'Even if. . .'

Jonathan Bennettt

102. 'Even': preliminaries

The literature includes work on the semantics of conditionals that use 'Even if', such as 'Even if you ask me on bended knees, I won't marry you'. The first philosopher to attend to 'Even if. . .' conditionals, so far as I know, was Pollock (1976: 29–31). He treats them as one species of conditional, and seeks to give their truth conditions. Much of his labour on this has to do with how to evaluate A>C when C is true (§§91-3). I shall not resume that topic. My present concern with Pollock focuses on his statement that the subjunctive 'Even if A, C' is true only if C is true, so that in saying 'Even if channels were to be cut into the dam, the village would be safe' one asserts, among other things, that the village will be safe.

Here is a conditional—with some scene-setting—which makes that plausible:

> 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; (1) *Even if he were to perform perfectly, she would fire him.*

However, Lewis offered examples like the following as evidence against Pollock's thesis:

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

Conditional 2 in the context I have given it does not entail or even suggest the truth of the consequent. Pollock gives 2 the back of his hand, saying: 'We are not attempting to analyze all possible uses of "even if". We are merely analyzing what is in some sense "the standard use" of "even if"' (page 31). But 2 is perfectly 'standard', and the difference between it and 1 is straightforward. I shall explain it in this chapter.

Pollock took 'Even if' to be an idiom—understanding it as a single semantic lump, rather than as an upshot of the separate meanings of 'even' and of 'if'. (Like Lewis's treatment of 'If. . . might. . . '—see §73 and §8.) Nobody who has worked on 'even if' in recent years takes it to be an idiom.

Strictly speaking, then, a treatise on conditionals need not discuss 'even' at all, any more than a theory of time and tense needs to attend separately to 'even when'. Still, the present chapter may serve as prophylaxis against mistakes relating to 'even if'. The linguists have worked hard and long on 'even [if]', and I have not absorbed their results. However, I gather from Dancygier 1998: 160–7 that there is

a consensus amongst them on at least some of the points I shall be defending.

A start on getting straight about this was made by Hazen and Slote (1979); I took the story further, writing in culpable ignorance of their work (1982); and Lycan (1991) made yet further progress, partly building on my work though also dissenting from some of it; papers by Barker (1991, 1994) have thrown more light still, in relation to Lycan's work and mine but also rejecting parts of each.

103. Lycan's account

Lycan starts by comparing 'even' with 'only'. Each word is what he calls a 'floater': it can occur in many positions in a sentence, each bringing a difference in 'focus' (as the linguists call it). For example:

(1) Only the goats graze on the hillside in the afternoons.
(2) The goats only graze on the hillside in the afternoons.
(3) The goats graze only on the hillside in the afternoons.
(4) The goats graze on the hillside only in the afternoons.

The meanings are different: 1 focuses on the goats (not the sheep), 2 on grazing (not sleeping), 3 on the hillside (not the valley floor), 4 on the afternoons (not the mornings). Many people would use 2 to mean what 4 properly means, and the context would save them from misunderstanding. Sometimes, indeed, the correct placing of 'only'—as of 'even'—can sound a little pedantic. Still, any literate person will agree with me about what is strictly correct, and thus about the proper focus of 'only' in 2.

Now, the word 'even' has the same range of positions, with corresponding differences of focus. Thus:

(1) Even the goats graze on the hillside in the afternoons.
(2) The goats even graze on the hillside in the afternoons.
(3) The goats graze even on the hillside in the afternoons.

(4) The goats graze on the hillside even in the afternoons.

I think you will agree, before hearing detailed explanations, that these differ in meaning because the word 'even' somehow acts in 1 on 'the goats', in 2 on 'graze', in 3 on 'on the hillside', and in 4 on 'in the afternoons'.

This likeness of 'even' to 'only' has long been familiar, but Lycan was the first to turn it to account in an original and illuminating way. Given that *'only' is a quantifier*, he conjectures that *'even' is also a quantifier*, or at least that it 'reflects a universal quantifier in logical form' (1991: 132). In his 2001 book Lycan proposes a slightly different account from that of the 1991 article; but all the features I shall discuss are the same in both.

