals, resources, and pressures that make some inferential moves salient, appropriate, or obligatory, while rendering others marginal, costly, or unintelligible. Inferential niches are dynamically constructed and maintained through practice, training, and interaction with material, social, and institutional affordances. While multiple niches may coexist within the same conceptual landscape, they may license different inferential norms and logical regimentation without thereby fragmenting the shared conceptual background. The distinction mirrors that between an ecological environment and an ecological niche: the former provides the overall field of available structures and possibilities, while the latter captures how particular agents, with particular abilities, inhabit and exploit selected regions of that field. In this sense, inferential niches explain local variability and logical diversity, whereas the conceptual landscape explains continuity, mutual intelligibility, and the possibility of rational disagreement across contexts.

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misuse of a physical affordance can endanger an organism. If vervet monkeys misinterpret alarm calls, that is, if the signal becomes inferentially unintelligible or incorrect, they become more vulnerable to predators and may die (Seyfarth et al. 1980). Our approach is perspectival but not relativist. Perspective determines which solicitations a skilled agent can perceive, while objectivity is carried by the material, institutional, and historical pressures that stabilize better and worse ways of taking them up.

Against intellectualism and anthropocentrism, this ecological account supports the existence of abstract affordances. Rules, games, institutions, and concepts can function as genuine affordance-bearers with genuine soliciting powers. Social affordances, such as spatial layouts that afford discussion or gestures that afford trust or caution, generalize naturally to inferential affordances, such as contexts that afford proof, revision, or suspension of judgment. Logic thus appears as a technology of affordances: a repertoire of techniques for highlighting, suppressing, or redesigning which inferential invitations become salient within the conceptual niches articulated by our language games (Silva 2026).

This perspective brings us back to the plurality of logics. Two families are especially central to our analysis of conceptual life. Paracomplete logics weaken or reject the law of excluded middle in response to vagueness, indeterminacy, or open-ended modalities. Paraconsistent logics block explosion, allowing reasoning to proceed in the presence of conflict without triviality (da Costa 1974; Carnielli and Rodrigues 2019; Priest 2014). On the neo-pragmatist view defended here, these systems are not deviations from rationality but principled articulations of how reasoning adapts to ecological and normative pressures.

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Taken together, these considerations yield a unified philosophical picture. Affordances are relational possibilities arising in concrete agent–environment couplings. They are multiply realizable (Vetter 2023), norm-governed, and materially constrained (Gibson 1986; Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014). Inferential affordances are their conceptual counterparts: opportunities to apply, restrict, or revise rules that become salient within our conceptual landscapes and inferential niches. Logical systems do not float free of these affordances. They express, organize, idealize, regiments and regulate when and how such possibilities for action are appropriately taken up. This perspective explains logical diversity by showing how different systems highlight different regions of our conceptual landscape, while preserving objectivity through the shared resistances and solicitations of our forms of life.

Section 3. On Normative Abilities and Soliciting Powers of Inferential Affordances

The aim of this section is to integrate the ecological and neopragmatist conception of reasoning developed so far with the inferentialist and expressivist framework presented earlier, in order to show how logic can be understood as a normative practice shaped by inferential affordances, their soliciting powers, and agents' normative abilities. Throughout the discussion, we retain a functionalist stance. Our concern is not with the metaphysics of affordances, but with their conceptual and normative roles within reasoning. Whether an affordance is instantiated in facts, propositions, beliefs, data structures, proofs, or institutional relations is immaterial for present purposes. What matters is the function it plays in structuring possibilities for normative engagement. Logic, accordingly, is not a

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detached calculus of abstract forms, but a practical and revisable technique for navigating the landscape of inferential affordances made available by our conceptual practices and environments.

A concern in introducing the notion of inferential affordances is whether it makes sense to speak of perceiving inferential properties such as negation, incompatibility, or modality, and, if so, what kinds of properties these might be. Within the inferentialist semantics adopted here, negation is not a metaphysical feature attached to facts or propositions. It is a formal and linguistic device used to make explicit relations of material incompatibility within a network of commitments. As an example, to assert "not p" is to mark that p is incompatible with other claims one is prepared to endorse. Negation does not describe an intrinsic property of the world; it articulates a role within a conceptual landscape or inferential niche. From an expressivist standpoint, logical operators function to make explicit inferential and normative relations that are already implicit in practice (Brandom 1994, 2000, 2008). Their purpose is not representational, but practical. Logic operates at a meta-level by articulating our capacity to navigate incompatibility, possibility, and commitment within a shared normative space.

