Anankastic conditionals are still a mystery: reply to Condoravdi and Lauer

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1 Introduction

The *Harlem Sentence*, just below, doesn't look like anything special.

(1) If you want to go to Harlem, you have to take the A train.[1]

It's clear what the sentence means—more or less, that taking the A train is necessary for going to Harlem. Yet that meaning, and the meanings of *anankastic conditionals* more generally, has proven difficult to derive compositionally.

Semanticists have proposed accounts for anankastics that distinguish them from ordinary indicative conditionals. Condoravdi and Lauer (2016) disagree, arguing that, as their title says, "anankastic conditionals are just conditionals." They have two main goals. First, to introduce data of conditionals ('near-anankastics') that aren't anankastics but that nonetheless have the same compositionality problem as anankastics; near-anankastics resist the treatments previously given for anankastics. The second goal is to develop a semantics for anankastics and near-anankastics that's continuous with the standard semantics for ordinary indicative conditionals and that solves various problems.

I will argue that one of these problems persists, *the problem of conflicting goals*.

I'll first lay out the initial compositionality problem, what I'm calling the *problem of conditioning on goals*, and show how Condoravdi and Lauer dissolve it. Then I'll explain the problem of conflicting goals, Condoravdi and Lauer's proposed solution, and why it works in some cases but not all. Condoravdi and Lauer rely on a special, *effective preference* interpretation for *want* on which what an agent wants cannot conflict with her beliefs. But a general solution to the problem of conflicting goals requires that the goals cannot conflict with the *facts*. When the agent has false beliefs—when her beliefs don't match the facts—the goals may conflict with the facts. Finally, I'll consider another possible solution, but ultimately reject it. The upshot is that anankastic conditionals are still a mystery.

[1] The name is from von Fintel and Iatridou (2005) and the sentence from Sæbø (2001).

2 The problem of conditioning on goals

Identified by Sæbø (1985, 2001), the problem of conditioning on goals is that the most straightforward application of Kratzer's (1981, 1991) classic system of modals and conditionals gets anankastics all wrong.

In Kratzer's system, modals are evaluated against two conversational backgrounds, a modal base f and ordering source g, both functions from worlds to sets of propositions. Leaving the familiar details to a footnote, the semantics for necessity modals generally, and *have to* in particular, is:[2]

$$[\![\text{have to}]\!]^w(f)(g)(\lambda w.[\![\text{q}]\!]^w) = 1 \text{ iff } \forall w' \in \text{best}_{g(w)}(\bigcap f(w)): [\![\text{q}]\!]^{w'} = 1.$$

If modifies a modal base:

$$[\![\text{if r}]\!](f) = \lambda w. f(w) \cup \{\lambda w.[\![\text{r}]\!]^w\}.$$

Combining *if* and *have to* gives us:

$$[\![\text{have to}]\!]^w([\![\text{if r}]\!](f))(g)(\lambda w.[\![\text{q}]\!]^w) = 1 \text{ iff}$$
$$\forall w' \in \text{best}_{g(w)}(\bigcap(f(w) \cup \{\lambda w.[\![\text{r}]\!]^w\})): [\![\text{q}]\!]^{w'} = 1.$$

An anankastic conditional contains a *teleological* modal. Its ordering source provides certain relevant goals, its modal base certain relevant facts. Later, we'll consider what these goals and facts are. To see the problem of conditioning on goals, we can just stipulate the goals and facts.

The problem is this. Suppose that we're evaluating the Harlem Sentence in the actual world. Assume that throughout the modal base, various actually true propositions about New York's geography hold—that, for example, the A train is the only way to Harlem. Let the relevant goals be your actual goals, which, imagine, *don't* include going to Harlem. I assert the Harlem Sentence. The *if*-clause restricts the modal base to those worlds where you want to go to Harlem. We ask: do you take the A train in all of these worlds that best realize the relevant goals, i.e. your *actual* goals? No—since your actual goals don't include going to Harlem! The Harlem Sentence comes out false even though the A train is the only way to Harlem.

A solution will say that when evaluating whether you have to take the A train in a world w, the proposition that you go to Harlem (*Harlem*) is a relevant goal in w.