Lycan starts from this fact: when we use a universal quantifier, its range is tacitly restricted by the context or by a mutual understanding between speaker and hearers. 'Why aren't you going to the baseball game? Everyone else is going.' This does not mean that every other person in the universe is going, but everyone in some roughly understood group. Sometimes there may be a misunderstanding about the range of the quantifier, as when I say to you 'Michael has always admired Nietzsche', meaning to generalize over times since Michael first heard of Nietzsche (fifty years), and you wrongly think I am talking only about times since he became a philosopher (forty years). Anticipating such a misunderstanding, I might continue 'ldots and that includes his years as a schoolboy'. Similarly, someone might say 'Every Catholic rejects papal infallibility now', and then clarify the intended range of his quantifier by saying '. . . and that includes the priests'.

Now, either of those clarifications could have been expressed using 'even'. 'Michael has always admired Nietzsche, even when he was a schoolboy.' 'Every Catholic rejects papal infallibility now, even the priests.' What about statements

in which 'even' occurs without being prefaced by a clause using 'always' or 'every' or the like? According to Lycan, such statements do themselves mean something universally quantified. He would say that the unadorned 'Even the priests reject papal infallibility' means something along the lines of 'Everybody rejects. . . etc., and that includes the priests'. By the same reasoning, (1) 'Even the goats graze on the hillside' means 'Everything (in some envisaged group) grazes on the hillside, and that includes the goats'; and (2) 'The goats even graze on the hillside' means 'The goats do everything (in some envisaged class of activities) on the hillside, and that includes grazing'. Similarly with 3 and 4.

Barker's 1991 paper appeared just three months earlier; evidently it and Lycan's owed nothing to one another. Barker's account of 'even' is basically like Lycan's, minus the comparison with 'only'. Barker stipulates that what is being asserted (minus 'even') is 'an extreme instance' of the relevant universal quantification. Lycan does not say this, but something like it follows from his account. Whenever there is a point in saying explicitly that the focus item (the one referred to by the focus of 'even') is included, this must be because hearers might otherwise understand the quantifier to exclude it; so the focus item must be thought of as near the edge of the quantifier's likely range, and in that sense to be an extreme instance.

Despite its elegant handling of many cases, the Barker-Lycan account fails for others. Plenty of relevant occurrences of 'even' do not involve universal quantification, even implicitly:

> 'How was the Brahms?' 'Pretty good, I guess. Otto was ecstatic. Even Ben quite liked it.'
> '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.'

(Or, to avoid sounding pedantic, 'I may even swim tomorrow'.) There are countless such examples, and the Barker-Lycan approach cannot lay a finger on them, so far as I can see. This trouble of theirs seems to be irremediable.

What, then, should we do with the comparison of 'even' with 'only'? Before we just walk out on it, we should note that other words also come into this comparison. 'Other floaters', Lycan writes, 'are *just. . .* , *at least/most*, *maybe*, *too*, and *also*. Notice that all have reasonably clear quantificational or otherwise referential values' (Lycan 1991: 134, n 16). Are we to dismiss all of this as irrelevant to the semantics of 'even'?

Yes. I believe it to be a mere historical accident of our language, and in no way necessary, that (nearly) all of our one-word floaters involve something quantificational. We do have other floaters that are not 'quantificational or referential'. In each member of the 'even' series about the goats, remove 'even' and after its focus insert '(I'm afraid)':

> The goats (I'm afraid) graze on the hillside in the afternoons,
> The goats graze (I'm afraid) on the hillside. . .

and so on. Also 'I'm proud to announce', 'You'll be sorry/glad to hear', and so on. Unlike Lycan's favourite floaters, however, these need commas or parentheses, and that may disqualify them from the comparison I am offering, because it may show that 'they are discourse markers of some sort rather than genuine constituents of the sentences "in" which they occur' (Lycan 2001: 110).

Well, then, consider the role of spoken emphasis, or of the written equivalent, namely italics and a terminal exclamation mark:

> *The goats* graze on the hillside in the afternoons!
> The goats *graze* on the hillside in the afternoons!
> The goats graze *on the hillside* in the afternoons!
> The goats graze on the hillside *in the afternoons*!