Within Brandom's inferentialist and expressivist framework, necessity is conceived normatively rather than alethically: it concerns the preservation of commitments within a practice of giving and asking for reasons, not the preservation of truth across possible worlds. On this view, to say that a conclusion follows necessarily from certain premises is to say that an agent who undertakes the relevant commitments is normatively obliged to acknowledge the conclusion, on pain of incoherence. Modal vocabulary thus functions expressively, making explicit which inferential

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transitions are non-optional given a set of commitments (Brandom 1994, 2000, 2008).

Our ecological and affordance-based reinterpretation retains this normative core but shifts its grounding away from an overly intellectualized conception of the space of reasons. Instead of locating necessity primarily in discursive scorekeeping practices centered on assertion, we propose understanding normative necessity as emerging from agents' trained responsiveness to inferential affordances within concrete conceptual niches. On this view, necessity is not first encountered as an abstract obligation to preserve commitments, but as a perceived constraint on what can or cannot be done, inferred, or maintained within a given inferential landscape.

In ecological terms, necessity corresponds to the experienced non-optional character of certain inferential moves relative to a form of life. Just as a cliff does not merely afford falling but constrains locomotion, certain inferential configurations constrain reasoning by making some responses unavailable or dysfunctional. These constraints are not metaphysical necessities, but objective normative pressures arising from the interaction between agents' abilities and the structured environments in which reasoning takes place. What is preserved in necessary inference, therefore, is not truth but practical coherence within a niche of action and reasoning.

This reframing also addresses a limitation of Brandom's intellectualism. As we discussed, by tying necessity too closely to explicit discursive commitments and assertion-centered practices, Brandom's account risks excluding pre-linguistic agents, non-human animals, and non-assertoric forms of norm-sensitive cognition. An affordance-based approach allows us to see normative necessity as continuous with more basic forms of ecological attunement: agents can be sensitive

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to inferential impossibility, incompatibility, or inevitability without possessing explicit modal concepts or participating in sophisticated linguistic practices.

Accordingly, necessity is neither a metaphysical feature of the world nor a purely conventional rule of discourse. It is an emergent normative property of inferential affordances that solicit and constrain reasoning in context. It remains objective insofar as these affordances are stabilized by material, social, institutional, and historical constraints, but it is revisable insofar as inferential niches themselves evolve. This ecological conception preserves the expressivist insight that modality is not representational, while embedding it in a broader, naturalizable account of normativity that avoids intellectualism and remains continuous with natural history.

A central motivation for the ecological and functionalist orientation adopted in this paper is the recognition that our inferential practices are historically and biologically contingent. If our natural history had been different, it is highly plausible that our forms of rationality, conceptual repertoires, and logical practices would also be different. Rationality, in this view, is not the unfolding of an invariant logical essence, but the stabilization of norm-sensitive abilities within a particular agent–environment couplings[9]. Consider a

[9] The Vervet monkeys (Chlorocebus pygerythrus) emit three distinct alarm calls, each associated with a specific predator: leopards, snakes, and diurnal eagles. Notably, although baboons occasionally prey on vervet monkey infants, vervets have not developed a specific alarm call for these predators. This observation highlights that the acquisition of inferential abilities, even if rudimentary, plays a crucial role in ensuring the survival of organisms (Seyfarth et al, 1980; Cheney & Seyfarth, 2008; Seyfarth, 2017; Fischer, 2017, Silva, 2026).

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counterfactual scenario in which agents evolved in a predominantly liquid or gaseous environment, or in a world where objects lacked persistence, stability, or temporal duration. In such environments, many of the material regularities that currently scaffold our conceptual practices, such as object permanence, stable identity over time, discrete boundaries, or reliable re-identification, would be absent or radically altered. Under those conditions, core features of our conceptual landscape, such as re-identification, negation, conjunction, or even the distinction between object and process, would likely be regimented differently, if they emerged at all. Language games, conceptual use, inferential habits, and norms of reasoning would be shaped by different affordances and constraints, yielding alternative inferential niches.

This ecological contingency strongly suggests that logical systems are not universal mirrors of rational structure, but formal articulations of how reasoning adapts to the affordances of particular environments. If our conceptual niches were structured by fluidity, volatility, or radical impermanence, logical systems privileging persistence, identity, bivalence, or monotonicity might be poorly adapted, while alternative systems, perhaps emphasizing gradience, temporal instability, or tolerance of contradiction, would be normatively superior. Logical diversity, on this account, reflects not theoretical permissiveness but ecological adaptability.

