

Practical Conditionals

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This is a very drafty draft, so please don't cite it.

Introduction

Sometimes we are under conditional requirements to do things. We can express them like this:

If p , then R φ .

The 'R' is for 'requirement'. We often say 'ought' instead; at least, in this paper, I shall assume that what we say when we say that we ought to do something is the same as saying that we are *required* to do it. This may be false.¹ But here I will assume it is true. If I'm wrong then what I am saying applies to conditional requirements, but not to conditional *oughts*.

I am most interested in one particular sort of conditional requirement. It is a form that has as its antecedent a goal-directed intentional state of the agent. Some people think this state is a desire, some think it is an intention, some think it is a preference. (I am in the last camp.) For familiarity and convenience I'll speak of desire, though this may not be the most plausible. The kind of requirement has to do with means/ends rationality. An example:

If you want to avoid chocolate, then you ought to avoid the gianduia.

I will call this type of conditional requirement an *instrumental requirement*. One might adjust this requirement to add to the antecedent that you *believe* that the only way to avoid chocolate is to avoid gianduia. If you like(!), imagine that this belief is tacitly included.

On one popular account, the instrumental requirement is misleadingly stated. This account says that although the word 'ought' is in the consequent, and appears to have scope over the consequent only, that appearance is misleading. The scope of the requirement is wide. The scope is over the whole conditional, and not over the consequence alone. John Broome offers such an account. And he adds that the conditional is a material conditional. I will call this account 'the wide-scope account' and its advocates 'wide-scopers'.

I think this account is wrong. I'm not confident about what the correct account is, but I think there are good reasons for thinking that 'wide-scoping' the requirement is a mistake.

Let's first see why wide-scoping seems plausible. It seems plausible mainly because the conditional requirements often do not seem to be detachable. Take Steve Darwall's example.

If you want to kill Jones in a particularly violent way you ought to use a cleaver.²

This may strike us as true. But suppose Jill does want to kill Jones particularly violent way. We are reluctant then to assert the consequent (addressing Jill). To say the least. A good explanation is that the logical form is as follows:

$\mathcal{O}(\text{You want to kill your victim in a particularly violent way} \supset \text{you use a cleaver.})$

(I'll use ' \supset ' to express the material conditional.) If you do not satisfy this requirement then you are incoherent and therefore irrational. And you ought not to be irrational.³ But it doesn't follow that you ought to use a cleaver, even if you do want to kill most violently, because it's quite likely that you ought to stop wanting to kill in a violent way. (Not to belabor the obvious, but you ought to stop wanting to kill your victim, period.)

There is also a similar example from the realm of theoretic reasoning.

If you believe that no whales are mammals and that Nanu is a whale, then you ought to believe that Nanu is not a mammal.

which according to wide-scopers has this form:

$\mathcal{O}(\text{you believe that no whales are mammals and that Nanu is a whale} \supset \text{you believe that Nanu is not a mammal})$

In each case the result of detaching seems implausible, even though the premises are plausible. It's not true that you ought to believe Nanu isn't a mammal, for you ought to know that whales are mammals. Even if you believe that no whales are mammals, you oughtn't. You can't make it true that you ought to believe something silly, just by irresponsibly believing something else silly.

But conditionals are for detachment. The point of a conditional is to get us from the antecedent, when we are in possession of it, to the consequent. So if detachment doesn't work, that's a sure sign that something is wrong. The statement we had in mind must not have the logical form that it appears to have.

Even when the scope of the operator is made explicitly wide, putting the embedded sentence in the form of a conditional, even a material conditional, may make the consequent feel detachable. Indeed, it would be detachable if a certain rule were valid (in the sense of necessarily truth preserving). The rule⁴ says that when you ought to do one of two things, you ought to do each.

$\mathcal{O}(p \vee q) / \mathcal{O}(q)$

But this rule is not plausible. In chess, when you are in check, you are required to move your king, interpose, or capture the attacking piece. It does not follow that you are required to move your king.⁵ You aren't.