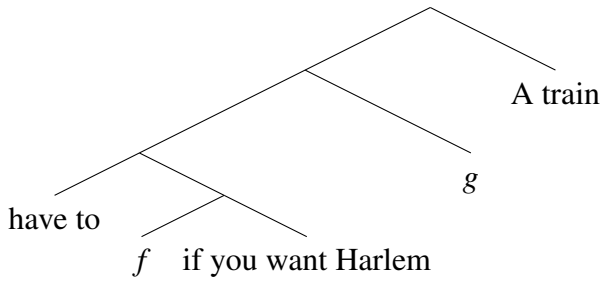
[2] We get a pre-order $\leq_{g(w)}$: $u \leq_{g(w)} v$ iff $\{p \in g(w) : p(v) = 1\} \subseteq \{p \in g(w) : p(u) = 1\}$. And where X is a set of worlds, $\text{best}_{g(w)}(X) = \{w'' \in X : \neg\exists v \in X\ [v <_{g(w)} u]\}$.

3 The first pieces of Condoravdi and Lauer's view

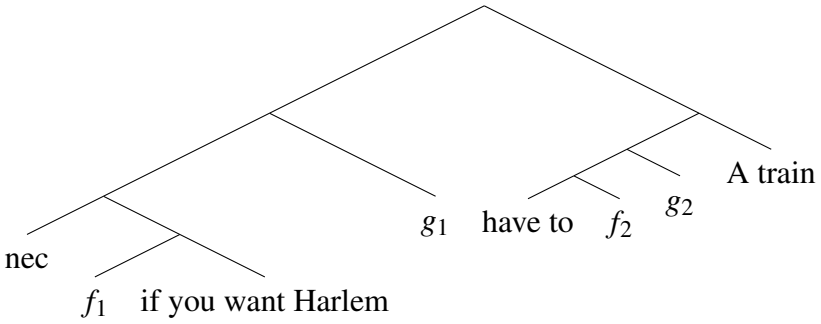
Authors have solved the problem of conflicting goals in various ways. Condoravdi and Lauer solution belongs to a class of solutions that includes von Fintel and Iatridou's (2006) and Huitink's (2008), solutions on which the Harlem Sentence has a *double modal structure*. In addition to the overt modal, *have to*, there's a covert epistemic modal, *nec*, and it's *nec*, not *have to*, that's restricted by the *if*-clause. On Huitink's and Condoravdi and Lauer's views, anankastic conditionals are just indicative conditionals.

Here is the double modal structure, along with the single modal structure for contrast:

Single modal



Double modal



The semantics is:

$[\![\text{nec}]\!]^w([\![\text{if you want Harlem}]\!](f_1))(g_1)(\lambda w.[\![\text{have to}]\!]^w(f_2)(g_2)(\lambda w.[\![\text{A train}]\!]^w))$
$= 1$ iff $\forall w' \in \text{best}_{g_1(w)}(\bigcap(f_1(w) \cup \{\lambda w.[\![\text{you want Harlem}]\!]^w\}))$:
$[\![\text{have to}]\!]^{w'}(f_2)(g_2)(\lambda w.[\![\text{A train}]\!]^w) = 1$.

We evaluate the Harlem Sentence in a world w first by identifying a set of worlds (determined *nec's* conversational backgrounds, f_1 and g_1) where you want to go to Harlem. Then we ask whether you have to take the A train in each w' in the set. Advocates of the double modal view intend that (at least in typical cases) each world in *have to*'s modal base at w', $f_2(w')$, matches w in its subway facts. Suppose we're evaluating the Harlem Sentence in a world w where only the A train goes to Harlem. Then at each w' where we evaluate whether you have to take the A train, every world in the modal base will be one where only the A train goes to Harlem. That looks right.