Importantly, this does not entail relativism. Although inferential practices are contingent, they are not arbitrary. They are constrained by the material, social, and historical pressures that shape successful action and coordination within a form of life. What counts as a good inference is relative to an inferential niche, but niches themselves are stabilized by objective constraints. Logical plasticity, therefore, is bounded: not every

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system is viable in every environment, but different environments can sustain different logics.

This perspective also highlights the role of normative abilities in logical practice. Logicians, understood as agents with specialized normative skills, can exploit the plasticity of inferential affordances to design, refine, or explore alternative logical systems suited to different conceptual landscapes. The diversity of logics is thus not merely a theoretical possibility but an expression of our capacity to reconfigure reasoning practices in response to new environments, technologies, epistemic pressures, or forms of life. Logical systems become tools for navigating possible worlds of practice, rather than static representations of a single rational order.

Both vagueness and conflict are pervasive features of our inferential niches. Paracomplete logics address vagueness by weakening or rejecting the law of excluded middle, while paraconsistent logics manage conflict by blocking the principle of explosion. These systems do not introduce alien principles into reasoning. Rather, they formalize patterns that already occur in our discursive lives. Not every proposition must be determinately true or false, and not every contradiction renders reasoning trivial in the diversity of our language games. These logical frameworks reflect the functional diversity of inferential affordances available to agents embedded in complex and evolving practices. The same contradiction may afford retraction for one agent, cautious revision for another, and exploratory reasoning for a third, depending on training, context, commitments and goals. Such differences do not amount to relativism. They show instead how inferential abilities are disciplined by shared practices and objectively constrained by material, institutional, and historical factors. Again: our inferential affordances are contingent, but not arbitrary.

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To clarify this point, it is useful to distinguish between conflicting affordances and conflict between affordances. Conflicting affordances arise when an environment presents an agent with mutually incompatible possibilities for action, for example when a passage appears both accessible and blocked. Conflict between affordances arises within a conceptual or inferential landscape when an agent must choose between incompatible patterns of reasoning. This distinction highlights the active character of reasoning. Agents are not passive recipients of inferential cues, but active resolvers of normative tension. The existence of incompatible inferential paths shows that our conceptual landscape need not be classically structured by strict bivalence, consistency, or monotonicity. Ordinary experience confirms this. When confronted with contradictory instructions, evidence, or norms, agents must interpret, weigh, and decide how to proceed under uncertainty. Reasoning in such contexts exemplifies inferential agency emerging from competing normative and objective pressures. This fact motivates the philosophical need for flexible and context-sensitive logics, including paraconsistent and paracomplete systems, rather than exclusive allegiance to classical frameworks.

Because affordances are relational and modal, they can also be abstract. Rules, institutions, games, and conceptual patterns afford specific ways of reasoning and acting. Just as a physical chair affords sitting, an institutional rule affords application, compliance, or challenge. Abstract structures possess soliciting powers. They invite, solicit, constrain, or repel certain forms of engagement. A university affords research, teaching, and accreditation. A law affords interpretation and enforcement. A theorem affords proof, generalization, or refutation. The metaphysical bearer of these affordances is secondary. What matters is their role in

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shaping the normative possibilities agents can recognize and enact. This commitment is neopragmatist and functionalist. Philosophical explanation should focus on what structures do within practices, not on their ultimate ontological constitution.

As Vetter (2023) emphasizes, affordances are not subjective impressions or abstract potentialities. They are grounded in the relational structure between agent and world. "Affordances will generally have a basis both in the intrinsic properties of the object that has them and in the relation in which it stands to an agent" (p. 47). This interactive model applies equally to structured practices such as chess or soccer, where the range of possible moves depends not only on explicit rules but also on material and normative constraints. Extended to logic, inferential affordances can be understood as objective relational opportunities for reasoning that emerge within conceptual and discursive practices. They provide skilled reasoners with ways to respond normatively by allowing, constraining, or revising inferential rules in response to contextual demands such as inconsistency, vagueness, or temporal uncertainty. The affordance is objective because it depends on shared practices and constraints. It is normative because it calls for assessment and disciplined uptake.