So wide-scoping does block the Ugly Modus Ponens inferences (UMPs). It does so by giving to the English sentences a logical form that they do not wear on their sleeves. Since they are not really conditionals at all (but *oughts about* conditionals, so to speak), they are not ripe for detachment.

One might ask, how is it that people *say* the English sentence with the wrong logical form? How is it that the wide-scope *ought* proposition is expressed by the consequent-

scope *ought* sentence? An initially plausible answer is that English is generally rigged in this misleading way. In section I I'll explain briefly the reason for thinking so: there is a similar phenomenon in the domain of alethic modals. Then I'll argue against wide-scoping.

My argument will be linguistic: I'll suggest reasons for doubting that the wide-scope logical form could represent *what we mean when we use sentences of instrumental requirement*. This won't directly challenge a view about what instrumental requirements there are, but it does provide an indirect challenge. My evidence has to do with parallel constructions. If (deontic and alethic) modals of requirement take wide scope in instrumental conditionals, that has implications for how modals of permission should work; but they don't work that way. Nor do other modals, nor do practical conditionals other than the instrumental kind have logical forms with wide scope modals. Wide-scoping doesn't generalize in any of the ways one would expect if it were the correct strategy for interpreting instrumental requirements.

Finally, I'll present a different kind of practical conditional that doesn't support modus ponens. Though the diagnosis of this failure doesn't transfer back to instrumental requirements, it suggests a strategy.

I The Alethic Modal Analogy

We say things like

If the skies are clear, then necessarily it isn't raining.

This seems true. But suppose, furthermore, that the skies *are*, in fact, clear. Does it follow that *necessarily it isn't raining*? Well, in fact, it isn't. But this fact doesn't seem to be necessary. If I reasoned my way to the conclusion and reported it to you ("Necessarily it isn't raining") without explaining my reasoning, you would surely think I had made some mistake. It isn't raining, but it might have been. It is possible that right now it should be raining. And so on.⁶

Plausibly what's going on is that our conditional really has this form:

$\Box(\text{the skies are clear} \supset \text{it isn't raining})$

rather than

the skies are clear $\supset \Box$ it isn't raining

The 'strong modal' of necessity, like the strong modal of deontic requirement, burrows its way into the consequent, even though in the logical form it belongs outside, with wide scope over the whole conditional.

I should note that although Broome's wide-scoping strategy uses the material conditional, I think what I have to say will apply to related accounts with other sorts of conditionals, but of course there are many kinds of conditionals, some with controversial or obscure

logical form, so I don't have a lot of confidence that everything I will say transfers neatly to every wide-scoped conditional.

II The Problem of the Duals

I am pretty sure this account of the logical form of alethic modals is wrong. Suppose it were right. Then, it seems to me, something similar would be true for the weak modal of possibility. But nothing similar is right for that modal.

If the sky is overcast, then possibly it will rain.

This perfectly plausible English claim cannot have the form

$\diamond(\text{the sky is overcast} \supset \text{it will rain})$

This should be obvious. The wide-scope possibly proposition is much too weak. For this is true:

$\diamond(\text{the sky is clear} \supset \text{it will rain})$

Even though this is not:

If the sky is clear, then possibly it will rain.

(The former is true because the consequent is possible; it is also made true by the antecedent's not being necessary.)

Similarly, this instrumental permission:

If you don't care about the mess, then you may use a chainsaw to kill your victim.

can't be rendered:

$\mathcal{P}(\text{you don't care about the mess} \supset \text{you use a chainsaw to kill your victim})$

One thing a wide-scooper might say is that the possibility conditionals are negations of certain necessity conditionals. They are related to the necessity conditionals not by replacing the necessity (alethic or deontic) operators with possibility ones, but negating twice, once inside and once outside. To illustrate, the permissive conditional might rather be formulated

$\neg \mathcal{O}(\text{you don't care about the mess} \supset \text{you don't use a chainsaw to kill your victim})$

$\mathcal{P}\neg (\text{you don't care about the mess} \supset \text{you don't use a chainsaw to kill your victim})$

$\mathcal{P}(\text{you don't care about the mess} \& \text{you use a chainsaw to kill your victim})$

just as the alethic possibility is better thought of like this:

$\diamond(\text{the sky is clear} \& \text{it will not rain})$

That's pretty plausible on its face. The two statements 'feel' like contradictories, so it is plausible to say that one is the negation of the other. I might say,

If you want to get to Boston quickly, you ought to take 95.

