

SUPPOSITIONAL REASONING, INDUCTION,
AND NONMONOTONIC INFERENCES

Review of

ISAAC LEVI, *FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT:
RAMSEY TEST CONDITIONALS, INDUCTIVE
INFERENCE, AND NONMONOTONIC REASONING*

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The book collects Levi's recent results concerning the imaginative use of *suppositional reasoning* relevant to *practical deliberation, explanation, prediction, hypothesis testing, scientific inquiry*.

In suppositional reasoning, we add to the initial state of full belief a proposition supposed to be true *for the sake of the argument*: "Like a change in the state of full belief, the result is an altered way of distinguishing between the possible and impossible or between what is judged true, what is judged false, and what is held in suspense. But the transformed state is not the inquirer's new state of full belief. [...] A new state of full belief is simulated in the sense that the ramifications of moving to that state are explored without actually making the change" (pp. 2–3). Hence, changing full beliefs calls for some sort of assessment or *justification* but supposition does not, consequently it is necessary to pay attention to the distinction between *genuine change in belief* and *suppositional change*.

Practical deliberation involves evaluation with respect to the decision-maker's goals and value options: this evaluation can be obtained by considering consequences of the supposition adopted purely for the sake of the argument. The "potential" new state of full belief will contain the initial state of full belief and the consequences of the supposition previously added. Only when the decision-maker decides to implement