Bennett's Ch. 17: 'Even If…'
Maile Holck, 11/16/04

Bennett begins this chapter by dismissing theories that hold 'even if' to be an idiom. He goes on to say that if he is right, and 'even' modifies conditionals just as it modifies words and phrases, "a treatise on conditionals need not discuss 'even' at all." This seems like a dismal way to start a chapter called 'Even If…' in a treatise on conditionals, but the material is fun and (possibly) more relevant to conditionals than Bennett wants to believe.

§102. 'Even': Preliminaries

Bennett starts with Pollock's 1976 account of "even if" wherein: 'even if' is an idiom, and a subjunctive statement 'Even if A, C' is true only if C is true. This analysis fits the following example (Bennett's):

(1) "She's going to fire him. If he carries on as in the past she'll fire him; if he becomes more punctual, polite and accurate, she'll fire him; *Even if he were to perform perfectly, she would fire him*."

Lewis offers counterexamples to Pollock's thesis such as the one below.

(2) "If she has any reason to think he is not a teetotaler, she'll fire him. *Even if he were to drink just a little, she would fire him.*

Pollock dismisses these as not fitting the standard use, but Bennett holds that Lewis's example is perfectly standard, and he can, therefore, have a unified account for both. Namely, he treats both as regular cases of 'even,' giving the conditional structure no special value. We will return to this discussion in §105.

§103. Lycan's Account

LYCAN'S ACCOUNT
Lycan offers a semantic (as opposed to pragmatic or, as Lycan says, conventional) analysis of 'even' so for Lycan, (1) differs in *truth value* from simply "If he were to perform perfectly, she would fire him." For Bennett the sentences have the same truth value but may differ in assertibility.

Lycan derives his semantic theory from similarities between 'only' and 'even'

Consider the following sentences first with 'only' and then with 'even':

    (a) [ ] the goats graze on the hillside in the afternoons.
    (b) The goats [ ] graze on the hillside in the afternoons.
    (c) The goats graze [ ] on the hillside in the afternoons.
    (d) The goats graze on the hillside [ ] in the afternoons.

Plugging in 'only' in each sentence, we see the meaning changes. In (a) the focus is the goats (as opposed to sheep), in (b) the focus is grazing (not sleeping), (c) the hillside (not the valley), and (d) the afternoons (not the mornings).

'Even' seems to act in a similar manner, changing the meaning of the sentence by shifting its focus. Since 'only' and 'even' have such similar behavior, and since 'only' is a quantifier, Lycan reasons that 'even' is a quantifier (or, at least, reflects a one in logical form).

LYCAN'S VIEW OF 'EVEN' AS A UNIVERSAL QUANTIFIER
Point 1: The range of a quantifier is restricted by context or by mutual understanding between Speaker and Hearer. A pharmaceutical salesperson may say:

(3a) "Everyone should be on cholesterol reducing drugs."

The hearer and speaker both interpret this not to mean every person in the universe, but every adult, or every adult over a certain age.

Point 2: These restrictions are fallible and may require clarification.

H may believe that people who make certain choices are excluded from this group. The salesperson, anticipating the mistake, will clarify:

(3b) "Everyone should be on cholesterol reducing drugs, and that includes vegetarians and athletes."

Point 3: These clarifications can be expressed using 'even.'

(3c) "Everyone should be on cholesterol reducing drugs, even vegetarians and athletes."

Point 4: 'Unadorned' 'even' clauses are disguised universal quantifiers so

(3d) "Even vegetarians and athletes should be on cholesterol reducing drugs."

really means something like (3b).

Returning to the goats: these sentences really mean:

(a) "Everything (in some group) grazes on the hillside, and that includes the goats."

(b) "The goats do everything (within some class of activities) on the hillside, and that includes grazing."

Etc.

BARKER'S ACCOUNT

'Even' is a universal quantifier, and the focus of 'even' is an extreme instance of the relevant domain of quantification.

So in (3d) "vegetarians and athletes" are 'extreme instances' of "people who might need to be on cholesterol-reducing drugs" …as the domain of quantification is understood by speaker and hearer given context. We use 'even' to make sure the hearer understands our intent that certain items (near the edge of the quantifier domain) be included under the quantifier. So far, it makes little sense to talk about something being near the edge of the quantifier domain. In section 104, Bennett clarifies this some by introducing Barker's notion of a scale that imposes order on the set.