In these, the effect of the italics (aided by the exclamation mark) is to express some kind of surprise or impressment about the role of the focus item in the entire truth that is expressed. So does 'even', but it means more than that, and so it does not do every job that italics can do. I submit that it is a mere accident that English does not have a single word with exactly the same significance as emphasis/italics, doing a part of what 'even' now does. Then that word and 'only' would also be 'syntactic soul-mates', but it would be obvious that one was a quantifier and the other not. In the light of all this, we should be comfortable with the idea that although most English one-word floaters have something quantificational in their meaning, 'even' does not.

104. Amending Bennett's 1982 account

My 1982 paper came at things differently. The core of it, now slightly amended, consists of two technicalities and a little doctrine.

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. Thus, if S is 'Even the children laughed at him' then S^* is 'The children laughed at him'.

S has countless 'neighbours', as I call them. A neighbour of S is a proposition that could naturally be expressed, at least approximately, by a sentence formed out of S^* by an operation on (Focus) that part that constituted the focus of 'even' in S: the operation may be (1) replacing Focus by something else that yields a sentence or (2) by dropping Focus without replacing it by anything else. Examples of 1: eligible neighbours of 'Even the children laughed at him' include the propositions that everybody laughed at him, that the adults were amused by him, that his grandmother giggled at him, and so on. An example of 2: an eligible neighbour

of 'Even *allegations of* conflicts of interest make him angry' could be 'Conflicts of interest make him angry'.

Now for the doctrine. When S uses 'even' in the manner we are studying, S is true if and only if S^* is true; and an asserting of true S is felicitous, satisfactory, well-put, if and only if there is a neighbour P_n of S such that:

(a) P_n is true and mutually believed by speaker and hearer, and salient for them (perhaps having just been authoritatively asserted);

(b) the truth of S^* and that of P_n can naturally be seen as parts of a single more general truth;

(c) it is more surprising that S^* is true than that P_n is true.

I abbreviate the whole of condition *a* to 'P_n is salient', and *b* to 'P_n is related'—but remember that these are mere shorthand. Then the whole story is that 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.

Of the two ways in which a neighbour of S may relate to S^*, the more usual one is (1) replacement of Focus by something else; but (2) the simple dropping of Focus also deserves a place in my account. Lycan mocks the account for containing it, saying that it commits me to 'compar[ing] the expectedness of allegations. . . with that of nothingness' (2001: 100). It does no such thing. The needed comparison, which my account supplies, is between allegations of conflicts of interest and conflicts of interest.

Originally I took sentences as neighbours, rather than propositions. Vic Dudman warned me against this, and he was right. If the account stays with *sentences* formed according to my recipe—replace the focus of 'even' by something else in S^*—it does not cover such innocent examples

as this: 'The children laughed themselves sick. Even the adults were amused.' In that context the difference between 'laughed themselves sick' and 'were amused' is nugatory, and by moving from 'sentence' to 'proposition' I have stopped my account from implying otherwise. I should add that the salient proposition need not be openly asserted:

> 'Isn't it too late in the season for swimming in the sea?' 'No.' He dives into the sea, surfaces, and with shivering bravado says: 'I may even swim tomorrow.'

He gives salience to the proposition that he is swimming today, without putting it in words.

I contend that S is true if S* is true. The further constraint on the neighbour proposition is, according to me, a matter of conventional implicature as distinct from outright truth-affecting assertion (§15).

Lycan and I agree that our accounts have much in common. For 'Even Granny tried on the coat' to be all right on my account, there has to be a salient neighbour proposition that naturally combines with 'Granny tried on the coat' to form a single unified truth; and a good way to satisfy this is with a proposition about other people trying on the coat—which gives Lycan his quantification. My requirement of a single unified truth is also provided for in Lycan's account by the inclusion of Granny and the others in the scope of a single quantifier. As for my requirement that the truth of S* must be more surprising than that of P_n: Lycan's analysis provides for this too. It is reasonable to use 'even' for the Lycan purpose only if one thinks that otherwise the range of a certain quantifier might be misunderstood. When I say 'Even granny tried on the coat', rather than merely saying 'Everyone tried on the coat' and trusting you to understand Granny to be included, that should be because I could reasonably have said 'everyone' meaning to exclude Granny; so it must be somewhat surprising or notable that Granny should have

tried on the coat—and more so than that the others did. This is not a special feature of this example; it applies to them all.

