

Conditional Analysis and Reason Explanation

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Abstract

In this thesis, I argue against the idea that the conditional analysis and the reason explanation are completely different projects. The conditional analysis and the reason explanation share many similarities and by bridging the two, the two groups of theorists can enrich their respective accounts.

I first reject the simple version of conditional analysis for its own deficiency. I also point out that despite the initial impression that they are different, conditional analysis and the reason explanation are actually both about investigation of semantics. I then argue that part of the conditional analysis of freedom can be made to be a reason explanation of action, because it contains enough information to explain the action in question. Thus, I bring the reason explanation and conditional analysis even closer.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter mainly talks about the background of the thesis, and introduce to the curious reader of what I would like to argue for in my thesis.

1.1 *Freedom and the Conditional Analysis of the Ability to do Otherwise*

The question of whether we have freedom or not given the truth of determinism is a classical philosophical question. This is also a question someone who is an outsider of Philosophy would inevitably ask.

It is a cliché to say that there's no consensus on the definition of freedom in philosophy, but it is important to explore it and make an attempt to define "freedom" if the writer tries to engage in a task of answering the question we have set out to answer above.

The French philosopher Vincent Cespedes once said that "use your freedom, because your freedom is your power!" For Cespedes, freedom means you decide who you are, and you decide where you go. This is my motto, so I certainly would think freedom should, at least, include this sense of you taking control of your own life. This means you make choices and decisions everyday whether you do this or you do that, so freedom is very much about making decisions and choices. Of course, what follows is that you take responsibility for your choice.

To make a choice means one is choosing among several possible options, and the agent is the one to decide which one to choose. Philosophers have long pointed out that this entails that there is the possibility of the agent doing otherwise.

Many philosophers believe that the ability to do otherwise is one necessary condition to one's having freedom. Whether freedom/responsibility requires the ability to do otherwise is debated and has

been argued against many times throughout the history of philosophy, but I shall not get into the debate about whether freedom requires the alternative possibility or not; for the purpose of my paper, I will just stipulate that freedom require one's ability to do otherwise.

I really think that this is a smart move by stipulating that freedom requires the ability to do otherwise, because the ability to do otherwise captures the sense that the agent has many different choices and it also reflects self-determination. If I have the ability to do otherwise but I'm doing the thing that I'm doing at a certain time, that means I'm doing it according to my own choice and want.

As Kane says, "the existence of alternative possibilities is a necessary condition for acting freely." (Kane, 11) Now, given the truth of determinism, one certainly could have not have done otherwise. Because if everything is determined, there's only one road that the agent could embark on.

A group of philosophers who are called hard determinists, for example, Peter van Inwagen (Inwagen, 158), believe that determinism and free will are not compatible with each other – **if we accept the thesis of determinism¹**, then the agents we talk about cannot have free will.

According to incompatibilists, determinism implies that the agent S was bound to do X, and not anything else at time t. If S was not able to do otherwise at t, and the ability to do otherwise is a necessary condition to free will, then under determinism, S did not have free will at t.

One of the premises for the conclusion that S was bound to do X at time t is the truth of the past, which includes one's life history and the desire that S had at an earlier time t_0 that led him to carry out the action X at time t. But the unrealized alternative event was led to by a different desire at an earlier time t_0 , so if we have replaced the original desire (which leads to X at current time t) with a different desire at an earlier time t_0 , then we would deny this premise for the unalterability of the current state of affair. As a result, the conclusion that S could only do X at time t would not hold anymore. This way, the

¹The classical way of defending freedom against determinism is to redefine the ability to do otherwise which is the conditional analysis of freedom. The compatibilists redefine the ability to do otherwise as "one would have done otherwise if one had fulfilled some type of antecedent condition first".

conditional analysts did not deny the thesis of determinism and they have proved that there is a kind of ability to do otherwise which can be compatible with determinism.

Christian List gives us two convenient terms to differentiate two kinds of the ability to do otherwise, one is the ability to do otherwise in a modal sense and another one is the ability in a conditional sense. (List, 4) To use his terminology, let me describe how I understand the situation: the conditional analysts say that the ability to do otherwise is compatible with determinism and this is the position that they want to defend, and they charge the incompatibilists being unclear about what the ability to do otherwise is.

The conditional analysts also believe that the ability to do otherwise the incompatibilists talked about is the modal version of the ability to do otherwise; they suggest we modify it into a conditional version. The conditional analysts further explains that this way of looking at the ability to do otherwise is how we **actually** understand the ability to do otherwise **in real life** and it reflects the freedom we care about, and this really important sense of freedom is compatible with determinism. As Kane has so wisely said, “one cannot simply assure that if determinism is true, we would lack freedom or free will in an important sense.” (Kane, 10)

Although the conditional analysis is usually called a compatibilists’ strategy, it is not exactly its aim to make the ability to do otherwise compatible with freedom. Their prior aim is to first let us see what the ability to do otherwise really is and how it is related to our conception of freedom in an important and related sense. The conditional analysts believe that the freedom we care about only requires the ability to do otherwise in a conditional sense.²

²I was brought attention to this argument that the main aim of conditional analysis is to clarify what the ability to do otherwise really is and in what way it relates to the kind of freedom we care about, rather than to make the ability to do otherwise compatible with determinism by Ferenc Huoranszki. I believe that Kapitan said the same thing when he replies to the charge that the compatibilists (conditional analysts) have assumed compatibilism when they are arguing for it, which is begging the question; Kapitan argues that the conditional analysts were not assuming that there’s a kind of ability that is compatible with determinism when they are arguing for the compatibilism, rather, Kapitan contends that, what conditional analysts did was to give a clear definition of the ability to do otherwise as it is related to the kind of practical freedom we care about in normal life.(Kapitan, 140)

Conditional analysis is challenged because it is said to have its own defects. Indeed, in this paper, I'm going to describe many of the defects conditional analysis has, and also suggest that the simple conditional analysis is to be rejected, and we should favor a more complicated version of conditional analysis.

As Kaptitan says, "those who wonder about the viability of compatibilism are correct to demand a fuller account." (Kaptitan, 136) The conditional analysts are bound to say more if they want to increase the strength of their position, and they have to make clearer what to include in their account.

Some say that the ability to do otherwise is a special kind of ability³ and I am very much sympathetic with this view. As a non-native speaker of English, one immediately would understand that the ability to do otherwise is a different type of ability than those abilities we normally talk about, for example, one's ability to sing⁴, or many of the other abilities of this sort, which can be defined as some property or a set of properties the agent possessed.

The ability to do otherwise is a "special occasion" ability, which means that if the agent can do X in a certain situation, and then we can say that the agent has the ability to do X. This is different from one's ability to sing, which is something that the agent does not tend to lose over a period.

In any case, it is very helpful in this discussion to differentiate different kinds of "ability", which I shall do later in my thesis. On the other hand, the ability to do otherwise has to explain why the agent does what he does in the specific circumstances, because the conditional analysis takes the form of "one would have done otherwise if one had fulfilled some previous conditions". The previous condition usually is one's want, desire or intention (Haji, 202), and the conditional analysts are usually required to

³ I really do not remember who said this, but I have certainly heard from some other people, and later we shall see that the ability to do otherwise is indeed a very special kind of ability and cannot be defined easily.

⁴ Of course here it will be debated what really counts as one's ability to sing. For example, one could argue that a manufactured pop singer can in no way compared to a classical trained opera singer, and there's a huge difference between the two. But when I say that there's a difference between one's ability to sing and one's ability to do otherwise, I'm not talking about this kind of difference of degree or difference of different people's standard. The ability to do otherwise is a very special ability that is yet to be defined by the incompatibilists.

say how the antecedent mental state led to the consequent action. This certainly looks like reason explanation, because reason explanation quite often explains the action in terms of its antecedent mental state.