PROBLEMS WITH BARKER-LYCAN

At this point, Bennett lumps Barker's and Lycan's accounts into one theory of 'even' as a universal quantifier whose focus is an extreme instance. Though he admits that the Barker-Lycan theory succeeds in several ways, Bennett notes that it fails in some cases, namely, those where 'even' is clearly not a universal quantifier. He gives two examples, neither of which I think is a good counterexample.

(4) 'How was the Brahms?' 'Pretty good, I guess. Otto was ecstatic. Even Ben quite liked it.' And

(5) 'Isn't it too late in the season for swimming in the sea?' 'No. I'm going to swim today. I may swim even tomorrow.'

According to Bennett, Barker-Lycan can't "lay a finger" on these examples, but that's not obvious to me.

Looking at (5), under Barker-Lycan "I may swim even tomorrow" means something like, "I may swim during any time of the year that is appropriate (with respect to time-of-season) for swimming, and that includes tomorrow" where tomorrow is along the late edge of "times of the year that are appropriate for swimming."

(4) Also seems to fit Barker-Lycan. We get, "Everyone liked it, and that includes Ben (who is an extreme instance of people who might like it)." That is, Ben is least disposed to liking it.

Unlike Bennett, I don't see these counterexamples causing irremediable trouble to universal quantifier approaches. Potentially, Bennett could see fault with the speaker taking too large a domain. If even is a quantifier, he may think, then someone saying "Ben liked it" implies that everyone (who saw the show? Who is disposed to liking it and saw the show?) liked it, and this is (at least potentially) untrue. Same goes for the implication that the speaker swims during every viable day.

Lycan takes context into consideration, though, and I do not think he would read 'even' in (4) as taking such a wide domain; he could reasonably limit the domain to Otto, Ben and the speaker or the people who attended with the speaker. Perhaps Bennett's problem is with Lycan taking such

a limited domain, and he thinks an 'even' ranging (so-to-speak) over such a small group is obviously not a universal quantifier. To me, the use of 'even' in four sounds felicitous if we limit the domain of quantification to a context-sensitive group.

This trick does not work so well with example (5). Context limits the domain only to days appropriate for swimming, and from the use of 'even,' it does not follow that the swimmer swam *every* day in the season. If we call 'even' an almost-all quantifier rather than a universal quantifier, we solve this problem, so perhaps Bennett has drawn out a good point. Still, I don't think 'even' in (4) and (5) is *obviously* not a universal quantifier. These are not the knock-down counterexamples Bennett seemed to intend.

Further evidence that Bennett meant to remove the quantifier approach altogether (and not just swap 'universal' for 'almost-all' is that he says that in light of the counterexamples, we should dismiss the only/even comparison as irrelevant to the semantics of 'even.' As further evidence, he offers that there are other 'floaters' (unlike *only*, *just*, and *too*) that are not quantifiers. He makes two goes at this:

Try one: phrases like 'I'm afraid' or 'I'm proud to announce.' As in: "The goats, I'm proud to announce, graze on the hillside in the afternoon." Lycan dismisses these as discourse markers requiring separation from the sentence by comma or parentheses. Accepting Lycan's objection, Bennett tries again.

Try two: emphasis or italics to express surprise about the focus: "The goats *graze* on the hillside in the afternoons!" Here, Bennett says, the sentence expresses surprise about their grazing but does not imply that they do a range of things, one of which is (surprisingly) grazing.

Branden noted that the examples in try two might be better read as "The goats *graze* on the hillside in the afternoons?!?"

Perhaps this use of exclamation where a question mark seems right is a *British* thing!

Consider, though, the following: "There was a *three-headed space alien* grazing on the hillside this afternoon!" Here the speaker is not questioning, he is merely expressing surprise at what was grazing on the hillside. He is also not implying that anything else grazes on the hillside.

I think Bennett is right that italics used in this way are not universal quantifiers, but I don't know if it is a fair comparison to call them "floaters" so they may not harm Lycan's account.

§104. Amending Bennett's 1982 Account

"TWO TECHNICALITIES…"
- S and S*
  "Given any sentence S containing 'even,' used in the manner I am concerned with, a *simplified* sentence, S* can be formed by dropping 'even' from S."

S: Even the children laughed at him.

S*: The children laughed at him.

Bennett does not specify what "manner [he] is concerned with." Presumably he means to include all uses of 'even' that potentially fit the Barker-Lycan scenario (whatever they may be) and exclude other uses such as 'even' as an intensifier (as in "Bill is even taller than John" to imply John is tall but Bill is taller). Even this is not clear, however, as Bennett discusses 'even' as an intensifier in §107.