Barker (1991: 4–5) contends that the concept of 'more surprising' does not do the job, failing in cases where universal quantifiers succeed. He points to this exchange:

> South: 'Only three people out of a hundred won prizes. Brain and Smart won prizes, of course, but so did Smith, the worst student in the class.'
>
> North: 'Even Smith won a prize!'

This plainly infelicitous use of 'even' satisfies my conditions, Barker says, taking it that my requirement for a 'single more general truth' is satisfied by *Three of the students won a prize*. In offering my analysis I did not mean anything as feeble as that, but I am not sure what exactly I did mean. Rather than trying to stiffen that part of the analysis, therefore, I shall accept this as a counterexample to it, and agree with Barker that what is needed is something more, or something other, than mere surprisingness.

Universal quantification could provide it: what North says in that remark would be happier if there were a salient, known, neighbour proposition to the effect that *all the Fs won a prize* for some suitable F that applies to Smith. For example, *All the students with decent attendance records won a prize*. If there is a point in specifying that Smith is included, this must be for a reason that makes it especially surprising that he won a prize; so that condition is satisfied, but no longer by the mere, bare surprisingness that brought down my account.

Because it is wrong to tie 'even' to universal quantification, however, we must look further. I submit that the needed ingredient in the analysis is one Barker considers, by discussing the use of it in Fauconnier 1975, namely the notion of the focus item's *place on a scale*. Suppose the news—the neighbour proposition—was that many students won prizes

because the adjudicators had reached a long way down the ability scale; against *this* background it might be reasonable to say 'Even Smith got a prize'. The simplified sentence 'Smith got a prize' says something more surprising than the neighbour proposition; but now it is the surprisingness of their having reached *that far down*, that far along the scale.

The scalar notion is also missing from another of Barker's counterexamples to my analysis:

> Looking out the window expecting to find only family members in the front yard, I see three figures and remark truly, 'There's Pa and Grandma outside and even *Ronald Reagan*!' My audience rejoins 'Even *Reagan* is outside!'

This fits my 1982 conditions for felicity, but it is a downright silly use of 'even'. What is missing, I now suggest, is a relevant scalar thought. Change the example to one where the effective neighbour proposition was that guests at my surprise party included not only my immediate family but also my nieces, nephews, cousins, colleagues, former colleagues,. . . Against this background, I could properly say 'Even Ronald Reagan was there' if, for instance, I had met Reagan a few times and occasionally worked with him on small tasks. The neighbour proposition is that the list of invitees who came to the party stretched a good distance along the remoteness-of-relationship scale; and 'even Ronald Reagan was there' reflects how far along the scale he is. Or the effective neighbour proposition might concern a scale not of closeness of relationship but rather of public importance and fame; that too could make it felicitous to say 'even Reagan was there!', however well I knew him.

My account needs, then, to be modified by strengthening

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

to something like this:

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

This is on the right lines, I submit. The relevant scale is not merely that of sheer surprisingness, but rather of something upon which—in the given context—surprisingness supervenes. In my first Reagan example, the scale concerns remoteness of relation to me; in the second, public importance and fame. If this is not to include the Reagan example with which Barker challenged my original account, we must deny that my immediate family and Ronald Reagan (whom I have never met or corresponded with) lie at opposite ends of a single scale of closeness of relation to me. Intuitively the denial seems all right; but I would like to support it with explicit rules for the 'scale' concept, and have not been able to devise any.

I now say 'surprising or striking or noteworthy' because 'surprising' is too narrow. 'There has not been proof of any miracle, or strong evidence for any miracle, or even *prima facie* evidence of any miracle'—this might be said, properly enough, in a group of people none of whom is *surprised* by the final clause; but it is a more striking claim than the ones that go before—which is to say that S* is more striking than P_n—which is what my present analysis makes room for.

The analysis applies well enough to the examples I have used in this chapter. 'I shall swim today; I may even swim tomorrow'—here the focus item is tomorrow, which is lower than today on the scale of early-enough-in-the-year–for-a-swim. 'Otto was ecstatic about the Brahms. Even Ben quite liked it'—the focus item is Ben, who is lower than Otto on the scale of receptivity to Brahms. In this example, the scalar idea is somewhat recessive, but it is present all the same.