1.2. Conditional Analysis and Reason Explanation

I do think that the conditional analysis of freedom and the reason explanation even face some very similar challenges and they share some similarities as well. In the literature of both conditional analysis and reason explanation, I have seen both of the accounts have been charged with not being able to provide a general account of law that links the antecedent and the consequence.

But as far as I have observed, except for Scott Sehon, whose work I have discovered after I have made my guess that reason explanation of action and the conditional analysis can be quite similar; no one really connects conditional analysis with the reason explanation. I think it would really be unprecedented of me identifying this similarity between conditional analysis and the reason explanation, and say that the conditional analysts can learn from reason explanation in their way of describing the action-forming process and enrich their account and make it more viable and immune to different kinds of problems. I have done this out of a curious move, but I think it is a very interesting and meaningful comparison which makes my argument non-trivial.

But is conditional analysis of freedom reason explanation of action? The obvious answer to this question seems to be no. One could say that the conditional analysis of freedom is not an explanation of action, because it is an analysis of the ability to do otherwise, but the ability to do otherwise is not a normal action. One could say that an account of conditional analysis is aiming at explaining what is the ability to do otherwise and whether it is compatible with determinism or not, and its aim is not to say why S did X. It seems that it is plain fact that both conditional analysis and reason explanation have different aims, and they are about completely different things (I will describe, in detail, about what reason

explanation is and how it relates to conditional analysis in the next chapter). I do not know how much weight I should give to this criticism, but apparently, conditional analysis and reason explanation are not that different; actually both of them are about getting clear on linguistic expressions. We shall see this point later in Chapter 4 & 5 of the thesis paper.

Another apparent reason that conditional analysis and the reason explanation are different things is the way they explain action. Reason explanation usually incorporates one's desire and belief as the explanation of one's reason for doing something. In an obvious way, conditional analysis lacks the belief part. On the other hand, the "antecedent desire" cited in conditional analysis refers to one's desire to do X, which is hardly explanatory of why agent does X. Because usually when we try to find out why someone does something X, it is even irresponsible to say that the agent does it because he or she just wants to do it; this is too little information to be provided here.

As I have observed, in a typical philosophical reason explanation, the desire cited is usually desire to do another action rather than the action X the agent did, and X is usually just a middle step. This feature of reason explanation seems to be quite different from the way conditional analysis formulates the proposition too. I will address this divergence as well and say how we can make them more closely related in this regard.

However, in some regards, I think conditional analysis does try to explain to the readers why the agent does the action, because in ordinary language, when we utter the sentence that "I could have done otherwise", there must be some reasons why we say such things. I think this could definitely be one of the reasons that the conditional analysts add an antecedent to the alternative action in question; it helps make clear the unsaid part of "I could have done otherwise" in our ordinary language.

On another note, as some philosophers call for a more sophisticated version of conditional analysis (they reject simple conditional analysis), it seems that the conditional analysis and the reason explanation will share more similarities; since a more advanced version of conditional analysis would

talk about the background conditions where the belief is included. In the next chapter, I'm going to discuss why the simple conditional analysis is to be rejected in chapter 3.

I certainly do not put an equivalence mark between the conditional analysis and the reason explanation at this point, mainly because they have a very different purpose to start with. However, do notice that, the ability to do otherwise comes partly from the ability to choose, and the choice-making process is a rather complicated process, which could involve many different components of it, such as one's belief, and one's desire. For conditional analysts to make a fuller and more inclusive account of the ability to do otherwise they have to make part of their account reason explanation, for this reason, there's a lot for them to learn from the reason explanation of action. I will explain how such a task would go in 5.4.1.

Chapter 2: The Antecedent Part of the Conditional Analysis

As we have seen, the simple conditional analysis takes the form of “S would have done otherwise if he had fulfilled some antecedent condition,” and the antecedent condition could be one’s desires, wants, or intentions. Since there are different ways to formulate the conditional analysis by changing up the antecedent, one would naturally ask if there’s any difference in the formulations and if there’s one best candidate. I would say that there is some difference regarding the different formulation of the conditional analysis and I would conclude that “desire” as a mental state is the best candidate for the antecedent part of the conditional proposition. To choose for the best, let’s see which one has the most potential of being immune to the most problems a conditional analysis faces.

2.1. Infinite Regress Problem

Now there is this so-called infinite regress problem which apply to the conditional analysis with an antecedent of the action sort. Whether it is trying, or choosing or even trying and then succeeded.

When the antecedent of the conditional analysis is action, that means we say that S would do X if he does something first, we would then ask the question whether he is free to do the antecedent part or not. If we find out that the agent is not free doing the antecedent, then the conditional analysis would not work, because anyway it is an account about freedom.

According to this version of conditional analysis, the alternative action, and let us name it X_A , comes from the agent’s attempt, and this suggests that the agent’s action bases upon the agent’s previous

action, for attempt is itself an action. Then we can think that this agent's previous action is further caused by action at even earlier time. If we keep tracing back, we will arrive at a time when the agent was just born, and he cannot control these conditions given to him when he was just born. So ultimately, he is not the creator of his action X_A.

When thinking about freedom, we think of the origin of the choice should come from us, but not from anyone else, as Kane says, "the origin or source of our choices and actions is in us and not in anyone or anything else over which we have no control." (Kane, 10) It is obviously we can see here that, any conditional analysis with an antecedent of an action sort, is subject to the infinite regress problem, because we would have the alternative action caused by its preceding action, which was in turn caused, by further preceding action, and this causal chain is what creates the infinite regress problem.

The matter here is that if one cannot be the originator of his action, he cannot be said to be free, and conditional analysis in the first place is to make free will and determinism compatible with each other, so conditional analysis with an "action" antecedent fails. Maybe there are ways to reply to this infinite regress problem, for example, to argue that the power to create one's action and the power to do otherwise are different powers required by freedom. Since the infinite regress problem only targets on the power to create and it has nothing to do with the power to do otherwise and the conditional analysis is about the power to do otherwise, so the infinite regress problem does actually have no bearing on the power to do otherwise. I am not aware of any of such replies and I cannot successfully and articulately make a reply here myself.

2.2. Attempt is Part of the Action

Let us consider another problem for the conditional analysis with an antecedent of an action sort (trying, choosing). This problem is that apparently the "action" antecedent is part of the action we talk about itself. First, Donald Davidson believes that the antecedent condition should be prior and separate from

the action. He then says that choosing or trying is part of the action itself, since now we are trying to find a different prior cause for the alternative action that we are analyzing, and if the antecedent is part of the alternative action itself, it cannot be said to be a proper cause for the alternative action. (Davidson, 2002)

For example, consider the proposition “Natalia would have raised her arm if she had tried”; it seems strange to say that Natalia is trying to raise her arm, because when Natalia is trying to raise her arms, isn’t she already raising her arm?

In the case of choosing, if we interpret choosing as an action (if we think of choosing as something that is not just something that is taking place in one’s mind, but actual action of choosing), then it seems that choosing is part of the action that the agent chooses to do as well. Think about a very simple case: Adam was thinking whether he eats an apple or an orange, and there is an apple and orange in front of him. When he is choosing to eat the apple, we can think that he is already going ahead to grab the apple and then starts eating it; the action of choosing, grabbing the apple and eating it seems so closely connected and we can say that they are parts of one single action.

