

# Anankastic Conditionals

Deontic modality: linguistic and logical perspectives on oughts  
and ends

Cleo Condoravdi    Leon van der Torre

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  - b. If Jones wants to eat fastfood for dinner, then he should not go to McDonalds.
  - c. If Jones wants to eat fastfood for dinner, then he should go to McDonalds.
  - d. Jones wants to eat fastfood for dinner.

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- (2) a. Jones should not smoke.

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- ▶ The two conditionals in the set have identical antecedents and seemingly contradictory consequents but are consistent.
- ▶ A deontic modal, broadly construed, is necessary for the consistency of the conditionals.
- ▶ Compare with predictive, epistemic, and counterfactual modals, where the corresponding pairs are inconsistent.

# Inconsistent pairs of conditionals

Predictive:

- (3)
- a. If Jones wants to eat fastfood for dinner, then he will go to McDonalds.
  - b. If Jones wants to eat fastfood for dinner, then he will not go to McDonalds.

# Inconsistent pairs of conditionals

Epistemic:

- (4) a. If Jones wanted to eat fastfood for dinner, then he must have gone to McDonalds.
- b. If Jones wants to eat fastfood for dinner, then he must have not gone to McDonalds.

# Inconsistent pairs of conditionals

Counterfactual:

- (5)
- a. If Jones had wanted to eat fastfood for dinner, then he would have gone to McDonalds.
  - b. If Jones had wanted to eat fastfood for dinner, then he would not have gone to McDonalds.

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- ▶ The conditional in (c) conveys a best-means-of relation between  $p$  and  $q$ .
- ▶ *Anankastic conditionals* (ACs): conditionals of the form **If want  $p$ , should  $q$**  that convey a best-means-of relation between  $p$  and  $q$ .

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- ▶ From this perspective then, both conditional necessities are instrumental necessities.
- ▶ Arguably, all the necessities in the set, including the one in the unconditional premise, are instrumental necessities, but different considerations are at play in their interpretation.

# Dilemma

- ▶ The new set also presents a dilemma in terms of its potential conclusions.
  - ▶ Is the dilemma true?
- (6)
- a. Jones should not to go to McDonalds.
  - b. Jones should go to McDonalds.
- (7)
- a. Jones should not buy cigarettes.
  - b. Jones should buy cigarettes.

## Factual detachment

- (8)
- a. If  $a$  wants  $p$ ,  $a$  should  $q$ .
  - b.  $a$  wants  $p$ .
- 
- c.  $a$  should  $q$ .

- ▶ Is factual detachment with instrumental necessities generally valid?
- ▶ If not, when does the inference go through?
- ▶ Should factual detachment be (in)valid for anankastic conditionals?

## Factual detachment and anankastic conditionals

- (9)    a.    If you want to go to Harlem, you should take the A train.  
       b.    You want to go to Harlem.
- 
- c.    You should take the A train.

- ▶ (9) seems compelling.
- ▶ Factual detachment for ACs has had a long series of detractors in the philosophical literature, who seek analyses of the conditional that would fail to validate factual detachment.
- ▶ One major argument against it is the variability in the intuitive acceptability of the pattern across instantiations of  $q$  and  $p$ .



# Deontic logic for practical reasoning

- ▶ Deontic logic was developed in a narrow setting as a logic of obligations.
- ▶ In this course we want to consider
  - ▶ how it can be used for means-end reasoning
  - ▶ also taking linguistic considerations into account.
- ▶ We will consider side by side the linguistic semantics and corresponding logical analyses of the sentences in the new type of set.