To see this, consider an example from which it is absent. I hear music on the radio, I enjoy it, and have a sense that my dog enjoys it too, though I don't think the enjoyments are related. The dog, I suspect, is responding to some rhythmic features of the piece that contribute nothing to my aesthetic appreciation of it. Here it is not appropriate for me to say, except as a joke: 'I enjoyed it. Even my dog enjoyed it.' It is not the case that the music was *so attractive* that it reached not only me but the dog.

Barker's objection to the scalar approach (pages 8–10), though it holds against the version he considers, does not apply to mine. His target version requires merely that there be a relevant scale with the focus item at one end of it; mine requires that relevant scalar fact be implied by the salient, known neighbour proposition, *and that it helps to make S* more surprising etc. than P_n*. The example that Barker uses against the scalar approach involves a scale at one end of which sits the focus item; but that fact is idle, silent, not part of anyone's thought. This does no harm to my version of the scalar approach, which requires that the neighbour proposition be seen by all concerned to involved the relevant scale.

My handling of the scalar notion differs in two other ways from the one that Barker considers. His requires that the item in the focus of 'even' be at 'the lowest point on the scale' (page 8). I see no need for that, and nor does Lycan (2001: 120). All that is required is that it be low enough for the reported fact—that the simplified sentence is true of it—to be notable. '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.

Also, Barker seems to inherit from Fauconnier the idea that if the simple sentence is true of the focus item then it is true of everything higher up the scale. I do not see why. In the prize-winning example, the relevant scale could be that of unworthiness (by correct standards) to win a prize; the examiners went far along that scale awarding prizes. They did so intermittently, so that plenty of lowish-level students did not win prizes. Still, in their erratic way they went pretty far down; even Smith won a prize. Here again, incidentally, universal quantification is absent.

105. 'Even if. . . '
As for the two conditionals that Pollock mentioned (§102), Lycan and I tell essentially the same story about how they differ, namely in the focus of 'even'. My way of showing this was defective in some of its details, as Lycan and Barker have proved, and Delgardo (1999: 114-6) has further illustrated. I wrenched my analysis into an ugly shape through trying to make it imply that one of the two kinds of conditional entails its consequent. In this I was following Pollock's lead, which was an error. I ought not to have struggled to preserve the 'entailment of consequent' idea; my account looks more comely when not crushed under that burden of error.

On the most natural reading of it, 'Even if he were to perform perfectly, she would fire him' is true and felicitous just in case (1) If he were to perform perfectly she would fire him, and (2) Some neighbour proposition of 1—that is, something expressible in the form 'If. . . were to be the case, she would fire him' is (in my shorthand) salient, related, and less surprising. Of these, 1 is required for the conditional's truth, 2 for its felicity.

Lycan's treatment could fit the case, for the neighbour proposition might be something implying that for any value of P (within some envisaged range), if P she would fire him. But it might not fit: 'She doesn't think he is yet ready to play Hamlet, and has forbidden him to do so. If he defied her about this, she would fire him. Even if he performed

perfectly, she would fire him.' That fits my analysis, not Lycan's. In countless possible scenarios—including many that fit Lycan's analysis as well as ones that fit only mine—the conditional has not the faintest appearance of entailing its own consequent—that is, entailing *She will fire him.*

Now for the other of the two conditionals with which we started: 'Even if he were to drink just a little, she would fire him.' Pollock thought that its special feature, stopping it from involving 'the standard sense' of 'even if', was that it does not entail the truth of its own consequent. In fact, as we have just seen, the other example does not do this either; the idea of entailing the consequent was an *ignis fatuus* that I followed into a swamp. Still, this second conditional differs from the other in a way that Lycan and I can describe.

On its most natural reading, the conditional would be better expressed in the form 'If he were to drink even just a little. . .', and my account deals smoothly with this. The simplified sentence is 'If he were to drink just a little, she would fire him' and the eligible neighbours are such propositions as that if he were to drink more than she does she would fire him, that if he were to drink as much as he would like to she would fire him, and so on. The given conditional is true and felicitously uttered if the simplified sentence is true, and if some neighbour proposition is salient, related, and less surprising or noteworthy because of some scalar fact.