I think this observation here shows us that it is quite difficult to draw a line between the cause and the consequent if we think of the antecedent as an action. However, the conditional analysts want to say that the satisfaction of a preceding condition would guarantee the occurrence of the alternative action, so the conditions and consequences need to be separated. Here, I conclude that because the “action” antecedent can very easily be seen as part of the consequent action, this type of antecedent like attempting or choosing is not a very good candidate for the antecedent part of the conditional proposition.

2.3. The Edges of the Antecedent of “Desire”

Obviously, if we choose the antecedent part of “desire” as the antecedent of the conditional analysis, then the conditional analysis is immune to the problem we just talked about. We would say that

the “desire” clearly is not part of the action, because it is a mental state, which is completely different from the action, and it can be seen as the cause to one’s action.

One immediate criticism would be that desire is not in the agent’s control, and if we say that desire is the cause of the action, then the action comes from something that the agent is not free to do, does this make the agent unfree to do the action?

To explicate, the desires we have are usually not made by us, but we just come to have them by default, and this observation gives us the impression that the desires are out of our control. This impression is further strengthened when we think that there are some desires we just really do not want to have, for example, my desire to go to the park when I really want to stay at home and study. So the criticism is that the desire, as the cause of our action, is not in our control, and if we say that our actions are caused by something that is not in our control, then we are to say our actions are unfree, which is certainly not the conditional analysts want.

My response to this problem would be as follows: the fact that the desire is not in the agent’s control has nothing to do with whether the agent is free or not, because having desire, impulse or even belief is what constitutes an agent – it is part of being an agent so to speak. Our free will works only when we, as human agents, are thinking whether we act upon our desires or not, and our free will has nothing to do with what constitutes a human agent.

As Davidson puts it, “the question how he acquired them (desires and beliefs) are irrelevant to questions of how free his actions are.” (Davidson, 72) Davidson added that, “the point isn’t that desires and beliefs aren’t ever in an agent’s control, but rather that coming to have them isn’t something an agent does.” (Davidson, 72) I take what he says here to mean that having the desire is just a very natural and organic process which happen to people, and it is like one needs to eat to survive or one needs to exercise to get energy, we do not consider these features of being a human being related to freedom we talk about.

I agree with Davidson's observation here. Desire is not an action the agent does, and it is a mental state that the agent has which can be seen as a cause for an action that the agent does latter.

What Davidson said here can also be used to refute the infinite regress problem regarding the conditional analysis with an antecedent of desire. Some critics think we can read "desire" as a verb and interpret it as "entering a mental state", then the conditional analysis with an antecedent of desire also suffers the infinite regress problem I have discussed earlier, because the antecedent of desire becomes an action and the conditional analysis with an "action" antecedent suffers the infinite regress problem.

As Davidson suggests, we can reply that the agent does not have to do anything to possess a desire and desire itself should not be seen as an action of the agent, and this understanding of desire has resolved the infinite regress problem. To make it clearer, the antecedent "desire" is a mental state, not an action, so it does not depend on previous action as the infinite regress problem suggests.

On the other hand, unlike the antecedent of the action sort, which obviously depends on previous "action", the antecedent "desire" does not depend on previous "desire" or any other obvious conditions, because having desire is just one very normal aspect of being a human agent. In other words, desires would just come to us, and there's nothing we can do about it, what we can do is to use our free will to decide whether we act upon it or not, or more sophisticatedly, to use our freedom to carve a way or make a plan to satisfy our desires.

To conclude, this chapter mainly discusses about what kind of antecedent we should take for the conditional analysis of the ability to do otherwise. To do this, I have considered several problems against different versions of conditional analysis (namely, conditional analysis with different kinds of antecedent). I have argued that if we think the antecedent is of an action sort, for example, attempt or decide, then the conditional analysis would suffer the infinite regress problem. I also believed that the antecedent of attempt or choice would sometimes be conflated with the consequence action. To put it in another way, sometimes it is difficult to tell whether the preceding attempt and choice is part of the action

in question itself or they are really prior to the action, and I consider this to be a defect for the conditional analysis with an “action” antecedent. In this chapter, I have pointed out that the antecedent of desire, which should be seen as a mental state, is immune to this problem that the antecedent is conflated with the consequence action itself and also the infinite regress problem.

Chapter 3: Simple conditional analysis is to be rejected

This chapter talks in detail what conditional analysis aims at achieving and argue why the simple version of conditional analysis is to be rejected and denied.

3.1. The Free Will Problem

The introduction of conditional analysis comes in the free will debate about whether free will and determinism are compatible with each other or not; the compatibilists charge that the incompatibilists have to show us that determinism does rob us of freedom in some important sense (Kane, 10).

However, what is the incompatibilists' position? Why they think that determinism has robbed us of the ability to do otherwise?

If we accept the thesis of determinism, our actions and our thoughts are caused by their preceding actions and thoughts, and these actions and thoughts were caused by further preceding actions and thoughts. If we follow this line of thinking, finally we will trace back to the time when we were born and find out that our current actions and thoughts ultimately are derived from the conditions we were given when we were born. Therefore, determinism is the doctrine that our current states of affairs are determined to occur given the deterministic natural law and the conditions at the time when we were born.

So how exactly determinism deprives the agent of his or her ability to do otherwise? I would explain as follows. The choice we have made at a given time t is caused by our thoughts at this time t which are caused by our previous thoughts at an earlier time t_0 ; then we find that our thoughts at time t_0 are also influenced by our thoughts at even earlier times. We will then track back until the time when we

were born, and find that our choice at time t is actually determined by the things we were given when we were born.

Now, if we think of this causal chain of thoughts and actions, or simply, one's life history (from the time when the agent was born to the time t when he did the action we are analyzing) as a tape, given the conditions the agent was given when the agent was born and which we cannot do anything about. Then this tape would lead to the very action of the agent at t which we are analyzing, not any other action, the upshot is that there's no possibility for the agent to do other actions. In other words, given the truth of one's life history from the time when he was born to the time t when he did the action in question and if we accept the thesis of determinism, alternative possibility is not possible for the agent.

If we could not have done otherwise and as the ability to do otherwise is generally treated as a necessary condition for free will, then under determinism, we cannot have free will. Such is the free will problem I am referring to in this context and the position of incompatibilists, who embraces determinism and believes that we cannot have free will when there is determinism.

3.2. Simple Conditional Analysis

A typical simple conditional analysis is like this: the agent would have done otherwise if he had desired to do so. (A more general version of the simple conditional analysis is simply to add an antecedent condition to the proposition that the agent would have done otherwise, but since we have previously discussed that the antecedent of desire has more edges than the other antecedents, I will just use the antecedent of desire here).

3.2.1. Background Conditions

Simple conditional analysis is to be rejected, simply because it is silent on the background conditions one has. These conditions can be the environmental factors and other conditions accompanying the antecedent desire to bring about the alternative action.

Berofsky argues that, “since the analysis tells us that an agent would inevitably act in a certain way under certain psychological conditions, freedom demands universal laws linking mental states with actions.” (Berofsky, 185) In other words, the conditional analysis presupposes a link between the antecedent and the consequence, once the agent had done the antecedent, he would automatically do the consequent action.

Now, some writers have challenged this link between desires to actions. They argue that desire is not enough for actions – if we would like to say that the desire leads to the action, not only the agent has the desire to do something X, the agent also has to have the corresponding ability and luck to bring X about. When compatibilists say that “I would have done otherwise if I had desired to”, they seem to ignore some other factors which lead to an action, for example, effort, skills or luck. It is as if they think that when people have a desire to do X, and then X would automatically obtain. We know that this is not the case, and we cannot simply add the antecedent of desire and assume it will lead to a different consequence. Moreover, the desire does not really mean that the agent is willing to act upon his desire and make an effort to bring about the action.