My wife disagrees:

No, even if you want to get there quickly, you can take Route 1.

(I'm using 'can' as a deontic permission, as is most natural in ordinary English.)

She is indeed disagreeing. It is a *conditional* disagreement, but it still feels like my wife and I have adopted contrary positions, even though it is only the consequents that are contraries. This is why it seems plausible that we can find the logical form of the instrumental permission by denying the consequent inside any operator, then denying the whole conditional.

In fact, though, I doubt that this wide-scoped conjunction is an adequate representation of the form of permissive conditionals. In the case of the deontic one, it is very doubtful that anyone would endorse the permission of the conjunction, even someone who didn't accept the rule,

$$\mathcal{P}(A \ \& \ B) / \mathcal{P}(B)^7$$

“It's just fine to not care about the mess and to use a chainsaw to kill your victim!” Not a likely inference, even if you are skeptical about the very general rule that would allow you to conclude that it's just fine to use a chainsaw to kill your victim.

Likewise, even if I don't think it's possible that George W. Bush should have been the son of Gary Cooper, and I don't think that it is possible that he should have been Cooper's son and that he will some day find out that he is, I do think that if he was, it's possible he will someday find out. So conditionals of possibility, whether instrumental permissions or conditional judgments of alethic possibility, do not seem to be related to the *wide-scope* form of conditionals of necessity in any clear way.

This is not a knock-down argument. It *could* be that strong modals burrow from their proper logical position to the syntactically interior position, while weak ones have some very different logical form. But that would be strange. The modals are duals.

III A Small Matter of 'Will'

Wide-scoping seems initially plausible for (some) *ought* conditionals and *necessarily* conditionals, but it is plainly implausible for other modals that stand in English in the consequent of a conditional.

'will' doesn't wide-scope when it is embedded in conditionals. E.g.

If you bought ticket 79155, then you will win the lottery.

This could be false even though

will (you bought ticket 79155 \supset you win the lottery)

is true, because that ticket number is going to win next year's lottery, but will not win any lottery that has been run so far.

I admit that this is not very compelling, if only because various sorts of tense changes inside conditionals are well known and very complicated. I just thought I'd mention it.

IV Other Conditional Requirements

Consider now other sorts of conditional requirements, in particular other ordinary language conditional *oughts*. I'll choose a kind that seems relatively unproblematic, philosophically speaking: chess *oughts*.

If you are behind in material, you ought to play for a draw.

This may be a 'prudential' *ought*, but I won't assume so. We can just say that it is a 'chess' *ought*. (By this I do not mean that 'ought' has a special 'chess sense'.)

This is a good bit of chess advice (although it is by no means exceptionless). But the *ought* *does* detach. If the scope of the *ought* were wide, it would not detach; that's the whole point of wide-scoping.

Again, it *could* be that some conditional requirement *oughts* are wide scope while some are consequent-scope. (I could use a genuine requirement of chess, such as "If you are in check then you are required not to castle.")

But there is a pretty good reason to doubt that scope works one way in instrumental requirements and another way in chess requirements. For we can issue (and understand) both requirements in one breath, using just one occurrence of the word 'ought'.

My coach tells me before the big tournament:

You ought to play for a draw if you are behind in material, to go for the kill if you sense weakness, and to ask the director for a time out if you want a drink.

Could that one *ought* have narrow scope in the first two conditionals and wide scope over the last?

For a number of reasons, then, it seems unlikely, if not impossible, that instrumental requirements, as they are formed in English, have the logical form that wide-scopers say they have.

A wide-scooper might reply that his view is not about what the logical form of English sentences is. Rather, the theory is about what is *true*. The conditionals governed by wide-scope *oughts*, he might say, are true; they are genuine requirements of rationality, whereas their consequent-scope counterparts are not.