Unlike simple physical affordances, inferential affordances presuppose an additional normative layer. They are embedded within backgrounds of shared expectations, responsibilities, and norms that determine what counts as correct reasoning. We do not infer in isolation, but within communities of practice where rules are taught, contested, and revised. Following Rietveld and Kiverstein (2014), there is no reason to limit affordances to perceptual or motor domains. "The variety of affordances available to us as humans is as rich and varied as the abilities and sociocultural practices we are socialized into as human beings through processes of

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enskillment" (p. 343). Even highly abstract reasoning can therefore be understood as a form of skilled engagement with structured conceptual environments, including languages, institutions, and symbolic systems. Logic appears, from this perspective, as an ecology of inferential and conceptual affordances, an evolving set of invitations and constraints that guide rational behavior.

From an ecological standpoint, perception itself is normatively structured. Agents do not merely perceive colors and shapes, but also impossibilities, incompatibilities, and dangers. A weak branch appears unclimbable. An icy surface appears unsafe. These are direct perceptions of modal structure. Similarly, agents may perceive that an argument is flawed, that two rules conflict, or that an inference is precarious. This phenomenology of modality links logical normativity to embodied engagement. Logical sensitivity is an extension of perceptual attunement. To reason well is to be responsive to the structured affordances of one's environment. Logic can thus be naturalized as a refinement of capacities that enable animals to track incompatibility and opportunity in their ecological niches. Birds perceive perching possibilities. Primates perceive threat or retreat affordances. Humans, through language, perceive that a claim affords acceptance, rejection, or revision. The difference is one of articulation, specialization and complexity, not of kind.

Affordances are always coupled with soliciting powers, that is, with the degree to which they draw attention and motivate action. As Rietveld and Kiverstein (2014, p. 342) note, among the many affordances available to an agent in a given situation, most are irrelevant. Those that solicit action are the ones that matter relative to the agent's concerns. The same holds for inferential contexts. Among countless logical possibilities, only some solicit reasoning, depending on training, interest, and situational orientation. This

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ecological perspective helps explain why logic is not a neutral calculus. It is a dynamically soliciting structure that engages agents differently. Social position, education, and affective disposition influence which inferential moves appear natural, urgent, or obligatory. Feminist work by McClelland and Sliwa (2023) illustrates this dynamic. Just as domestic objects may solicit cleaning more strongly for women under gendered norms, inferential environments may solicit different reasoning paths for differently situated agents. Inferential affordances are objective features of practice, but their soliciting powers are modulated by perspective.

This distinction clarifies how training transforms what draws our inferential attention. Classical education trains agents to treat contradiction as a signal of error. Paraconsistent education retrains perception so that contradiction becomes a cue for cautious analysis rather than immediate rejection. The soliciting power of contradiction is therefore not fixed. It is shaped by normative conditioning and inferential practice. In traditional reasoning, contradiction typically triggers elimination. In alternative frameworks, it may prompt reformulation, investigation, or strategic containment. As Dreyfus and Kelly (2007) emphasize, solicitation depends on readiness for action shaped by history and concern. Changing logical education changes what calls to us in reasoning and in structuring of logical systems.

Affordances and solicitations thus extend fully into the conceptual domain. Inferential environments can be designed, much like physical spaces, to elicit particular forms of engagement. Logical systems themselves are such designs. They are normative technologies that highlight, suppress, idealize, refine or reorganize inferential affordances. To learn a logic is to acquire a trained sensitivity to its solicitations. The classical logician perceives contradiction as a red flag. The paraconsistent logician perceives it as an opportunity for

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controlled exploration. Both are trained forms of responsiveness. Logical education is therefore not merely the transmission of rules, but the cultivation of normative sensibility. Diversity of logical systems follows naturally. Different contexts justify and require different inferential attunements.

A contradiction, on this account, is not a metaphysical event but an invitation to engage or to avoid. Its normative role depends on how it is situated within an inferential niche. Classical logic, committed to explosion, frames contradiction as a terminal sign. Paraconsistent systems such as those developed by da Costa (1974) or in the Logics of Formal Inconsistency (Carnielli and Rodrigues 2019) reframe contradiction as a local signal, an epistemic alert rather than a global catastrophe. Dialetheist approaches (Priest 2014) go further by treating some contradictions as genuinely true within constrained domains. Each framework trains a different normative stance toward incompatibility. None should be regarded as uniquely correct. Each articulates a mode of reasoning suited to specific conceptual landscape and inferential niches.