Condoravdi and Lauer's double modal view is their own because of their choices for the conversational backgrounds. We'll discuss the teleological ordering source later, since that's where my criticism lies. Consider the other three conversational backgrounds now. For reasons I won't get into, Condoravdi and Lauer say that *nec*'s modal base derives from the speaker's true beliefs; *nec*'s ordering source is one of *typicality*; and *have to*'s modal base is *historical*.[3] So far, then, we have:

> *First pass semantics.* The Harlem Sentence is true in w iff
>
> a. For every most typical world w' compatible with the speaker's true beliefs in w *where you want to go to Harlem*:
>
> b. You have to take the A train in w'. More precisely:
>
> (i) For every world w'' historically accessible from w' (each of which matches w in subway fact[4]) that best conforms to the relevant goals in w':
>
> (ii) You take the A train in w''.

Note: in what follows, I will ignore the typicality constraint, since the cases I discuss can be filled out so that the constraint doesn't make a difference to my point.

The problem of conditioning goals is solved if we require that wanting to go to Harlem in a world w' entails that going to Harlem is a relevant goal in w'. Then, since you want to go to Harlem in each w' where we evaluate whether you have to take the A train, going to Harlem is a relevant goal in w'.

The rest of this paper is about how to define the teleological ordering source in a way that entails this requirement—*while avoiding the problem of conflicting goals*.

[3] See their pages 46 and 47.

[4] More precisely: each of these w'' matches w in subway fact when nothing atypical happens in w.

I argue that Condoravdi and Lauer don't succeed in their attempt to do so.

4 The problem of conflicting goals

To understand the problem of conflicting goals, it will help to consider a definition of the teleological ordering source that's often floated in the literature,[5] one that, in conjunction with the first pass semantics, is susceptible to the problem.

> *First pass definition of the teleological ordering source*
> If you want p in w, then $p \in g_2(w)$, the relevant goals in w.

This definition does rightly entail that if *Harlem* is wanted, then *Harlem* a goal. And it's natural to think that in evaluating what you have to do, what you want matters.

But now the problem. Consider a case inspired by von Fintel and Iatridou's (2005) Hoboken Scenario. First we suppose that the A train is the only way to Harlem. Second, we suppose that the speaker leaves open a certain possibility, one where you, the agent, have two desires that can't both be satisfied. More specifically, a possibility w' where you want to go to Harlem and want to do something else—say, go to Hoboken—that precludes going to Harlem, given your time constraints in w'. Put rigorously:

> *New Hoboken Scenario*
> (i) The A train is the only way to Harlem.
> (ii) In some world w' compatible with the speaker's beliefs: you want in w' to go to both Harlem and Hoboken, but you can't go to both in w'.

I assert the Harlem Sentence. It is supposed to be true just in case in every world w' compatible with my (the speaker's) true beliefs where you want to go to Harlem, you have to take the A train in w'. (Remember, we're ignoring the typicality constraint.) We predict, though, that there's such a w' where you do *not* have to take the A train.

Part (ii) of the New Hoboken Scenario is that there's a world w' compatible with my beliefs—and thereby my true beliefs—where you want to go to Harlem and want to go to Hoboken but can't do both w'. Since in w' you both want to go to Harlem and want to go to Hoboken, the first pass definition of the teleological ordering source dictates that both *Harlem* and *Hoboken* (the proposition that you

[5] See e.g. Sæbø (2001) and von Fintel and Iatridou (2005). Sæbø (2017) states it explicitly.

go to Hoboken) are relevant goals in w'. So in some of the best worlds in the modal base at w' you go to Harlem, and in some you go to Hoboken. In no world in the modal base do you go to both, though, since you cannot go to both w'. So you do not take the A train in all of the best worlds in the modal base in w': in some you go to Hoboken, not Harlem, and (suppose) it is the PATH train, not the A train, that goes to Hoboken. This entails that you do not have to take the A train in w'. The Harlem Sentence is predicted false.

But the Harlem Sentence is true in the New Hoboken Scenario. *The A train is the only way to Harlem*. And the only other thing we've assumed is about my, the speaker's, state of mind—that it's compatible with my beliefs that you want two things, going to Harlem and going to Hoboken, that can't both be realized. It couldn't be more normal to think this. All of us, all the time, want to do two things that as a matter of fact cannot both be achieved. The fact that my beliefs leave open that your desires are like this doesn't affect the fact that if you want to go to Harlem, you have to take the A train.