- Neighbors of S
  We can arrive at a neighbor, Pn, of S in two ways: replace Focus in S* by something else that yields a proposition, or drop Focus without replacing it by anything else.

  The first method yields, for example the propositions that: the men laughed at him, the teachers laughed at him, everyone laughed at him, etc.

  The second method is not as straightforward. Bennett gives the example that a neighbor of "Even allegations of conflicts of interest make him angry" is "Conflicts of interest make him angry." Here, he says, "allegations of" is the focus of "even," and he simply drops it to get the neighbor. I think this is wrong; it seems that "allegations of conflicts of interest" is the focus, and he is replacing it, as above, by something else, namely "conflicts of interest."

  "Allegations of" cannot stand on its own, and it makes little sense to claim that it is the focus of 'even.' Bennett even says later (pg 264) that his comparison is between allegations of conflicts of interest and conflicts of interest. If this is so, as I think it is, then this second method for arriving at neighbor propositions is unnecessary, even confusing to his argument. Take the following example:

  (6) "She wants him to actually help around the house, not just talk about helping. It's gotten so bad that even his promises to do the dishes make her angry."

  Using the first method, we get a neighbor like, "His bold-faced lies that he'll do the dishes make her angry," which seems fine.

  Using the second method, though, we get the neighbor, "His doing the dishes makes her angry," which seems wrong.

  Granted, we only need to find one viable neighbor, so the fact that the neighbor found by the second method is infelicitous does not hurt Bennett's argument. But we do not need two methods when one will do. In this case, it seems the first method is enough.

"…AND A LITTLE DOCTRINE"
S is true iff S* is true, and an asserting of true S is felicitous iff there is a neighbor Pn such that:

(a) Pn is true, believed by speaker and hearer, and salient for them (e.g. someone just asserted it or acted in a way that made it obvious)

(b) the truth of S* and Pn can be seen as parts of a single more general truth

(c) it is more surprising that S* is true than that Pn is true

In Bennett's shorthand: "S is true and happily asserted if and only if S* is true, and S has a neighbour that is salient, related, and less surprising" (264).

That is, the truth of "Even P" is the same as the truth of P, and whether "Even P" is happily assertible is a matter of conventional implicature and context with respect to (a), (b), and (c).

BENNETT AND LYCAN SIDE BY SIDE, SOME SIMILARITIES

(7) "Even Granny tried on the coat."

Bennett	Lycan
Single Unified Truth ranging over at least one salient neighbor proposition, e.g., that multiple members on the shopping trip tried on the coat.	Single Quantifier ranging over everyone in the proper context, e.g., that everyone (including Granny) tried on the coat.
Truth of S* must be more surprising than that of salient neighbors (It is more surprising that Granny tried on the coat than that the young girl did)	"Even" used only if the range of a more general quantifier would otherwise be misunderstood (Speaker and Hearer both know that Granny hasn't tried on a new coat since 1945).

BARKER'S COUNTEREXAMPLE AND BENNETT'S RESULTING SCALAR ANALYSIS

Bennett, somewhat abruptly, then jumps to Barker's assertion that something more that surprise is needed in Bennett's account. He offers the following counterexample:

(8) "Someone reading the prize winners' list remarks, *Only three people won a prize out of a hundred this year. Brain and Smart won a prize, of course, but last year's worst student was the other, Smith!* To which in reply it is exclaimed, *Even **Smith** won a prize!"* (from Barker, pg 4)

This use of 'even,' says Barker, fits Bennett's analysis. "Smith won a prize" is true, and "Brain won a prize" is a neighbor which is salient, related and less surprising. But the use of 'even' here is, says Barker, clearly infelicitous, probably because Barker thinks of 'even' as a quantifier. Under that view, saying that Smith wins, entails that all above him on the scale also win (which is not true).

Bennett accepts that a problem occurs because there is a neighbor proposition, and it is related because it satisfies a single, more general truth, namely that three people won a prize. Bennett argues that he didn't "mean anything as feeble as that" could satisfy the relatedness requirement,

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but he is not sure what he did mean, so he accepts the counterexample and goes on to search for something beyond surprisingness. He follows in Barker's footsteps, considering a scalar approach.

Barker lays out notion of a sort of metaphysical scale, so in example (3), above, "vegetarians and athletes" are examples of people who should *just barely* be on the cholesterol reducing drugs. That is, they have an actual place on some sort of scale. He adds, though, that "by virtue of *even,* this scale is simultaneously a probability scale, i.e., a probability-of-satisfying-x [*should be on cholesterol reducing drugs*]-scale, where the low point is again [vegetarians and athletes]. (7).