Here again, Lycan's apparatus might be put to use: If he were to drink any (envisaged) amount she would fire him, and that includes the amount just-a-little. But it is not always available.

The two conditionals differ formally, according to both Lycan and me, in that the focus of 'even' is the whole antecedent in one, something within the antecedent in the other.

Having discussed 'even', I should mention 'still'. 'Even if he performed perfectly, she would still fire him.' 'Even if channels were cut into the dam, the village would still be safe.' We use 'still' to mark the idea of something's being the case that might naturally be thought not to be the case, given what has been said before or what is assumed in the context. This plainly fits the OED's examples of sense 6 of the word: 'Ventilation would improve it, but still it would be unhealthy.' 'He is a rogue in many ways. Still, I like him.' (The same adversative idea is present, I suggest, in uses of 'still' falling under the OED's sense 4—'indicating the continuation of a previous action or condition', of which it gives the example '. . . one of those harmless prejudices that still linger round the person of the sovereign'. In that example, and in general, something is said to have 'still' continued because one might have expected it to have stopped.)

The use of 'still' in subjunctive conditionals resembles that. 'Even if the dam were weakened, the village would still be safe' has the same adversative thought buried in it, because such a conditional would ordinarily be asserted only in a context where there was some thought of the antecedent's ruling out the consequent. In such uses of it, 'still' affects what is conventionally implied but not what is outright asserted: the prejudices still linger if and only if the prejudices linger; he still waited for her if and only if he waited for her.

106. Truth or felicity?

My 1982 and present accounts of 'even' both say that for the *truth* of S (containing 'even') all that is needed is the truth of S* (that is, what you get by deleting 'even' from S), the remainder of the account bearing on felicity, not truth. Barker agrees about this: his 'remainder' differs from mine, but we agree about what it is an account *of.* Lycan, on the

other hand, holds that the truth of a relevant universally quantified proposition etc. is required for the *truth* of the statement using 'even'. He is encouraged in this by the comparison between 'even' and 'only':

> An *only*-sentence is true if and only if none but the mentioned member of the reference class satisfies the schema that results from deleting *only* itself and the mention, while an *even*-sentence is true if and only if every member of the reference class including the mentioned member satisfies that schema. (Lycan 1991: 135)

In short, just as the truth of 'Only Susan left' requires more than that Susan left, so does the truth of 'Even Susan left'.

This pays an intuitively high price for the bracketing of 'even' with 'only'. Suppose you are recounting a family's visit to a clothing store. You report that most members of the family tried on many garments while Granny sat in the corner and watched. You believe that everyone, including Granny, tried on the coat, but you are wrong about this: the younger girl went to the bathroom instead. In reporting the coat episode, you say: 'When it came to the coat, even Granny tried it on.' Lycan's analysis implies that this statement, under those circumstances, is *false* because the corresponding 'Everyone tried on the coat'—the proposition you had in mind, the one that fixes your 'reference class' and that you would have asserted if asked—is false. This is hard to swallow.

According to my analysis, you have in this case said something true, and indeed felicitous, although the neighbour proposition lying behind it is not quite true. My line of analysis left me free to go either way on this: the requirement for a neighbour proposition that is salient etc. could have figured either as a truth-condition or a felicity-condition; and I chose the latter because I found it intuitively more

plausible. Lycan acknowledges the intuition, but rightly does not regard it as decisive. Judgments about whether a feature of an expression bears on truth or only on conventional implicature are inherently fragile, having no basis except in superficial intuitions (§15). Against the intuition, Lycan brings his comparison of 'even' with 'only'. The latter obviously affects truth-conditions, he says; and the two are so alike in so many ways that he finds it reasonable to think that 'even' does the same.