The problem of conflicting goals stems from the fact that in some world w' where we evaluate whether you have to take the A train, there are two goals in w', *Harlem* and *Hoboken*, that are jointly inconsistent with the facts in w'. The problem stems from the fact that in some world where we evaluate whether you have to take the A train, two goals that *conflict with the facts*.

5 Condoravdi and Lauer's view in full

Recall that Condoravdi and Lauer and Huitink both solve the problem of conditioning on goals by positing a certain double modal structure. They also share a basic approach to the problem of conflicting goals, an approach on which *want* gets a special interpretation. They differ, though, on what that interpretation is. Condoravdi and Lauer's interpretation is situated in a new semantics for *want*.

I won't canvas the parts of their semantics not directly related to anankastics. We'll focus on their contention that *want* is sometimes interpreted against a special contextual parameter, *EP*, which represents what they call an agent's *effective preferences*. Wanting p in the effective preference sense—for short, wanting$_{EP}$ p—means that your desire for p is guiding your action. You might want to play in the NBA, but, knowing that's unattainable, your desire doesn't guide your action. You

want to play in the NBA, but you don't want$_{EP}$ to play in the NBA. Or you might want to sleep, but want to go running more, and when you run, it's your latter desire that guides your action. Although you wanted to sleep, you didn't want$_{EP}$ to sleep. What you did want$_{EP}$ was to run.

Wanting$_{EP}$ is tightly linked to planning and intending. You want to play in the NBA, but you don't plan or intend to. You wanted to sleep, but it's running that you intended and planned to do.

The crucial part of the view is that you can't want$_{EP}$ two things that *conflict with your beliefs*.[6] More precisely: if you want *want*$_{EP}$ p and want$_{EP}$ q, you must believe that p and q can both be achieved—p and q must be jointly consistent with your beliefs.[7] This constraint is motivated by the idea that you can't be planning, or intending, to do two things that you believe cannot both be done.[8] For example, consider how strange it would be for someone to say:

(2) #I'm planning on going to Seattle tonight and I'm planning on going to Melbourne tonight, and I believe I can't do both.

Condoravdi and Lauer say that it's the effective-preference interpretation of *want* at play in anankastics:

(3) If you want$_{EP}$ to go to Harlem, you have to take the A train.

And the goals aren't merely what's wanted, as the first pass definition of the ordering source has it. Rather, they're what's wanted$_{EP}$:

> *Condoravdi and Lauer's definition of the teleological ordering source*
> $p \in g_2(w)$ if and only if you $\underline{\text{want}_{EP}}$ p in w.

We can now lay out Condoravdi and Lauer's view in full. Adopting their nomenclature, f_{Sbel} is the speaker's-true-beliefs modal base, g_{typ} is the typicality ordering source, and f^t_{hist} is the historical modal base. The effective preference ordering source, $g_{EP_{you}}$, is this:

> $g_{EP_{you}}(w)$ contains exactly those propositions you want$_{EP}$ in w.

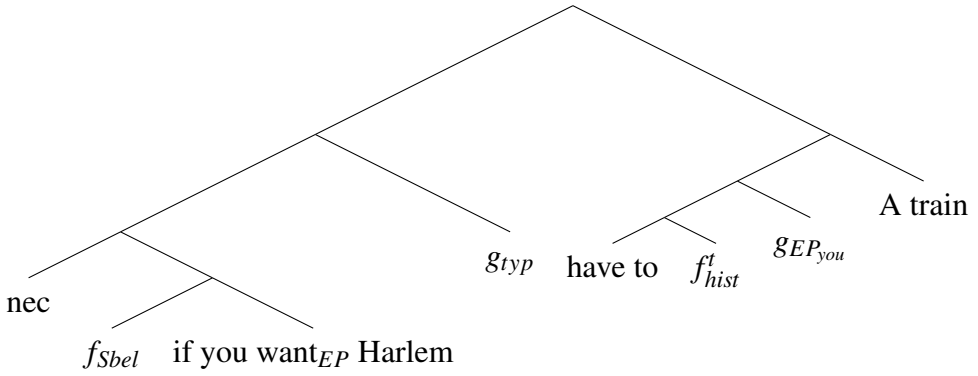
[6]Other semantics, including Heim (1992)'s and von Fintel (1999)'s, also disallow wanting two things that conflict with your beliefs.