The conditional analysts anyway seem to be required to say a little bit more about the background condition; a simple antecedent cannot expose the clear picture of how the action was formed, thus a simple conditional approach is certainly not to be favored.

3.2.2. Narrow Ability vs Wide Ability

On a similar note, Vihvelin also says that the conditional analysis is to be rejected because it did not tell us about the difference between wide ability and narrow ability. What does this mean?

First, there are these Frankfurt cases, which are originally taken to show that the ability to do otherwise is not required for moral responsibility. (Frankfurt, 835) In this paper, I am not going to discuss Frankfurt cases in detail. But Vihvelin believes that these cases cannot show the thesis that the ability to do otherwise is not required for moral responsibility, and she argues that these cases instead show that there's a difference between freedom of willing and freedom of action, and there's a difference between the narrow ability and wide ability.

A standard Frankfurt case goes like this: an agent Jones decides to go to San Francisco, and there's an additional agent Black who would intervene whenever Jones decides to go to other places. To illustrate, if in fact Jones decides to go to Hawaii, Black would come and change his mind or physically force him not to go to Hawaii, so despite the fact that Jones does not have the ability to go to any place other than San Francisco, he made up his mind to go there. Therefore, he is responsible for his choice to go to San Francisco.

According to Vihvelin's interpretation, Jones did not lose his narrow ability while he is deprived of his wide ability; in Vihvelin's terminology, wide ability is the combination of narrow ability and the luck (a convenient name for external environment factors). Similarly, Berofsky introduced us the notion of token and type ability which similarly capture the same distinction between some intrinsic properties of the agent that he does not lose easily (type ability/ narrow ability), and the ability to carry out an action in a specific circumstance (token ability/ wide ability).

Moreover, Kapitan has also talked about the differentiation of different types of ability one has, he has talked about the difference between Broad Ability & Causal Ability and strict ability (Kapitan, 136) if I understand Kapitan correctly, this differentiation corresponds with the distinction between narrow/wide & token/type ability.

Kapitan comments that "it might be thought that skill is simply a causal ability to regularly bring about a certain sort of result by performing a particular kind of action, what we might call regular causal

ability.” (Kapitan, 136) Kapitan identifies skill with the causal ability and he further explains that, “the point is that skills involves some measure of know-how in addition to a regular connection between action and result. If we add opportunity to know-how and regularity, we may speak of an agent as having the strict ability at a time to bring about a certain result.” (Kapitan, 137) Strict ability is the token ability because it involves the “luck” component, which may be present at one situation, but disappear in another one.

Let’s go back to the Frankfurt cases, Jones cannot go to Hawaii, because Black is there to stop him. But this certainly does not mean that if Black is not there, Jones still cannot go, on the contrary, Jones probably has the innate properties and what it takes to go to Hawaii had Black been absent from the scene. Therefore, Jones retains his narrow ability but loses his wide ability in the Frankfurt scenario.

I think it is useful and important in the discussion of whether the ability to do otherwise is compatible with determinism or not, in order to distinguish between the narrow ability and the wide ability, because we have to explain to people what we really mean by the ability to do otherwise. If we do not do, at least, some minimum explanation, this term can be confusing. On one hand, we can interpret it as an ability to do something in a particular situation. On the other hand, when one thinks about the term “ability”, it is very plausible to read it as something like one’s skills, or talents, which one does not tend to lose during a longer period of time, and such is a narrow ability.

We shall see in next section what a more advanced version of conditional analysis could include so we could understand from it whether the ability to do otherwise is a token ability or a type ability, and more generally, what the ability to do otherwise really is.

3.2.3. A More Advanced Version of Conditional Analysis

Back to the inadequacy of simple conditional analysis, if we just say that the agent S would have done a different thing X if he had desired to X, then we would think that the agent’s ability to X is a narrow one.

Because if S can easily bring about X, it must mean that S has a rather stable ability to X. However, it seems that there is also another way of reading it: as said earlier, one's desire cannot automatically lead to one's action, so we can say that partly it is S's good luck that he did X when he desired to, and in such cases, S's ability to X is clearly a wide one. Such a confusion exposed the inadequacy of the simple conditional analysis.

Some may say that the inadequacy of simple conditional analysis is simply a lack of clarity about semantics, but when it comes to the convincibility of the formulation, this problem becomes a very severe disadvantage for conditional analysis.

In one of her papers, Vihevelin identifies the ability to do otherwise with one's disposition, and she proposes such an analysis of dispositions and read as follows:

"S has the ability at time t to do X iff, for some intrinsic property or set of properties B that S has at t, for some time t' after t, if S chose (decided, intended, or tried) at t to do X, and S were to retain B until t', S's choosing (deciding, intending, or trying) to do X and S's having of B would jointly be an S-complete cause of S's doing X. (Vihvelin, 438)

This formulation of conditional analysis is much more sophisticated than a simple conditional analysis, and it does have more strength and immunity than a simple conditional analysis. I will use this version of conditional analysis to display what kind of advantages the conditional analysis has.

Let's take a look at some of the problems the simple conditional analysis faces and see why a simple conditional analysis suffers these problems and why a more advanced version is immune to the same kind of problems, Clarke has described this challenge against the conditional analysis that even if S tried, he may still fail. Clarke believes that this challenge may be a threat to simple conditional analysis (namely, simply specifying out the antecedent part of the analysis), but it has no force undermining the conditional analysis that Vihvelin is proposing because "it has nothing to do with the subtraction or addition of any causal basis of the ability." (Clarke, 328)

The criticism is that there are situations where the antecedent (in this case, one's attempt) does not lead to the targeted action X. If we give an analysis of the agent's ability to do otherwise X as "the agent would have done X if he had attempted to", then in the case where S tried but failed (S did not have enough external conditions to bring about X), the agent would lose his ability. But this is counter-intuitive, since we would not think that the agent would so easily lose his ability to do certain thing.

If we take the appearance of the conditional analysis, this criticism would seem legitimate. In other words, if we think the conditional analysis of the ability to do otherwise just means that "S would have done otherwise X if he had tried to do X", then of course the critics can say that the conditional would fail. Because in the scenario where S tries but fails, the agent S would lose his ability, and we would say this is counter-intuitive.

However, if we dig deeper and not just stays at the very simple formulation of the simple conditional analysis, we know that it is very common for conditional analysts to omit the background conditions, and give importance to the most important condition in the situation; in this case, the most important condition to notice is the antecedent of attempt⁵.

Moreover, as discussed previously, there are two aims of the conditional analysts, the priority aim is to make clear what the ability to do otherwise is and the second one comes after this first aim is to make the ability to do otherwise compatible with determinism.

By adding a simple preceding condition, the conditional analysts more or less fulfilled these two aims: 1). they have shown that the ability to do otherwise is not in the modal sense, but one that is related to the freedom we care about should be the ability to do otherwise in a conditional sense; 2). the conditional reading of the ability to do otherwise is compatible with determinism. Of course, the

⁵As discussed earlier, the conditional analysts were try to say what the ability to do otherwise really is and how it is related to the freedom, we care about in real life. I said the freedom that is important to us in practical life is about making choice, so the ability to do otherwise should reflect some kind of self-determination so to speak. I think here, the antecedent of attempt does not capture the sense of self-determination in the freedom we care about in real life as much as some of the other antecedents, like "desire", "intend", or even "choose". Which antecedent best serves the purpose of conditional analysis should be another separate discussion, which I am not going into in this paper at his point.

fulfilment of the first aim was far from satisfactory and the conditional analysts need to say lot more in this regard. But a simple antecedent condition did fulfil the function of modifying the modal reading of the ability to do otherwise into a conditional reading, and a conditional reading of the ability to do otherwise is usually the ability to do otherwise we need in real life.