This is a fair reply. But what do we have to go on? We know which sentences seem acceptable. And the English conditional requirement sentences do. They still seem perfectly acceptable even once we are shown the wide-scope alternatives (assuming now that the wide-scope conditionals are *alternatives to* and not *analyses of* the English sentences). True, detachment seems to fail for them. But until we have a diagnosis that accounts for the intuitive acceptability of the English conditionals, we do not have a happy theory.

V Henry's Inference

Take the example of King Henry.

Dominance at Agincourt

	We win	We lose
We have few	Glory Everlasting!	Defeat (but no shame)
We have many	Victory (but no glory)	Ignominy

The example is from Shakespeare's play King Henry V.⁸ The scene is just before the battle of Agincourt, at which the British know that they are terribly outnumbered. One of Henry's men wishes aloud that just a few thousand knights could join them in the morning. Henry disagrees. His argument: Either we will win tomorrow, or we will lose. If we win, how much better to win having been so hopelessly outnumbered! If we lose, how ignominious it would be to lose with a multitude on our side! Then in either case, it is better that we have few soldiers. What is wrong with Henry's Argument?

When I teach my class in Decision Theory, I say what is wrong is that the State (win or lose) depends probabilistically on "act" (whether we have few or many). It is very much more likely that we will win given that we have many, than given that we have few.

But hang on. We can put the argument as follows:

Either we will win or we will lose.

If we win, it is better to have few.

If we lose, it is better to have few.

So, it is better to have few.

This argument looks valid, but we know it isn't. We do know how to reason properly with information and judgments like Henry's, but that's not the question. The question is why the apparently valid argument is invalid.

I'll make the logic explicit now.

		Resting on ...	
1	Either we will win or we will lose.	1	Assumption
2	If we win, it is better to have few.	2	Assumption
3	If we lose, it is better to have few.	3	Assumption
4	We will win.	4	Assumption
5	It is better to have few.	2, 4	2, 4 Modus ponens
6	We will lose.	6	Assumption
7	It is better to have few.	3, 6	3, 6 Modus ponens
8	It is better to have few.	1, 2, 3	1, 5, 7 Or-elim

The conclusion rests only on the first three assumptions. They all seem pretty plausible.⁹ Only two rules are employed. In some contexts Or-elimination is suspect, but not here, I take it. There aren't any intuitionistic or relevance worries, and if anyone perversely has some I just stipulate that the connective in line 1 is the classical *vel* that we learned in introductory logic. The premise, surely, is still true.¹⁰

That leaves modus ponens. Modus ponens, it seems, is invalid for the conditionals in the premises. I don't see how this can be denied, so I accept it.

VI. Toward a positive account

What is really going on, then?

The conditionals are somehow defective. The problem is not quite that they don't detach. They don't participate unrestrictedly in modus ponens, but simple, two premise arguments strike us as intuitively valid. For example, the embedded arguments seem fine: on the assumption that *if we win it is better to have few*, and the further assumption that *we win*, it seems just fine to conclude that *it is better to have few*. And likewise, on the assumption that *if we lose it is better to have few*, and the further assumption that *we lose*, it seems just fine to conclude that *it is better to have few*. So in either case (if we win or we lose), it seems, it is better to have few. But we cannot conclude that it is simply better to have few. The conclusion was fine resting on each assumption separately, but it goes bad when the assumptions are put together, disjoined. It's as if in each little argument, the assumption is playing some role that each can play alone but which gets disrupted when they are discharged in favor of their disjunction.¹¹

The conditional judgments of goodness are judgments made *from the point of view* of some probability function or other. Which option is better is always relative to one or another assignment of probabilities to states of affairs. And when a judgment of *better than* occurs in a consequent, it is made relative to a conditional probability, or to a probability function conditionalized on the antecedent. Conditionalizing on each disjunct screens off the probabilistic dependence of the outcomes on the acts (here, having more

and having fewer). That dependence is alive and influential in the straight judgment that it would be better to have more than few.¹²

Let me add that I don't generally like the idea of a *judgment made from a point of view*. All judgments are made from a point of view. And in general it isn't good philosophy to tag judgments or sentences with 'from the point of view of...' In general, the *point of view* isn't something that gets tagged onto the judgment, the content, but properly belongs to the person making the judgment. So, for instance, it is sloppy and misleading (and suspicious) to say things like, "From Anne's point of view, Hume was a krypto-rationalist," if what we mean is that Anne believes that Hume was a krypto-rationalist. But here we cannot remove the *from X's point of view* in favor of *X believes that*. The point is not that Henry, or Westmoreland, or anybody, *believes* that having fewer men is better. The judgment is correct, on the condition that we (the British) win, and it is correct on the condition that we lose, but it is incorrect if left unconditional.