[7]This follows from Condoravdi and Lauer's stipulation that, in their terminology, the *preferential structure* that represents an agent's effective preferences in a given world obeys the *consistency* and *realism* constraints relative to her belief set (see their pages 29–31).

[8]This is a consequence of Grano's (2017) semantics for *intend* (see his pages 13–14).

So we have:

Condoravdi and Lauer's logical form



Condoravdi and Lauer's semantics. The Harlem Sentence is true in w iff

a. For every most typical world w' compatible with the speaker's true beliefs in w where you $\underline{\text{want}_{EP}}$ to go to Harlem:

b. You have to take the A train in w'. More precisely:

   (i) For every world w'' historically accessible from w' (each of which matches w in subway facts) that best conform to what you $\underline{\text{want}_{EP}}$ in w':

   (ii) You take the A train in w''.

Focus on wanting$_{EP}$, since we've already reviewed everything else. Condoravdi and Lauer identify the goals with what's wanted$_{EP}$ in order solve the problem of conflicting goals. After all, wanting$_{EP}$ is already conflict-free.

This identification works in certain cases. Take some world w' where we're evaluating whether you have to take the A train. Suppose that in w' you believe that it's impossible to go to both Harlem and Hoboken. Then, by the anti-conflict constraint on wanting$_{EP}$, you cannot both want$_{EP}$ to go to Harlem and want$_{EP}$ to go to Hoboken. Since the goals in w' are what you want$_{EP}$ in w', *Harlem* and *Hoboken* cannot both be among the goals! Your belief that *Harlem* and *Hoboken* conflict prevents the goals from containing two propositions that conflict with the facts.

6 The return of the problem of conflicting goals

To repeat: on Condoravdi and Lauer's view, the goals won't contain both *Harlem* and *Hoboken* when you believe that you can't get to both Harlem and Hoboken. The

problem is that you won't always have this belief. In some worlds, you believe that it's possible for you to go to both Hoboken and Harlem. The anti-conflict constraint on wanting$_{EP}$—which, to reiterate, bars conflict with your beliefs—doesn't kick in, meaning that you *can* want$_{EP}$ to go to both Harlem and Hoboken. *Harlem* and *Hoboken can* both be among the goals. The goals *can* conflict with the facts.

That's the structural flaw in Condoravdi and Lauer's proposed solution to the problem of conflicting goals. Now consider a case, a modification of the New Hoboken Scenario, where the flaw is manifested. In the new scenario, we again suppose that the speaker leaves open a certain possibility. This time, it's a possibility w' where you're *planning* to do two things—go to Harlem, go to Hoboken—that you believe to be compatible but which in fact aren't in w', one where you *want*$_{EP}$ to do two things that you believe to be compatible but which in fact aren't in w'. More specifically:

Newer Hoboken Scenario

(i) The A train is the only way to Harlem.

(ii) In some world w' compatible with the speaker's beliefs: you want$_{EP}$ in w' to go to both Harlem and Hoboken, but you can't go to both in w'.

In this world w', you want$_{EP}$ to go to both Harlem and Hoboken. Since the goals are supposed to be what's wanted$_{EP}$, the goals in w' include *Harlem* and *Hoboken*, which conflict with the facts in w'. As we know, when the goals conflict with the facts, the Harlem Sentence is predicted false.

But the Harlem Sentence is true. *The A train is the only way to Harlem.* And, as before, the only other thing we've assumed concerns my (the speaker's) beliefs. This time, my beliefs leave open the possibility that what you want$_{EP}$ conflicts with the facts. My beliefs leave open that you mistakenly believe that you can achieve two things you want$_{EP}$ to do. This again is a natural state of mind for me, or anyone else, to be in. Too often in life, we want$_{EP}$ (or plan) to do two things that we think we can do but in fact cannot; too often what we want$_{EP}$ (or plan) conflicts with the facts. That my beliefs leave open that your beliefs and wants$_{EP}$ are like this doesn't affect the fact that if you want to go to Harlem, you have to take the A train.