After the introduction of type and token ability, we have a clearer picture of what the ability to do otherwise should be like and how a simple conditional analysis can improve on itself. The criticism we talked about just now clearly understands the ability to do otherwise only as a wide ability, which means that the successful carrying out of the action can happen at one time but it may not happen the next time. Given the wording of Clarke here, the ability to do otherwise is a narrow one, because even the agent fails in some circumstances, it does not mean that S cannot do the alternative action in some other circumstances when the conditions needed which accompany the antecedent to bring about the alternative action are all at hand. Therefore, we can learn from this discussion here that there is a confusion to start with about what exactly the ability to do otherwise amounts to, and if the criticism is based on some type of ambiguities, then we should first try to solve the ambiguity and see if the criticism would still hold after the ambiguity is cleared.

3.3. Is the Ability to Do Otherwise Type Ability or Token Ability?

Is the ability to do otherwise type ability or token ability? I would say that the ability to do otherwise is actually a special kind of ability that I think we could call it “probability ability”. What do I mean by this? If we are talking about the action forming part in the ability to do otherwise X, we know that the rate of the agent bringing about X is not 100 %, and that is what I mean by calling it “probability ability”. To make the case clearer, let us compare the ability to do otherwise X to one’s ability to sing. When we

think about one's ability to sing, we would first think the agent possesses the ability for a period of time⁶, which means that the ability the agent possesses does come and go. During this period, the agent may sometimes give good performance, but sometimes also give bad vocal performance, but if we say that the agent has the ability to sing, we mean that the agent has certain level of competence.

On the other hand, in the case of the ability to do otherwise, there are situations where the agent would fail doing X completely due to external constraints, but this observation also does not make the occurrence of X just a one-time thing, there are other cases where the agent can also do X. However, the successfully carrying out of X is also not just a one-time thing, during the period when the agent possess the ability to do otherwise X, there are many other situations where the agent can bring about X. Notice that, the quality of X can vary from case to case in the situations where X is successfully carried out. Interestingly, I think we can think of the ability to do otherwise as the ability as an ability that is fusion of the token ability and the type ability, since the agent first has to have some type ability to do X that does not tend to lose during a longer period of time. On the other hand, the agent's ability to do otherwise is very much constrained by the external circumstances, so there are cases where the agent would not be able to bring about X at all. But there are also cases where X would be successfully carried out, so the ability to do otherwise is not as specific as the a type ability; we have to be aware of this "probable" aspect of the ability to do otherwise in order to understand it better.

The matter here is that there's some confusion to start with, and the simple conditional analysis is not clear enough to help us understand that there's some type of ability which is innate to the agent and this type of ability is also not easily to be lost. In addition, the simple conditional analysis is silent on the fact that there needs to be luck for the agent to carry out the action from case to case. The simple conditional analysis just wasn't detailed enough to showcase what the ability to do otherwise really is;

⁶I read somewhere that usually when talking about one's ability; we usually do not talk about the temporal aspect of it. I talk it about here to be precise about what the ability to do otherwise really amounts to.

this is also the reason that we say the ability to do otherwise is a special ability the agent possesses. If the main aim of the conditional analysis is to help us see clear what the ability to do otherwise amounts to, the simple conditional analysis is to be rejected, because it does not do the job adequately and properly.

Chapter 4: The Semantics Investigation

Previously I have said that both conditional analysis and the reason explanation are about getting clear on linguistic expressions. Before getting into the real business of discussing what similarities the sophisticated version of conditional analysis and reason explanation share, let me first address this issue.

Once again, one could argue that the conditional analysis is an analysis of the ability to do otherwise while the reason explanation of action is about how to explain action, so there's no way they can be the same thing. I have also said that I'm not going to put an equivalence mark between the conditional analysis and reason explanation because of this reason.

One could say that an account of conditional analysis is aiming at explaining what is the ability to do otherwise and whether it is compatible with determinism or not, and its aim is not to say why S did X. It seems that it is plain fact that both conditional analysis and reason explanation have different aims, and they are about completely different things. I don't know how much weight I should give to this criticism, but apparently, conditional analysis and reason explanation are not that different.

First, do notice that, the reason explanation is about explaining one's action, and usually such an explanation introduces the notion of mental states which usually took place before the agent has done the action (this mental state can be one's desire, one's intention and one's want). This formula of "explaining the action in terms of the mental state" is also included in a conditional analysis, so I would say content wise, conditional analysis of the ability to do otherwise and reason explanation share some similarities.

4.1. Conditional Analysis' Semantics Investigation

More interestingly, both of the conditional analysis and the reason explanation are about getting clear on linguistic expressions. In his paper, Balaguer argues that the compatibilism question ultimately reduces to the “what is free will” question, but he believes that the “what is free will” question is irrelevant to the “do we have free will” question. (Balaguer, 10)

I think we can say that the conditional analysis is certainly within the camp of asking the “what is free will” question. Why? Because one of the conditional analysis' aims is to prove that the ability to do otherwise is compatible with determinism. As Balaguer would argue, this compatibility issue in free will essentially is about figuring out what free will is, and if we want to answer the “what is free will” question, we need to investigate about how we normally use our language in daily life. Therefore, we could say that what conditional analysis aims at can be seen as a semantics project.

On the other hand, there's the question of “do we have free will” and “which kinds of freedom do we have” question. Balaguer comments that “if we could fully answer the which-kinds-of-freedom-do-we-have question, then we would have all the relevant facts about the nature of human decision-making processes that we might need in order to answer the do-we-have-free will question” (Balaguer, 9). I think for Balaguer, the “do we have free will question” is another way of asking “what decision-making ability we have”, which is entirely not about semantics, but **scientific**. We need to use scientific study and empirical evidence to find out what kinds of potentials and abilities human beings really have. If I understand him correctly, after we have made some research on human abilities, and then we are going to decide what kinds of abilities we would like to call “freedom”.

On the other hand, to answer the question “what is free will”, we are asking how we use the word “freedom” in our daily life and by finding out how we use our language it is also going to reveal to us what kinds of freedom we care about. We can see that the question “what is free will” is about linguistic and convention. Indeed, what conditional analysts are doing fit into this description: they are aiming at

revealing what the ability to do otherwise is by showing the reader how we are using our language in daily life. They are engaging themselves in a linguistic investigation.

Similarly, Baggini argues that conditional analysis is to capture the normative sense of the ability to do otherwise (Baggini, 12), in other words, it should reflect our ordinary language expression of “I could have done otherwise”. This is about semantics. I think this observation applies to both simple conditional analysis and the more complicated version of it.

4.2. Reason Explanation’s Semantics Investigation

Reason explanation is about how we give reason to justify our action, and it investigates how we **normally** rationalize our action. As I observe, the reason explanation of action is not a psychological investigation of why we really do certain action. The reason explanation may sound like a psychological project which tries to explain the agent’s action from a psychological point of view, but it is not. First, the reason explanation is saying that the agent does a certain thing because this or that thing happened to him when he was growing up, which probably would involve a sophisticated psychological theory to support it. Rather, more appropriately, the reason explanation is an investigation about semantics⁷: how we express ourselves when we give a reason to our actions.

