

Wide and narrow scope

Sam Shpall

Published online: 13 December 2011
© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2011

Abstract In this paper I present an original and relatively conciliatory solution to one of the central contemporary debates in the theory of rationality, the debate about the proper formulation of rational requirements. I begin by offering my own version of the “symmetry problem” for wide scope rational requirements, and I show how this problem necessitates the introduction of a normative concept other than the traditional notions of reason and requirement. I then sketch a theory of *rational commitment*, showing how this notion solves the symmetry problem as I’ve presented it. I also show that the concept of *rational commitment* is one we already appeal to in common sense discourse, and that it is necessary for vindicating comparative judgments of rationality.

Keywords Rationality · Normativity · Wide scoping · Broome

One of the main contemporary issues in the theory of rationality concerns the nature of so-called *rational requirements*. It is commonly assumed that such requirements specify ways in which we may fall short of some important kind of rational ideal. So for example, it is commonly assumed that we are rationally required to avoid having manifestly contradictory beliefs, on the grounds that an agent who has manifestly contradictory beliefs falls short of the ideal of the rational agent in an obvious way. But though philosophers generally agree that rationality is the source of at least some norms of this kind, they disagree about how these requirements are to be conceived.¹

¹ Though see Finlay (2009) for some skepticism about the existence of norms of rationality.

S. Shpall (✉)
School of Philosophy, University of Southern California, Mudd Hall of Philosophy, 3709 Trousdale
Parkway, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0451, USA
e-mail: Sam.shpall@usc.edu

In its most well known incarnation, this disagreement has focused upon a distinction between *wide* and *narrow scope* formulations of the relevant principles. Take the putative norm of non-akrasia (henceforth ‘enkrasia’) as illustration. Assume that it is necessarily irrational to both believe that you ought to *x* and lack the intention to *x*. There are two distinct ways of capturing this fact:

Enkrasia_N:

If you believe that you ought to *x*, then you are rationally required to intend to *x*.

Enkrasia_W:

You are rationally required to be such that (if you believe that you ought to *x*, then you intend to *x*).

In Enkrasia_W, the concept of rational requirement is said to take wide rather than narrow scope, since it ranges over the whole conditional clause.²

The issue can seem a minor one; it is natural to suspect that resolving a technical dispute about the logical form of a restricted set of conditionals is unlikely to entail substantive, interesting conclusions about the nature of rationality itself. This suspicion is nonetheless mistaken. The competing conceptions of the form of rational requirements lead to very different pictures of what rationality is like.

Suppose that Enkrasia_N is true. Suppose further that I believe on the basis of woefully insufficient evidence that I ought to spit on *Las Meninas*. It follows that rationality requires me to intend to spit on *Las Meninas*. In other words, I cannot be (fully) rational unless I intend to spit on that masterpiece of Velasquez’s.

Alternatively, suppose that Enkrasia_W is true. Again I believe that I ought to spit on *Las Meninas*. But no longer is it implied that I am rationally required to intend to spit on *Las Meninas*. I can satisfy the requirement in another way: by revising my belief. Since ‘rationally required’ takes scope over the whole conditional, the consequent cannot be “detached”, to invoke the prevalent jargon. Thus, if Enkrasia_W is true, I *can* be (fully) rational without intending to spit on *Las Meninas*.

Many authors take similar reflections to constitute sufficient reason to favor wide scope formulations of rational requirements. I agree with them. Narrow scope formulations result in a highly counterintuitive picture of the normative pressure rationality exerts on us. Nobody in her right mind would counsel me to spit on *Las Meninas* merely because I believe that I ought to. A rational person would tell me to give up my ridiculous belief. (We might also expect her to furnish me with reasons for doing so.) On the face of it, then, the narrow scope view forces us to accept a highly revisionary theory of what it takes to be a rational agent.

This paper does not aim to defend wide scope conceptions of rational requirements; it assumes that they are preferable to their narrow scope counterparts.

² For early defenses of wide scoping, see Hare (1971); Hill (1973); Greenspan (1975); Darwall (1983), and Gensler (1985). For contemporary defenses, which have increasingly focused on the formulation of rational requirements, see Korsgaard (1997); Hampton (1998); Broome (1999, 2007, 2008a, 2008b); Dancy (2000); Wallace (2001); Brunero (2010), and Way (2010, 2011). For the objections to wide scoping that I will be concerned with late in the paper, see Schroeder (2004, 2009), Kolodny (2005, 2007a, b, 2008a, b), and, for a later presentation, Finlay (2010). For another objection to wide scope principles that I won’t discuss, see Setiya (2007). For an interesting discussion of Hill and Kant on wide scoping, see Schroeder (2005).