Logical systems should therefore be understood not as mirrors of a pre-given rational order, but as designs of inferential niches. They organize which affordances are salient and which solicitations are strong. To change the soliciting powers of a contradiction is to redesign the inferential environment so that agents perceive contradictions differently. Such redesign is pedagogical and normative. It aims to cultivate agents capable of engaging with inconsistency and vagueness without collapse. Logic education, on this view, forms agents whose rational capacities are flexible, historically informed, and responsive to complexity.

From this perspective, logic engages a field of inferential affordances and solicitations that structure conceptual practice and our language games. Its

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objectivity does not consist in correspondence with metaphysical facts, but in the stability of rules and constraints under material, institutional, environmental and historical pressure. A concept is as objective as the rule governing its use remains stable across these pressures. Logical normativity arises from this stability. As Rietveld and Kiverstein (2014, p. 347) observe, openness to affordances consists in readiness to act appropriately in concrete situations, a readiness acquired through training and skill. Rationality itself is such readiness. Contradiction, seen through this lens, marks not the failure of reason but one of its most revealing tests. To change the soliciting powers of a contradiction is to alter how we inhabit the inferential world, expanding what can meaningfully solicit thought and, in doing so, enlarging the field of reason itself.

Conclusion

This paper has offered an affirmative answer to the question posed in its title. It is indeed possible to change the soliciting powers of a contradiction. The argument was developed within a functional and naturalistic perspective of logic grounded in a neo-pragmatist synthesis of inferentialism, expressivism, and the ecological theory of affordances. From this perspective, the metaphysical basis of inferential affordances is not decisive for the philosophy of logic. Whether a contradiction is instantiated as a relation among beliefs, facts, propositions, information, institutional rules, or data structures is immaterial. What matters is the functional role of incompatibility in structuring possibilities for normative engagement and regulating how agents respond to the pressures of reasoning in their collective language games.

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Affordances, as Vetter (2023) emphasizes, are multiply realizable: "like the corresponding dispositions and abilities, [they] can have many different categorical base properties, so that information about the affordance... does not specify which, if any, categorical basis is instantiated" (p. 47). This insight applies directly to inferential affordances. The same normative function may be realized in written proofs, discursive exchanges, information, institutional practices, or formal systems. Logic, accordingly, is not a mirror of an abstract logical order, but an explicit articulation of how agents, situated in concrete environments, navigate, revise, and inhabit their inferential landscapes.

The aim of this paper was not to defend neo-pragmatism as a comprehensive metaphysical doctrine, but to employ its functional insights to reconceive logic as a normative, revisable practice. This reconception rests on several commitments: logical diversity rather than monism; the revisability and plasticity of inferential norms; the dependence of logic on agents' abilities rather than metaphysical structures; the naturalization of logic within evolutionary and cultural history; continuity with non-human cognition; and the rejection of both platonism and strong conventionalism. Together, these commitments support a view of reasoning as situated, embodied, and historically modulated by the interaction between agents' skills and the solicitations of their conceptual environments.

Seen through an ecological lens, contemporary contexts intensify the relevance of this view. In environments saturated with conflicting information, contradiction is no longer exceptional. The ability to reason in its presence becomes an adaptive skill. Here the notion of soliciting powers is crucial. A contradiction's inferential role is not fixed or inherently destructive. Through training, education, and conceptual design, contradictions can be made to solicit exploration,

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revision, or restraint rather than immediate rejection. Paraconsistent and paracomplete frameworks exemplify how inferential perception itself can be retrained, transforming what contradictions invite reasoners to do.

This insight resonates with Wittgenstein's remark, reported by Waismann (1979, p. 139), that one might someday "pride [oneself] on having emancipated [oneself] from consistency." Within the framework developed here, this is not a celebration of irrationality but an acknowledgment of logical adaptability. Contradictions can function as productive affordances rather than signs of collapse. Logical education, on this view, should cultivate normative sensitivity: the ability to discern when a contradiction signals error, when it demands revision, and when it opens new inferential paths.

Logic thus appears not as a disembodied calculus, but as a living, plural, and revisable practice embedded in an ecology of agency. Its objectivity lies not in correspondence with metaphysical forms, but in the stability of inferential norms under material, social, and institutional constraints. By shifting attention from metaphysical foundations to functional roles, and from representation to participation, we recover a conception of rationality continuous with life itself: adaptive, embodied, historically situated, and open to transformation. Contradiction, once feared as the enemy of reason, emerges instead as one of its most revealing allies, a sign that our conceptual landscapes remain dynamic and that new inferential paths can always be carved within them.

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