The anti-conflict constraint on wanting$_{EP}$ is powerless to prevent the goals conflicting with the facts in the Newer Hoboken Scenario. That, to reiterate, is because the constraint prevents only conflict with your beliefs. In our world w' where you

want$_{EP}$ to go to both Harlem and Hoboken, the constraint entails merely that you believe in w' that *Harlem* and *Hoboken* don't conflict. It has no bearing on whether *Harlem* and *Hoboken* in fact conflict in w', since your belief in w' is false—put another way, since your belief does not match the facts.

7 A reply on Condoravdi and Lauer's behalf? (looks like not)

Condoravdi and Lauer do recognize that identifying the goals with what's wanted$_{EP}$ does not guarantee that the goals don't conflict with the facts. They say two things about this, neither of which, I argue, will save their view from the Newer Hoboken Scenario.

First, they write:

> Generally and by default [the speaker] can assume that the agent is sufficiently informed about the relevant facts, so as to not have incompatible effective preferences (given the facts). (p. 49)

Suppose that this is indeed the default assumption. Then we would have grounds to question the import of the Newer Hoboken Scenario. In it, I the speaker violate the assumption! I leave open the possibility that you the agent have incompatible effective preferences (i.e. that you want$_{EP}$ two things that conflict with the facts). A case that violates a default assumption is a case we should be suspicious of.

This assumption is not the default, though, nor should it be. As I pointed out in the last section, all the time we are insufficiently informed about the relevant facts. All the time what we want$_{EP}$ ends up conflicting with the facts. (Everything would be so much easier if this weren't so!) And we know this about one another. A speaker should be leaving open that some things the agent wants$_{EP}$ conflict with the facts. A speaker should *not* by default assume that the agent is sufficiently informed about the relevant facts. We needn't worry about the Newer Hoboken Scenario on these grounds. (There are also counterexamples to Condoravdi and Lauer, which I'll leave to a footnote, that do not violate the assumption.[9])

[9]One such counterexample is this: (i) the A train is actually the only way to Harlem; (ii) you actually want$_{EP}$ to go to both Harlem and Hoboken; (iii) you actually can't go to both; (iv) I *do* actually (and falsely) assume that you are sufficient informed about the relevant facts. I'll leave it to you the reader to work out how this is indeed a counterexample.

Condoravdi and Lauer's second concern is with a special kind of case, one where there is *informational asymmetry* between the speaker and the agent. For example, a case where (i) *Harlem* and *Hoboken* actually conflict with the facts, (ii) the agent believes they don't conflict, but (iii) the speaker knows they do. Condoravdi and Lauer maintain that in such a case, there are complications when assessing the Harlem Sentence. (See their section 7.1.4.)

We can safely ignore cases of informational asymmetry, because we can fill out the original description of the Newer Hoboken Scenario so that there is none. So that, for example, there's a conflict but neither of us know about it. More carefully: (i) *Harlem* and *Hoboken* actually conflict with the facts; (ii) you the agent don't believe either way about whether they conflict (and so you don't know the conflict exists); and (iii) I the speaker also don't believe either way (and so don't know). It's compatible with the original description that *Harlem* and *Hoboken* actually conflict, since the description is silent on how *Harlem* and *Hoboken* actually relate. It's silent too on your state of mind, so there's no problem in supposing you don't believe either way about the conflict. Finally, the description is also compatible with my not believing either way. The only thing it says about me i that my beliefs leave open a possibility where the conflict exists but you nonetheless want$_{EP}$ to go to both. The Newer Hoboken Scenario stands as a counterexample.

8 A different solution? (Looks like not)

Recall that Condoravdi and Lauer address the problem of conflicting goals with a special interpretation for *want*. This might make you wonder: even though wanting$_{EP}$ can only prevent conflict with the agent's beliefs, is there a different interpretation that prevents conflict with the facts? An interpretation on which, for example, if someone wants to go to Harlem, they thereby don't want to do anything else that in fact conflicts with going to Harlem, regardless of their beliefs.

While the most common interpretation of *want* is intimately wrapped up with the agent's beliefs—as reflected in the literature on *want*[10]—there is another interpretation that's instead connected to the facts. aTo illustrate, take a case inspired by Williams (1981). Toni is about to drink from a bottle that she believes contains gin, but that in fact contains gasoline. I am aware of this. I say:

[10]See e.g. Heim (1992) and von Fintel (1999).