The important point is that the conditional judgments are judgments relativized to a probability distribution – a *credence* function. Now thinking of the *oughts* in the instrumental requirements as relativized to credences won't help us understand why they seem problematic. When I consider what to say about clever murders first conditionalizing my credences on the assumption (pretence, imagining) that you want to kill your victim in a violent way, I don't then comfortably accept the idea that you ought to use a cleaver, not even conditionally or within a pretence. These special practical conditionals, I suggest, are *outliers*, semantically odd, just as wide-scopers say, but not in the way they say. They are rather members of a family of semantically odd conditionals, all of them departing from the core of conditional semantics in a similar way.

VII Outlier conditionals

The most famous outlier conditionals are *biscuit conditionals*:

There are biscuits on the sideboard if you want them.

Though I think these fit my suggestion reasonably well, they aren't as directly relevant as some other outliers, which is a shame because they share with the problematic practical conditionals the feature that their antecedent is a "you want" sentence. So I'll leave them aside.

The first one I want to consider also has an intentional state antecedent:

If you believe Broome, the operator takes wide scope.

I can assert this sentence happily, and (it seems) truthfully, even though I do not believe that the operator takes wide scope, and I don't believe it would take wide scope even if Broome convinced you. Nobody takes the conditional to assert any sort of dependence of its consequent on its antecedent.

If you believe their dispatcher, the plumbers will be here by noon.

Well, faith moves mountains, but I doubt it moves plumbers. So how do these faith-based conditionals work?

When I decide whether to accept a conditional, I *try on* its antecedent and see whether I accept its consequent. I don't know exactly what trying out is, but it's something like pretending or imagining. This is how we decide whether to accept conditionals, I think.¹³ So when someone tells me, "If you believe Broome, the operator takes wide scope", I pretend that I believe Broome and ask myself whether, within that pretense, to accept that the conditional has wide scope. Well, I am pretending to believe Broome, which is pretending to believe what he says, so I am pretending to believe that, among other things, the operator takes wide scope. There may be a difference between pretending to believe something and pretending that the something is the case (for instance, it seems difficult but maybe possible to pretend that you are walking through a mine field unaware of the dangers), but the difference is awfully subtle and it would be unsurprising if language ran them together.¹⁴

The second type of outlier I want to look at is the kind I'll call *conditionals of focus*.

If we're only talking about taste, you should order the fried mozzarella sticks.

If you restrict your attention to hitting, the Rangers are the best team.

These generally have practical or evaluative consequents.¹⁵ Again, what someone ought to order and which team is best can't depend on the vicissitudes of the conversations of philosophers, so these must be outliers too. And again we get the right interpretation by imagining the antecedent (imagining that it is true) and asking whether the consequent is acceptable. If we're only talking about taste, it would be preachy and querulous to point out that the mozzarella sticks are not conducive to cardiovascular health; if I'm restricting my attention to hitting, I won't notice that they're ERA is through the roof.

Now both conditionals of focus and faith-based conditionals are essentially second personal. Actually, their antecedents can be first person plural, but in that case they are also *about* the person they *address* – the 'we' in the mozzarella conditional includes the addressee, for example. So I'll say that they're 'second personal' even though their grammatical subject can be 'we'.¹⁶ The Trying On model explains why this is so. I am being told that if *I* (among others maybe) believe Broome, or only consider only taste, then such and such. So I imagine or pretend that *I* am believing or focusing, and then I see right through the belief to its contents, or I see the object of the focus instead of the focusing. And then I'll find the consequents acceptable. Contrast

If the Rangers' management is only attending to hitting, then they're the best team.