Therefore, we can see that both conditional analysis and reason explanation are both about semantics, to be more precise, they are both investigation of how we use our languages.

When talking about the proposition that takes the form of “S did something because he has the desire to do that thing,” which is a reason explanation kind of proposition, Scott Sehon has said that what justifies this kind of proposition should not be a physical question (Sehon, 31). I take this means that we should not think that the reason explanation is about anything scientific, but rather about how we use our language to justify the agent’s action in the most appropriate way.

⁷I mean the word “semantics” in a very simple way, that is to say how we use our language.

Chapter 5: Sophisticated Conditional Analysis and Reason Explanation

Let me make some generalization about the formulation of conditional analysis. The whole “if.. then ..” sentence of conditional analysis can be seen as a probable ability, as discussed above; in a simple version of conditional analysis, the stimulus condition (the antecedent) was specified out. A more complicated conditional analysis would say that the agent possesses some properties which can be considered as his or her type ability, and it also needs to say that there needs to be other conditions (the “luck” part) besides the stimulus condition that together bring the desired action about. Therefore, I take the basic components of a sophisticated version conditional analysis to be the stimulus antecedent condition, the causal basis of the agent and a set of other conditions which are needed.

As we have said earlier, the ability to do otherwise is a special kind of ability exactly because it can be read as fusion of both token ability type ability, and more precisely, a kind of “probable ability”, as the chance to bring about the desired action is not 100%. To explain this “probability” feature well, the conditional analysts need to say a little bit about the dynamics between the antecedent “desire” and the consequence “action”. As I understand it, the reason explanation also tries to do this work, namely, address the dynamics and explain the agent’s action in terms of the antecedent stimulus condition.

However, it is worth noting that the conditional analysis of the ability to do otherwise is very much simplified, and it is common practice that the conditional analysts omit some of the background conditions.

The previous section shows us that the simple conditional analysis is to be rejected because of its own deficiency. To prove this point, I have first argued that the simple conditional analysis did not fulfill its own purposes of showing the readers of what the ability to do otherwise really is, and I have pointed

out that the conditional analysis did not show us the difference between the type ability and the token. Moreover, I have mentioned that the simple conditional analysis gives us too little information of the whole picture of how action was formed to be considered as similar to reason explanation;

A sophisticated conditional analysis should give more information; especially those concerning the causal basis of the agent, and it should make clear that there's the "luck" component of the agent that is needed, so we have a clear idea about what the difference between the narrow ability and the wide ability amounts to.

As we have mentioned above, one version of a more sophisticated version of conditional analysis is the conditional analysis of one's disposition to do X and I have also showcased one such formulation from Vihvelin; I will just repeat it so that we can analyze it here. Vihvelin's account of conditional analysis of disposition goes like this: "S has the ability at time t to do X iff, for some intrinsic property or set of properties B that S has at t, for some time t' after t, if S chose (decided, intended, or tried) at t to do X, and S were to retain B until t', S's choosing (deciding, intending, or trying) to do X and S's having of B would jointly be an S-complete cause of S's doing X." (Vihvelin, 438)

Now, let's take a close look at the account Vihvelin has provided to us. It talks about the agent's narrow ability to do X, which is the innate property or a set of properties B which S possess from time t to time t'; it also talks had the agent decided, intended, or tried, the agent would do X.

More importantly, the account says that S's possession of the property/a set of properties B and S's deciding, intending or trying would together be a cause of S's action X, so here it gives a reason why S had done X at time, which is S's deciding, intending and trying.⁸ In other words, Vihvelin's account is to explain the action in terms of its antecedent.

⁸One may say that one's trying is hardly a reason, because it is just action, and it does not rationalize the agent's action. As I have discussed earlier, the antecedent of "desire" has more edges than other antecedents, so when talking about antecedents, I'm only going to talk about the antecedent of "desire".

5.1. *What Is Reason Explanation?*

In short words, reason explanation of action is an account of explanation of action, which tries to give a reason to the agent's action and the reason cited usually involves the agent's desire to do certain thing and some belief accompanying the desire.

Regarding the question about "what the reason explanation is", Davidson makes this comment, "something that agent does that was intentional under some description" (Davidson, 11) For Davidson, when he says that the action was intentional, he means that the agent acts for a reason. To be more specific, Davidson calls this reason the primary reason which constitutes of the pro-attitudes of the agent and the belief the agent holds which says that by doing certain thing he will be able to bring about another thing. (Notice here, Davidson uses this word "description", it corresponds with the earlier discussion about how reason explanation is about semantics.) Davidson also calls the process "rationalization", which basically means that by having the mental attitudes, the agent's action is rationalized.

Different from Davidson's usage of the word "rationalization", Wilson believes that the reason explanation is teleological; the action is explained because it has an aim to achieve something. The agent is doing something X in order to do Y or in order to promote the occurrence of Y.

Concerning reason explanation, Ginet made the comment: "(there's) a category of explanations that apply only to actions: they are explanations that give us the agent's reasons for acting as she did." (Ginet, 24) Once again, reason explanation is about using the agent's reason to explain the agent's action in question.

5.2. *The Controversy about the Causalist Approach of Thinking of Reason Explanation*

As Davidson argues, “rationalization is a species of causal explanation.” (Davidson, 3), so he believes that the primary reason (pro-attitudes + belief) is the cause of the agent’s action. If this is the case, then part of Vihvelin’s account of conditional analysis certainly fit this description. Wilson also points out that “the dependence of an action on a consideration, or on a reason, narrowly construed, is presumably always a sort of causal dependence.” (Wilson, 94) It is common in action theories to treat the reason for one’s action as the cause of one’s action.

Recall, the account Vihvelin offers said that the agent’s choosing, intending or trying is part of the cause of his action, and if here, we take “intend” as the preceding cause for Vihvelin’s account and if we read “intend” as Davidson reads it, then part of Vihvelin’s account would nicely fit the image of reason explanation in Davidson’s sense.

However, there is the opposition. Some philosophers argue that the reason explanation is not a causal explanation, and actually whether we should take the causalist approach to reason explanation or not is the biggest debate in philosophy of action. Let’s take a look at some of the people’s argument denying that reason explanation is causal one.

5.2.1. *The First Argument Against the Causalist Approach Against Reason Explanation*

In his paper, Huebl replies to this objection against the causalist account of reason explanation. As Huebl interprets, the anti-causalist account of reason explanation say that the primary reason can hardly be a cause for the action in question, because it is part of the action itself and the action are just manifestation of mental states. (Huebl, 13)

Arguing against Davidson’s thesis that rationalization is a species of causal explanation, McLaughlin says that the reason explanation merely just re-describes the action and make it look like there is a preceding cause and there is another action as the consequence. As I understand it,

McLaughlin's main point is that the reason and the action are not as distinct as one might think them to be. (McLaughlin, 117)

To reply to this criticism, I would say that it really depends on one's interpretation whether the primary reason is part of the action or not. I myself think it is an absurd idea to believe that the mental states or the antecedent action is part of the action itself, because in many cases, we do first think and make a decision, then we carry out the action. As Thompson points out, "action is typically a process that runs through phases, and the case where the resolution into phases turn on the agent's thought must be typical and possible." (Thompson, 96) This means intuitively, we would think that the action does rely on the preceding (and corresponding) mental state the agent has.

5.2.2. *The Second Argument Against the Causalist Approach of Reason Explanation*

There's another challenge that the causalist account of reason explanation face, and naturally, it can be seen as an argument from the anti-causalist camp of the debate. This argument says that it is difficult to figure out what a causal chain would look like, because the general account of how reason leads to the action is very difficult to make. Therefore, some people try to avoid this problem and find alternative to substitute.