(4) Toni doesn't *really* want to drink from the bottle. (It contains gas!)

(5) [To Toni:] you don't *really* want to drink from the bottle. (It contains gas!)

With (4) and (5), Toni's *beliefs* aren't what's at issue: she believes that the bottle contains water, which she would enjoy. Rather, what matters are the *facts*: the bottle in fact contains gas, which she very much wouldn't enjoy. Intuitively, that's why (4) and (5) are true.

Call the interpretation of *want* in (4) and (5) the 'objective *want*'. The hope would be that (i) what you objective-want cannot conflict with the facts, and (ii) the objective *want* is the *want* of anankastics.[11] It's unclear whether the objective *want* could prevent conflict with the facts, but even if it could, there are two problems.

First, speakers of Hindi and Turkish report no correlates of (4) and (5)—and no reading of the objective *want* more generally. Some speakers of Bengali and German say the same thing, although others disagree. All of these speakers report that the Harlem Sentence is true in the Newer Hoboken Scenario (except two Bengali speakers, who do not report anankastics generally; two other Bengali speakers do report anankastics). It would be surprising if in the Newer Hoboken Scenario the objective *want* appears in the Harlem Sentence in languages in which it's otherwise absent.

Second, even in English, the objective *want* can't help with all anankastics. Consider that conditionals that don't feature *want* at all can be interpreted as anankastics:[12]

(6) If you intend to go to Harlem, you have to take the A train.

(7) If you're planning on going to Harlem, you have to take the A train.

As with the Harlem Sentence (which does contain *want*), these anankastics raise the problem of conflicting goals. With the Harlem Sentence, the relevant goals were what's wanted, in some sense or other. What are the relevant goals for (6) and (7)? At a first pass: what you *intend* to do and are *planning* to do, respectively. But in the Newer Hoboken Scenario, there's a world compatible with my beliefs where you

[11] A different approach from (ii) would be to say that $want_{EP}$ *is* the *want* of anankastics, as Condoravdi and Lauer claim, but that in problem cases like the Newer Hoboken Scenario, the Harlem Sentence is not interpreted as an anankastic, but rather as a conditional with the objective *want*. The objections I raise below apply just as well to this approach.

[12] Condoravdi and Lauer also affirm that (6) and (7) have anankastic readings (see e.g. their page 2).

can't go to both Harlem and Hoboken and yet you intend to both and plan to go to both (recall that wanting$_{EP}$ is tightly connected with intending and wanting).

We're seeing how far we can go with the idea that (i) it's the objective *want* in anankastics (or at least anankastics with *want*) and (ii) you can't objective-want two things that are incompatible with the facts. This would solve the problem of conflicting goals for the Harlem Sentence. But clearly it doesn't solve the problem of conflicting goals for (6) and (7). These sentences don't contain *want*! Further, there's no analogue of the objective *want* that could apply to (6) or (7), no analogue that could resolve the problem of conflicting goals for anankastics with *intend* or *plan* more generally. Consider:

(8) #Toni doesn't *really* intend to drink from the bottle.

(9) #[To Toni:] You don't *really* intend to drink from the bottle.

(10) #Toni isn't *really* planning to drink from the bottle.

(11) #[To Toni:] You aren't *really* planning to drink from the bottle.

Even if the objective *want* could help in certain cases, it can't furnish a general solution to the problem of conflicting goals.

9 Conclusion

I've argued that Condoravdi and Lauer don't have a general solution to the problem of conflicting goals. They rely on an effective-preference interpretation for *want*, but effective preferences prevent conflict with the agent's beliefs, and what we need to prevent is conflict with the facts. Effective preference *want* doesn't prevent conflict with the facts when the agent is wrong about the facts—when she has false beliefs.

Where does that leave us? Not somewhere good. Remember that Condoravdi and Lauer introduced data of near-anankastics, revealing that previous semantics are overly tailored for anankastics. Those semantics are inadequate, but so is Condoravdi and Lauer's. I wish that I could point to a way forward. But I can't see one. Anankastic conditionals are still a mystery.

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