Branden suggested that perhaps the subjective probability scale should replace the other scale altogether. Barker says that scalar analyses of *even* requiring only a probability scale lead to infelicitous statements. I think this is because the probability scale merely marks surprise, and Barker (I think correctly) wants to hold on to the quantifier approach. His answer is that we must include a sort of metaphysical scale, but I think the problem could also be solved by requiring that the focus of S and the corresponding person (object, day-of-the-year, etc) in Pn be members of the same natural class. The subjective-probability scale, then, is determined by the subjective (to speaker and hearer?) probability that the person is a member of that class.

(Kenny noted that we might need something with more dimensions than a scale. This makes sense as Granny and the baby might have the same likelihood of trying on the coat (or being a member of coat-tryers-on) yet Granny's trying on the coat would not imply that the baby tried it on. I wonder, though, if context already performs this function. That is, context limits the natural class in question so that the membership of people with lower probability to be members does implicate the membership of (many) people with higher probability.)

Bennett takes Barker's advice, though, maybe even takes it a little too far. He keeps the metaphysical scale, but he *drops* the probability scale. The new requirement to his account of 'even,' then is that the focus and the subject of the neighbor proposition are both members of the same scale and that the focus is farther down on that scale.
Applying this, we replace

(c) it is more surprising that S* is true than that Pn is true with

(c*) both S* and Pn involve some scale, the focus item lies further along that scale than any items referred to in Pn, and for that reason the speaker and the hearers find it more surprising or striking or noteworthy that S* is true than that Pn is true.

According to Bennett, then, the surprise (or noteworthiness, strikingness, etc.) supervenes on the relevant scale rather than the proposition itself. The use of 'even' in the Smith example is infelicitous unless Smith is a lower-down member of the same scale as Brain. Here it would be the students-deservingness-of-a-prize scale. The surprisingness comes not from the thought that Smith won a prize but that the judges reached so far down on the scale.

To me it seems that Smith and Brain *are* members of the same scale and the reason the use of 'even' was infelicitous was because it implied that the other members of the scale, those between

Smith and Brain, also won a prize, which they did not. Even with Bennett's revision, his approach allows the infelicitous: "Even Smith!" Barker also objects to the scalar approach, and Bennett has a reply to both.

Barker's example:

(9) "Suppose a student rally was held today where the police turned up. In general the police go out of their way to arrest philosophy students. There were three philosophy students at the rally. Consider this conversation;

    A: *Who got arrested today?*

    B: *Just some philosophy students: Fred, Mary, and even **Jane**.*

This is infelicitous for Barker because 'even Jane…" implies that the others between Fred/Mary and Jane on the scale were also arrested, which is not true.

Bennett gets out of this objection because the neighbor, say, "Mary got arrested today," implies the relevant scalar fact (that Jane is the most mild-mannered philosophy student who attended the rally) which helps make S* (Jane got arrested today) more surprising.

Bennett disagrees that if the proposition is true of the focus item, it must also be true of everything higher up on the scale (thus, 'even' seems like a universal quantifier). He says that we can understand the prize-givers to have distributed prizes intermittently. Not everyone along the scale got a prize, still it is surprising that Smith, so low on the scale, was awarded.

Thus, it seems, Bennett wants to hold that examples (8) and (9) *are* felicitous. I think Bennett is on the right track when he says that we can understand the prize-givers to have distributed intermittently, but it is not because 'even' is not a quantifier at all, it is because it is an 'almost all' quantifier.

Saying even Smith won is infelicitous if nobody between Smith and Brain won, but if, say, seventy other students between Smith and Brain had also won a prize, use of 'even' seems right.

Bennett also holds that the focus of 'even' need not be the lowest point on the scale; it only needs to be notably low. Thus, he says, "'They really stretched the criteria for the winning of prizes; even Smith won a prize' could be felicitous although Jones, who is stupider than Smith, also won a prize" (267). I think this is right.

§105. 'Even If…'

Finally, we get to the chapter's namesake, not just 'even' but 'even if…'

CONSEQUENT ENTAILMENT?

Bennett starts by dropping his initial 'entailment of consequent' requirement. I think it's worth noting that although Lycan helped convince Bennett to drop this requirement, Lycan himself keeps a weaker version of it. He says that *Q even if P* is heard to assert *Q* although it does not entail it.