Such a substitution can be found in Wilson's literature about the reason explanation where he talks about the theological account of reason explanation, and he introduces the notion of intention into the picture (Wilson, 185), Wilson's account is seen as a reply to this problem. As Jeff Speaks points out (Speaks, nd.cdu), in Wilson's account, the intention Wilson introduces only refers to the action in a token sense, and not the general action Wilson is talking about. Therefore, it does not have to reflect the general dynamic between the preceding reason and the consequent action. Paraphrasing Wilson, Speaks says "the content of the intention refers to a particular token action, therefore erasing the need for a general link between the mental state and the action itself." (Speaks, Web)

Wilson's account is of course to be seen as preferable at this point because Davidson's causalist account suffers this defect. Maybe I can draw some inspiration from Davidson's other paper "Freedom to Act", where he discusses that it is very difficult to find a law regarding bridging the antecedent and the consequence, therefore, Davidson made the verdict that such an analysis of general law fails. To make some parallel between this article about action and his other article about freedom, maybe we can say that Davidson's account of a causalist approach to reason explanation also fails.

To this argument, the causalists can reply that just because it is difficult to formulate, it does not mean that it does not exist, indeed, as Ginet says, the reason explanation can be adeterministic while being deterministic in nature.

I would also comment that, and I think that this is the common challenge that conditional analysis and reason explanation face, that is they are both charged with not being able to formulate a successful and detailed enough law that bridges the antecedent and the consequence.

I think the causalist reason explainers and the conditional analysts can reply to this critics, similar to Ginet's observation, that even though the law is very difficult to find, it does not mean that the direction they point to, namely, there actually exists a causal law that links the antecedent and the consequence is wrong. They could also say that what they offer at the moment is the best they got at the moment. However, at the same time, I do think that they need to make some special notation which talks about what they can offer at the moment and why the link between the reason and the action is difficult to formulate.

In Ginet's paper, he talks about another argument that says it is difficult to formulate a general law bridging the antecedent and the consequence. First, Ginet talks about Mills who points out a general law can be acquired, but Mills says that the antecedent can include two conflicting desires and the agent does not know which one to satisfy. Then according to Ginet's interpretation Mills say that in this case of judgment, the stronger desire would win; the dialectics then say that it is difficult to formulate such a

rule to judge which desire is the stronger one. I take this to mean that even there exists a general law bridging the antecedent and the consequence; it is very difficult to figure out the precise formulation of the law, as there are much uncertainty involved.

I think this criticism can be seen as being part of the discussion that the exact account of law is difficult to formulate because the conditions can be very different from case to case. To elaborate, when the agent chooses to fulfil a certain desire instead of the other one, there must be something more going on than the case where the agent chooses the other conflicting desire; this “something more” is part of the accompanying conditions we talk about, and it is difficult to exactly pinpoint the accompanying conditions. In other words, there is no real conflicting desires; it has just the conditions are different cases of antecedents.

Therefore, to reply the “conflicting desire” criticism, we can first say that the “conflicting desire” criticism can be reduced to the problem that the exact account of accompanying conditions is very difficult to formulate. The reply then could be that just because the law is difficult to formulate does not mean that it does not exist.

We can almost conclude here that to give a general account of law that links the antecedent and the action is impossible. I would assume that a general account of law would have to be able to explain every case’s action forming and it also has to include all the variations of accompanying conditions, which would be a mission impossible to accomplish.

This discussion above does not refute the claim that the reason explanation is certainly not causal; it just refutes the claim that just because reason explanation theorists cannot formulate an account of law, then the reason explanation cannot be deterministic. So the upshot is that we still cannot say for sure that reason explanation should be taken by a causalist approach, and we have not proven yet that reason explanation is causal, we are only agonistic about the status of whether reason explanation is causal or not!

Ginet tossed a term “adeterministic” to describe the situation, he believes that we can be agonistic about whether the law in reason explanation is deterministic or not, but say that the reason explanation is adeterministic. He explains that as long as there are conditions for paradigm reason explanation which are “obviously sufficient for their truth, obviously do not entail that there is any true law covering the case, but do involve another sort of obviously explanatory connection between the explained action and its explanans.” (Ginet, 31)

Ginet labeled these conditions as the anomic sufficient condition for a reasons explanation. One example Ginet has given us is that “S v-ed in order to U”, in this case, Ginet argues that “for this proposition to obtain, all we need is that “concurrently with his action of V-ing, S intended by that action to U (S intended of that action that by it S would U.” (Ginet, 32) Obviously, this is similar to Wilson’s account where he also talks about the reason explanation being teleological, so we could guess that when we say that the reason explanation is teleological, we offer an explanation of the action which is not necessarily causal, but does explain the action in question. We shall see this point in greater detail in next section.

5.2.3. The Third Argument Against the Causalist Approach of Reason Explanation

Moreover, what do we mean by “cause” anyway? Ginet suggests that one way to go is to think of it as “because”, a word that links the explanandum and the explanans. (Ginet, 35) If this is the case, we can certainly say that the antecedent of deciding and intending as the cause one’s action, because it is very normal for us to say that the agent does something because he decides or intends to. However, as some philosophers point out, “because” does not necessarily mean “cause”, it could just give some teleological spice to the reason explanation.

The third argument argues against the conditional analysis of freedom is the idea that in some cases, the reason explanation actually takes the form where the antecedent part of the explanation is not

intuitively to be thought of as the cause of the action, but as something that gives a teleological justification for the agent's action.

Once again, the reason explanation is to explain the action, so in the sentence of such explanation use the word "because", and according to Wilson, "because" does not equal to the usage of "cause". For example, Wilson gives us a sample sentence, "He turned blue because his body needed oxygen", Wilson believes in this sentence, the word "because" does not express a causal relation between the antecedent and the consequence, but it helps make the sentence to be a "teleological claim." (Wilson, 181)

Wilson believes that there are many other cases of sentences which have this feature of appearing teleological rather than causal, therefore, the idea that the reason explanation takes a causalist is defeated.

As he puts it, "Most ordinary explanation of action is teleological in character and explanation of action in terms of wanting and believing is no exception to the rule." Indeed, for Wilson, the general account of reason explanation usually takes the form "S did something X in order to do something else", and this aim of the agent explains the agent's action X, but it does not mean that the aim causes the action, it only expresses something teleological.

5.3 *The Difference between the Conditional Analysis and the Reason Explanation*

As said before, the reason explanation that takes the form of "Ag did X in order to do Y", while the conditional analysis says that "Ag would have done X if he had done X". If we think in both cases, there's a link that bridges the antecedent "desire" and the consequence "action", then the content of the desire does not match with the action he wants to promote; some critics may take issues with this and argue that because of this difference, the conditional analysis and reason explanation cannot be said to be similar.

I would reply that because we have said earlier that both conditional analysis and reason explanation are about semantic investigation, so we are always allowed to redescribe the content of the conditional analysis and make it matchable with reason explanation.

One of the big difference between the conditional analysis and reason explanation is their aims. For conditional analysis, the prior aim is to make clear what the ability to do otherwise is and for reason explanation, the aim is to give a proper explanation of the action from the agent's point of view. But as shown in the discussion above, we know that part of the formulation of the sophisticated version of the conditional analysis of the ability to do otherwise is to explain why the agent does what he or she does, so this part of the conditional analysis is very similar to the reason explanation of action. We could also say that the conditional analysis and the reason explanation are not that different content wise.