He remarks that 'few words in English can float so freely' as these two, and mentions other floaters—'just', 'at least', 'at most', 'maybe', 'too', and 'also'—and remarks on the 'quantificational or otherwise referential values' that they share (Lycan 1991: 134, n 16). He does not say outright that each of these floaters affects truth value in the way 'only' does, but if he allows that some do not, nothing remains of his reason for his counter-intuitive view about the truth-conditions for sentences using 'even'. For then we can liken 'even' not to 'only' but rather to one of the floaters that does not affect truth values. If on the other hand Lycan lumps all floaters together in the respect we are now considering, the intuitive price rises steeply. Consider the force of 'too', which floats as 'even' and 'only' do (try it out on the grazing goats). I awake in a flowery meadow, look around, and murmur *I too am in Arcadia*; it is indeed Arcadia, but I am alone there; so Lycan must say I have spoken falsely. I do not believe it. In statements like this, I submit, 'too' affects only what is conventionally implied, not what is outright asserted, and in this respect it resembles that other floater, 'even'.

107. Two words?

Consider these two sentences:

(1) Jane is even heavier than Rita.

(2) Even Jane is heavier than Rita.

Noticing that 1 implies that Rita is heavy and Jane heavier, while 2 implies that Rita is light and Jane heavier, some people have wondered by what trick the placing of 'even' (syntax) affects what is implied about a woman's weight (semantics). In my 1982 paper I answered that the difference comes not from syntax but from the fact that these 'even's are distinct words, spelled the same way. OED makes a bad job of explaining 2, I contended, because it tries to stretch its account to cover 1 as well. As prima facie evidence that they are two, consider the fact that neither of English's nearest living neighbours has a single word for both. French expresses 1 with *encore* and 2 with *même*. German expresses 1 with *noch* or *sogar*, and 2 with *selbst*. I have since learned that the Spanish, Korean and Bulgarian languages also use distinct words for these two purposes..

However, the two words must have something to do with one another: it can hardly be a coincidence that both are spelled the same way in English, in Turkish, and presumably in other languages as well. Having noted this, I ought to have dug for a single account to cover both. I might have done so had I noticed that 1 is strictly equivalent to

(1′) Even Rita is lighter than Jane.

This uses 'even' in the manner I associate with *même* and with *selbst*, yet it says just the same thing as 1; their conditions for truth and for felicity are identical. Each implies that Rita is heavy, says that Jane is heavier than Rita, and exclaims over the latter fact. It is hardly credible that two lexically different 'even's are at work in 1 and 1′.

Not credible, and not true. My 1982 view, which has found favour with some writers, was demonstrably wrong, as I learned from Barker (1991: 12–13). Abstracting from details that reflect his theory's reliance on universal quantification, we can learn from Barker the crucial point, that the difference between

(1) Jane is even heavier than Rita.

(2) Even Jane is heavier than Rita

lies purely in the focus of 'even'. I have given my account of 2, in which the focus is 'Jane', and have no more to say about that. The right way to understand 1 is as having the form:

Jane is even heavier-than-Rita,

with focus of 'even' being 'heavier than Rita'. This is felicitous if there is a salient neighbour proposition, a milder one, about Jane's degree of heaviness; for then 1 serves to put Jane's weight further along the heaviness scale than the neighbour proposition does.

Works cited

Barker, Stephen J. (1991). '*Even*, *Still* and Counterfactuals'. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 14: 1–38.
——(1994). 'The Consequent-Entailment Problem for *Even if*'. *Analysis* 17: 249–60.

Bennett, Jonathan (1982). 'Even if'. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 5: 403–18.

Dancygier, Barbara (1998). *Conditionals and Prediction: Time, Knowledge, and Causation in Conditional Constructions*. Cambridge University Press.

Delgardo Lavin, Eva (1999). '*Even* as a Constraint on Relevance: The Interpretation of *even-if* conditionals', in *Proceedings of the Sixth International Colloquium on Cognitive Science*. University of the Basque Country, 112–18.

Fauconnier, G. (1975). 'Pragmatic Scales and Logical Structure'. *Linguistic Inquiry* 6: 353–75.

Hazen, Allen and Slote, Michael (1979). 'Even if'. *Analysis* 39: 35–41.

Lycan, William G. (1991). '*Even* and *Even if*'. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 14: 115–50.
—— (2001). *Real Conditionals*. Oxford University Press.

Pollock, John L. (1976). *Subjunctive Reasoning*. Boston: Reidel.