Barker says that while *Q* is not entailed by *P,* it is not undermined (causally or otherwise) by P. That is 'even if' removes the otherwise implied connection between P and Q. Bennett's account is similar.

Returning to example (1) "Even if he were to perform perfectly, she would fire him," consequent entailment seems right, but there are other cases where it fails. For example:

(10) "If he were to come home late again, she would be mad. Even if he were to come home just five minutes late, she would be mad."

Bennett's account can handle this:
S*: "If he were to come home just five minutes late, she would be mad" is true
Pn: "If he were to come home an hour late, she would get mad at him" is salient, etc.

But the consequent is clearly not entailed. If he came home early or on time, it does not follow that she would get mad. 'Even if' in the antecedent does not entail that she would get mad *no matter what*.

"TRUE" EVEN IF CONDITIONALS

This brings us back to the Pollock/Lewis examples from the first page. There are, apparently, two types of conditionals:

(1) "She's going to fire him. If he carries on as in the past she'll fire him; if he becomes more punctual, polite and accurate, she'll fire him; *Even if he were to perform perfectly, she would fire him*."

(2) "If she has any reason to think he is not a teetotaler, she'll fire him. *Even if he were to drink just a little, she would fire him.*

Pollock held that those of type (2) are non-standard because they do not entail the truth of their own consequents. Bennett and Lycan have a different idea; in conditionals of type (2), we are misreading the focus. The sentence should really read:

Bennett: "If he were to drink even just a little…"
Lycan: "Even if he were to drink *just a little*…" (shifting the word-order is not necessary for shifting the focus)

In other words, the focus of the second type of conditional is not the whole antecedent as it is in (1), it is just some part of it.

Thus, it seems conditionals are type (1) are true "even if" conditionals; those of type (2) are merely conditionals containing "even," and Lycan's consequent assertability still holds for true "even if" conditionals.

Bennett's account can handle this revision and so can Lycan's because a possible neighbor sentence is a universal such as, "If he were to drink any (envisaged) amount she would fire him, and that includes just-a-little."

"STILL"

Probably in answer to Barker, Bennett makes a quick note of "still" as a lead in to the next section. Barker agrees with Bennett that "even" does not affect the truth conditions of a "semifactual" (conditionals like example (1)), but "still" does.

"Still" has been invisible in our examples, but we can see how it fits.

(1) "Even if he were to perform perfectly, she would (still) fire him."

"Still" puts the focus on something we might have expected to have stopped or would have expected not to be the case.

(11) "The food was terrible and the service worse; still, I'd recommend the restaurant to a friend."

"Still" in the consequent of a conditional puts the focus on something we might have otherwise expected to be ruled out by the antecedent.

(11a) "Even if the food were terrible, I would still recommend the restaurant to a friend."

Bennett says, as with "even," "still" affects the felicity but not the truth. He still waited for her iff he waited for her, just as even the children laughed at him iff the children laughed at him.

§106. Truth or Felicity?

TRUTH OR FELICITY

Bennett returns to conventional implicature saying that while the truth of the sentence is ensured by the truth of S*, the felicity relies on the salience, relatedness and less-surprisingness (on some scale) of the neighbor.

Lycan, on the other hand, says that *truth* (not just felicity) is affected by the truth of the universally quantified proposition (one of Bennett's possible neighbors). That is, "Even the children laughed at him" is true iff "Everyone (in some understood domain) laughed at him, including the children."

Bennett reminds of us Granny trying on the coat. On Lycan's analysis, "Even Granny tried on the coat" is true iff every family member at the store tried on the coat, and that includes Granny. Suppose, says Bennett, that one family member went to the bathroom while the coat was being passed around and failed to try in on. In this case, by Lycan's account, "Even Granny tried on the coat" is false because one member of the quantified-over set did not try on the coat, and this cannot be right. This seems like a good argument against even-as-a-universal-quantifier but maybe not against Lycan's truth conditions.

Lycan addresses a similar problem in his paper. He first tries to answer it by saying we should restrict the quantification class to things *within reason*. I think this gets him close to a reply but not quite; it is within reason to suppose the girl was present while the coat was passed around. Further, Lycan admits that applying this restriction causes the 'even'/ 'only' parallel to split.

He half-heartedly offers one more try. Suppose, he says, that of a large group of people invited to a party, Gonzo (a big party animal) and Bluto (an even bigger one) are almost certain to go. On the night of the party, however, every invitee gets the stomach flu. All stay home but Gonzo, who drags himself to the party. The assertion:

(12) "The party was a disaster, even Bluto stayed home"

seems felicitous. Yet under Lycan's account, it fails because Gonzo, a less extreme member of the scale, did attend. Thus, it is not true that "everyone (within reason) stayed home from the party, even Bluto" because Gonzo did not stay home.