The real difference comes down to the different ways reason explanation and conditional analysis explain the actions in question. As we have discussed earlier, the idea that the reason explanation takes a causalist form is very much disputed, so it is safer to claim that the reason explanation is not causal, but just expresses a teleological force. The reason explanation part of the conditional analysis is certainly not teleological, at least it is not usually made to be.

Why the reason explanation part is not theological? This comes partly from one of the aims of conditional analysis, that is to make the ability to do otherwise and determinism compatible with each other. We will understand this if we take a closer look at the simple conditional analysis and the way it makes the ability to do otherwise compatible with determinism.

Determinism entails that at time t , the agent S was bound to do certain action X given the truth of the past and deterministic natural law. Apparently, S could not have done otherwise. Conditional analysts have modified "A could have done otherwise at time t " into "A would have done otherwise at time t if A had desired to".

A different previous desire would lead to a different action, but this causal relation between the different preceding desire and the alternative action we talk about also runs according to determinism. Therefore, the conditional analysis did not deny the truth of determinism and just by redefining the ability

to do otherwise in modal sense into the ability to do otherwise in a conditional sense; the conditional analysts have saved free will in a deterministic world.

Here, we can understand that the conditional analysts initially just need to add a little antecedent to the proposition “S would have done otherwise’ and they have solved the task they set out to do: make the ability to do otherwise compatible with determinism. While this is true, it does not mean a more sophisticated version of conditional analysis cannot include a part that is informative enough to be a reason explanation and we can interpret the reason explanation part of the more sophisticated version of conditional analysis to be teleological.

Previously we have said that it is safer to say that the reason explanation is teleological rather than causal, and I argue this is because it is very debated in philosophy of action that reason explanation is causal, but it is difficult to argue against the idea that reason explanation is teleological.

Here I would like to show a few examples which show that the reason explanation being teleological. First, we have several examples of reason explanations from Ginet: “S V-ed because she had desired that p and believed that by V-ing she would (might) make it the case that p (or contribute to doing so)” or “Prior to V-ing S had the intention to U and (b) concurrently with V-ing S remembered that prior intention and intended that by this V-ing she would carry it out.” (Ginet, 37) The action in question is explained partly by what it tries to achieve. We can also take a look at Thompson’s paper who has this idea that “the explanation of action as it appears most frequently in human thought and speech is the explanation of one action in terms of another”. (Thompson, 85) The examples Wilson gives usually say that the agent is doing X in order to do Y, so such an explanation is teleological.

5.4 The Similarities between the Conditional Analysis and the Reason Explanation

5.4.1 The Agent's Properties

Now the remaining divergence between conditional analysis and reason explanation seem to be that the conditional analysis's reason explanation is not teleological and it lacks a belief part.

But notice that, the conditional analysis did say that the agent possesses some properties which serve as the base for his narrow ability to do otherwise, now as far as I'm concerned, Vihevilin is silent on what these properties really are, so there's lots of space for we to interpret them. Compared to the reason explanation of action, the reason explanation part of the conditional analysis does not say that the agent possesses the belief that by Xing he or she would Y, and also the conditional analysis only says that the agent has a preceding desire to do X, which has no mentioning to another action Y.

I see no reason that we cannot say that these properties are the belief that the agent possesses which includes his previous knowledge about what doing X can achieve and about that by doing X he could bring Y about. Moreover, we could say that the properties, which include another desire to Y, which is the end goal of the agent's doing Y.

So to be more clear about the conditional analysis we already have, we could make specification about what the innate properties in the sophisticated version of conditional analysis are about. We could say that these properties not only include the agent's type ability to do X, but also include the agent's belief that by Xing he would Y and another desire of the agent S to do Y which is the end goal of the agent's doing X.

However, some may say that this similarity may not be convincing enough, exactly because we do not know what the properties look like and there could many ways of interpreting them and how we shall know that a certain interpretation is more favorable than another one. My reply would be that we cannot know exactly what they look like, but there's no way that we cannot say that some of the properties can be interpreted as what I have demonstrated above. Then the critics could say that this is not exactly

a good of replying it, because they could say that I'm begging question and did not say anything new. Then I would admit that I do not know how to reply to this criticism at this moment, but I will just stress the point that we can use our imagination to interpret what the combinations of properties can amount to, and there's no definitive argument to deny my interpretation.

5.4.2. Both Accounts Being Counter-Factual

Another way to bridge the conditional analysis of freedom and the reason explanation is to say that they both rely on the notion of counter-factual.

Needless to say, the conditional analysis is counterfactual in nature. We are trying to understand the alternative action using a desire that hadn't happened before, the scenario that links the different preceding desire and the alternative action takes place in a possible world which is different from our world. Indeed, philosophers like Daniel Dennett and Christopher Lambert are using the possible worlds to defend a conditional analysis of freedom. (Dennett & Taylor, 262)

The conditional analysts also want to say that the agent only care about the alternative actions which he want to achieve, the ones which he does not want to do, he would just not care and would do. Therefore, they want to say that for their accounts to work, the "desire" would have led to the consequence, and the "desire" can also be seen as a causal basis for the alternative consequence.

Similarly, the reason explanation of action also shall be read as counter-factual. Maybe it is easier to see that the action and the reason takes a counter-factual relation than seeing the action and the reason takes a counter-factual relation. Because reason explanation has not talked about anything that did not take place in the place, but that does not mean we cannot understand that there's a counter-factual relation going on in the reason explanation.

As we have established previously, the reason explanation's account is a teleological one, the agent does something in order to do something else. Now one of the people who proposed to advance a

sophisticated version of conditional analysis Wilson actually says that the account of reason explanation should be understood as counter-factual. As Wilson says, “if Ag had not wanted to Y, then there would have been nothing that was for him a potential objective that he believed to be promotable by his doing X.” (Wilson, 198) This means that if there were not the reason and the desire in the first place, there would have been no action. Indeed, Wilson concludes that, “an explanation of action in terms of reasons implies the assertion that there exists a counter-factual dependence of the actions on the reasons.” (Wilson, 198) Wilson came up with this idea especially because he denies that there’s causal relation between the action and the preceding cause of desire and belief, and he wants to find a substitute relation here. The counter-factual relation between the consequence and the cause is what Wilson proposes as a substitution.

The upshot of the discussion here is that we have pointed out a one important similarity between the conditional analysis and the reason explanation, and this similarity is that they both involves the notion of counter-factual, and they both assume that there’s counter-factual relation between the consequence and the preceding desire. This finding, combined with the claim that we have established previously, that both conditional analysis and the reason explanation are semantics investigation, certainly have refuted the claim that the conditional analysis of freedom and the reason explanation of action are completely different things. I believe that by pointing out this similarity, we have bridged the two group of theorists and opened doors for them to learn from each other in the future.

Chapter 6: Concluding Remarks

In my thesis, I have argued that unlike people's first impression that the conditional analysis of freedom and reason explanation of action are completely different things, and they actually share many similarities. To bridge the two, I believe, opens the door for both group of theorists to learn from each other and thus strengthening their respective positions.

The conditional analysis which could be similar to reason explanation is certainly not the simple conditional analysis, and I have argued that we should reject simple conditional analysis for its own defects and inadequacy. I then argue that both conditional analysis of freedom and the reason explanation are about investigating about our common way of using language, so in this sense, they are not as different as people initially would assume.

I have also used Vihvelin's conditional analysis of disposition as an example to showcase that we can play with the component of the conditional analysis to make the "reason explanation" part of the conditional analysis similar to a teleological account of reason explanation of action in a more obvious way.

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