To the contrary: that's why they're not a top team! When I pretend or imagine that Jon Daniels is only attending to hitting, I don't ignore pitching, so I don't find the consequent acceptable.

VIII Trying on Practical Conditionals

Second person instrumental requirement conditionals fit my “trying on” theory pretty well. One time my wife said to me,

If you want to get me really angry, you should keep using that tone of voice.

This turned out to be good advice. (In a way.) First, suppose I try to decide whether to believe the conditional. I imagine that I want to get my wife really angry, and ask myself whether I accept the judgment, addressed to me, “You should keep using that tone of voice.” Knowing how these things go, I do find the judgment very compelling, when I am imagining that I want to get her really angry. Continuing to use the smug, sarcastic tone seems like a very good idea indeed.¹⁷ Now suppose that I am *not* experienced or reflective enough to have any clear sense, independent of my wife’s conditional advice, of what sort of effect my tone has. Trying on the antecedent and working out what would make the consequent then seem compelling makes me realize what that effect is (or strictly speaking, what effect my wife is telling me it has).

The second person case fits nicely. Unfortunately (for my little theory), instrumental requirement conditionals can, plainly, be in the third person.¹⁸

If Jesse wants to anger the audience, then he ought to say that conceptual analysis is a posteriori.

According to my little “try it on” theory, then, we should check it for acceptability by imagining that *Jesse* wants to anger the audience, and asking ourselves whether he *ought* to say that conceptual analysis is a posteriori. And we feel some resistance, I admit. We feel the same resistance that we feel at the UMPs. So it appears my suggestion really makes no progress.

Now, suppose I actually asserted the Jesse conditional to you, and you remarked that he does indeed want to anger the audience. Then you ask me whether he ought to say that conceptual analysis is a posteriori. I balk. But then I say, “Well, *if he really does want to anger the audience*, then he ought to say it, yes.” And you repeat that indeed he does. Why am I reluctant to assert unconditionally that he ought to say that conceptual analysis is a posteriori?

Standing behind the conditional is, I think, standing by the consequent *ought* from a certain point of view. We assess behavior and states of affairs from our own point of view, of course, but in assessing someone’s rationality we want to take special care to incorporate at least much of that person’s own standpoint.¹⁹ And by all accounts, conditionals of instrumental requirement are about the *ought* of rationality (that is, they are about what we rationally ought to do). So when we try on the Jesse conditional, we imagine *ourselves* wanting to anger the audience, and decide whether we then accept that we ought to say something outrageous. And we do. But then when we detach the consequent, we do so with the belief that *Jesse* wants to anger the audience, and when we assess the consequent we find that we still cannot endorse saying such an outrageously false thing about conceptual analysis. The antecedent is no longer hanging around to remind us of the ‘proper’ point of view from which to do the assessment.

I have one last detail to clean up. I have been speaking of what one *ought to do from a certain point of view*. And as I said, this sort of talk bothers me, and it sounds suspicious. Isn't what we ought to do from somebody's point of view simply what that person believes we ought to do?

As I said at the end of the section about King Henry, the *from a point of view* can't be eliminated, in our context, in favor of a *so-and-so believes that*. Just as the way in which having few was better than having many, namely from the point of view of assuming that we win, and also from the point of view of assuming that we do not win, was not a matter of somebody or other *believing* that it is better to have few, so the instrumental *ought* is about what is to be done, not according to one person or another, but from the point of view of having a certain aim or want.

I hope eventually to have a more careful and clearer account of this last idea, and I apologize for not having it yet.

Notes

¹ Sam Wheeler thinks it is false. I have not been able to digest his argument for thinking so.

² *Impartial Reason*, p. 15. Darwall says ‘should’ rather than ‘ought’. And he helpfully contrasts the example with “If you want to kill your victim in a particularly violent way, you should see a psychiatrist.”