Bennett continues, saying that in the Granny case above, his account of "even" still works because he holds the neighbor sentence as a felicity condition which is "intuitively more plausible" than holding it as a truth condition. I think it still works because it did not require that everyone tried on the coat. That is, if 'even' is an almost-all quantifier, these examples do not counter it.

In fact, even if he denies quantifier approach, Bennett could preserve Lycan's idea that 'even' affects truth by reassessing the chosen neighbor and finding that the truth of it and S* is not part of the more general truth that everyone in the store tried on the coat; the "more general truth" was that everyone in the *room* at the time tried on the coat.

Perhaps this is not "intuitively more plausible" than figuring the neighbor proposition a felicity condition, but it is not a knock-down argument against Lycan's truth-condition requirement. Even Bennett agrees that the distinction between truth and conventional implicature is sketchy.

LYCAN FIGHTS FOR TRUTH.

Drawing a final connection between 'even' and 'only,' Bennett's Lycan (who unlike the real Lycan refuses to even consider that the two do not run in parallel) says that all floaters (e.g. 'just,' 'at least,' 'too') seem to be quantifiers though he does not explicitly say that each affects truth value the way 'only' and (he holds) 'even' do. Bennett says that some floaters fail to affect truth conditions only-style. He uses "too" as an example.

He asks us to imagine awaking in a flowery meadow and uttering *I too am in Arcadia*. According to Lycan, this is true just in case I am in Arcadia and at least one other being is also there.

Bennett holds that this is wrong, saying that the statement is true just in case I am in Arcadia, regardless of the location of anyone else. Conventional implicature makes the statement infelicitous, but it is nonetheless true.

Like Bennett says, though, the truth/conventional implicature distinction has no basis beyond intuition.

§107. Two Words?

Finally returning to the question of what manner of 'even' he is concerned with, Bennett offers two sentences:

> (a) Jane is even heavier than Rita

> (b) Even Jane is heavier than Rita

The first implies that Rita is heavy and Jane moreso while the latter implies that Rita is light and Jane (also considered light) is heavier.

This leads Bennett to suspect that "even" might be two different words. He takes as evidence that translated into French or German, these sentences would replace one word for "even" in the first sentence and another for "even" in the second.

However, in several other languages (and, of course, in English), we use the same word. Noting this, Bennett looks for, and finds, a relation between the two sentences. Namely, that the latter is strictly equivalent to

> (a*) Even Rita is lighter than Jane.

This revised version (a*) uses the same 'even' as (b) yet is equivalent to (a) in meaning. Thus, Bennett concludes, we can reasonable say that the same 'even' is at work in both cases. The difference is in the focus of 'even'. The focus of (1) is not "heavier" it is "heavier-than-Rita." There is one 'even,' and when we use it we need to be careful to mind the focus. Seems like a good moral for the entire chapter.

A Final Note

I will leave you with a final note. There seems to be a use of 'even' that does not fit Bennett's analysis—it almost squeezes by but fails at the last second. Consider:

(13) I am sitting around with a group of friends watching the news, and the newscaster does something unintentionally funny. I start laughing, and everyone else in the room sits stone-faced. I say to my friends, "No reaction? Come on, even *I* got thought that was funny." My friends know it takes a lot to make me laugh.

S*, "I thought that was funny" is true, but there is no neighbor proposition which is salient, related, and less surprising (on some scale). There *is* no neighbor proposition at all—no one else thought it was funny.

The best shot for a neighbor is "Everyone in the room seemed likely to think what the newscaster did was funny," but this is not a valid neighbor for Bennett.

Use of 'even' in (13) seems felicitous, and if it is a complete theory of 'even' should be able to account for it.

I think our revised account succeeds on most points.

1- There is a natural class of people expected to laugh at such jokes
2- Subjective probability (mine and everyone in the room's—if people disagreed widely on this probability, they may disagree on the felicity of 'even') that I would be a member of that class is low

But we run into a problem:

3- Use of 'even' implies that most (or almost all) members with a higher probability of being members of the set are members, and this is not true.

Hence, I think we have to conclude that 'even' in (13) is not felicitous in the way that all ironic/sarcastic comments are infelicitous. They play off the conventional use of the words to highlight something, here that members who I had expected to laugh did not laugh.