³ Maybe; Broome, for one, is now agnostic about whether you ought in general to be rational; see his “Have we reason to do as rationality requires?—a comment on Raz”, *The Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, Symposium I, 2005; www.jesp.org. Suppose it is not true that you ought in general to be rational. Then the requirement is hypothetical. It is not hypothetical in the sense that it applies to all and only those who have a certain desire! It is unclear what hypothesis the requirement of rationality would be conditional on, in this event. But I assume it would be something like the requirements of law, or chess. These requirements tell you what to do, but sometimes you really ought to abide by them and sometimes not.

⁴ ... which should have a name, but I don’t know what it is – ‘normative subtraction’? ‘normative contraction’?

⁵ A weaker, and slightly more plausible rule says that $\mathcal{O}(q)$ follows from $\mathcal{O}(p \vee q)$ along with $\neg p$. This is *factual detachment*.

Michael Smith has suggested (in conversation) an even weaker rule that still manages to derive the unpalatable conclusion. It says that when you are required to do (or make true, let’s say) a disjunction, and it is not within your power to make one of the disjuncts true, then it does follow that you are required to make the other disjunct true. This is much more plausible. Suppose you are in double check, so that you cannot escape by capturing the opposing piece or interposing. Then you must move your king. Smith thinks that wide-scoping does not prevent detachment, then, since typically it is not in your power to stop wanting an end. I will not pursue this line of argument here.

⁶ I understand that there are famous fallacies having to do with free will, determinism, fatalism, that exploit this apparently erroneous reasoning. I’ll have to check on these.

⁷ That seems like a very plausible rule, although an example of Frank Jackson’s designed for a different purpose may seem to cause some trouble for it; see FJ????

⁸ It’s Act 4, Scene 3.

I believe that the example, used to show something philosophical but not quite what I’m using it for, is due to Hugh Mellor, but I cannot find it and the person who told me it was used by Mellor now cannot remember even telling me such a thing.

I should also say that there is a different interpretation of what Henry is saying in the scene, possibly a more plausible one. He may be saying that it is already fated that his side will win, or fated that his side will lose, so that nothing that happens now can affect the chances. For the record, here is a snippet of the text.

Westmoreland:

O that we now had here
 But one ten thousand of those men in England
 That do no work to-day!

King Henry V:

What's he that wishes so?
 My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin:
 If we are mark'd to die, we are enow
 To do our country loss; and if to live,
 The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
 God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.

⁹ The first assumption is a little leaky, since the battle might have no decisive outcome, but I think this is irrelevant; I'll have to expand this footnote to say how to fix the assumption if anyone complains.

¹⁰ Again bracketing concerns about messy, victorless outcomes.

¹¹ Here I might add a note about Vann McGee's counterexample to modus ponens; also Simpson's Paradox?

¹² It is very tempting to mention Newcomb's Paradox here, but I won't, because it wouldn't advance the present line of argument and the reader would start thinking about Newcomb's Paradox instead of conditional requirements.

¹³ It fits Dorothy Edgington's account of what "if" means. I find that account very compelling, which is why I think the line of argument in the text might be right.

At deadline Jonathan Ichikawa persuaded me that only *some* conditionals fit the 'trying on' picture, which I suppose doesn't damage the argument in the text too much, only I wish I could say systematically which conditionals do fit and why.

¹⁴ I promise to get a better explanation of this from some philosophical mavens of pretense and imagination.

¹⁵ Don't they? Or am I so caught up in those cases that I'm unable to think of some obvious counterexamples?

¹⁶ For that matter, it can be 'I', when the speaker addresses herself. "Ok, if I'm just paying attention to the artistic merits, I should give her the highest score."

¹⁷ Here think of what Niko Kolodny says about the 'transparency' of requirements of rationality, in *Mind* 114:455 (2005).

¹⁸ It seems significant that philosophers give examples of them in the second person. E.g. Hare, Darwall, others. {cites}

¹⁹ As Don Hubin says, "It is precisely the fact that in making rational evaluations we adopt the agent's normative standpoint that makes the charge of irrationality have special force for the agent. If we are correct and he understands our rational criticism, he is generally motivated to act on our recommendations." "What's Special about Humeanism", *Nous* 33 (1999) p. 41.