The goal of the paper is to show that such requirements are not sufficient for an adequate theory of rationality. In particular, these requirements cannot account for asymmetries that seem fundamental to our judgments of when agents are rational, asymmetries that have led some philosophers to regard wide scope principles as indefensible. In order to account for these asymmetries we do not need to abandon wide scope requirements. Instead, we need to amplify our conceptual resources. Fortunately, there is an extremely natural way to do so.

In Sect. 1 I briefly expand upon the guiding idea of the paper, the claim that the truth of what I'll call *wide scope theses* does not entail anything about the sufficiency of these theses as exhaustive theories of the norms of rationality. In Sect. 2 I introduce my own version of what has come to be known as the *symmetry problem* for wide scope requirements, and I argue that a proper formulation of the problem does indeed show that wide scope theses are insufficient as theories. In Sect. 3 I consider one proposed solution to the symmetry problem, John Broome's account of *basing permissions*, and I show that this solution is not compelling. Then in Sect. 4 I offer a diagnosis of why Broome's suggestion fails, and the beginnings of an alternative proposal. The main insight to be gained from the diagnosis is that the dual notions of rational requirement and permission cannot be used to capture the asymmetries we need to capture. My own proposal appeals to the fact that, conveniently, we *already have* the notion that's appropriate for this task: it is the intuitive notion that we employ when we speak of *being committed* to having certain beliefs and intentions. In Sect. 5 I offer a more detailed account of *rational commitment*, outlining several essential features of this normative notion. In Sect. 6 I explain how the introduction of this notion affords us a satisfying resolution of the symmetry problem. I also consider two important objections to my solution and reject them.

The view that emerges in this paper is a conciliatory one. The requirements of rationality must be captured by wide scope principles. But an equally important set of normative facts, the facts about rational commitment, must be captured by narrow scope principles. The charitable way to read wide scopers is as being primarily concerned with wide scope theses. And the charitable way to read critics of wide scoping is as being primarily concerned with the viability of wide scope theories.

1 Theses versus theories

Most of the discussions of wide scope views in the theory of rationality have concentrated on whether particular wide scope principles are true. Call claims to the effect that one or more of these principles are true *wide scope theses*. For example, the claim that Enkrasia_W is true is a wide scope thesis. There are some extremely general, and in my view compelling, arguments for such theses. I have already given one example, but I will not be concerned to extend the idea, which has already been forcefully articulated by others.³

The simple point that I'm concerned to make in this section is that we need an *interpretation* of the role of a particular wide scope thesis in our conception of

³ Especially by Broome in (1999, 2007, 2008b).

rationality. It could, after all, do one of many things. A simple view is that a wide scope thesis *constitutes* a theory of the relevant domain. This would amount to the idea, for instance, that Enkrasia_w captures everything about the rational import of akrasia that is worth capturing.

Writers on rational requirements often seem to presuppose the truth of this simple view. Discussions of these matters typically don't distinguish between the question of whether a thesis is true and the question of whether its truth suffices to give us a satisfying theory of a given domain. So once the argument has been given for or against a particular wide scope principle (or wide scope principles generally), or for or against a particular narrow scope principle (or narrow scope principles generally), the writer appears to consider the discussion settled. The issue of interpreting the putatively true principle, of providing an analysis of its place in an overall theory of rationality, is not broached. This can be seen most prominently in the exchange between John Broome and Niko Kolodny.⁴ But it is also related to the tendency of many writers to assume that we have a natural, well-understood conception of rational requirement on the table. Treatments of the so-called *normativity problem* for rational requirements seem to rely on something like the simple view insofar as they suppose that the interesting question to ask about rationality is whether rational requirements are normative. If the simple view were false, the non-normativity of rational requirements would not entail the non-normativity of rationality.⁵

But this is clearly an oversight. Even if the simple view were correct, it's correctness would not be trivial. From the truth of a wide scope thesis nothing necessarily follows about the truth of a wide scope theory. It might be that the thesis is only part of the true theory of the relevant domain—e.g., that the wide scope thesis Enkrasia_w is true but insufficient for a satisfying theory of enkrasia. This is the view I will be suggesting in what follows: wide scope theses are true, but wide scope theories are not.⁶

I endorse wide scope theses because they alone preserve the proper intuitive interpretation of the notion of rational requirement, an interpretation according to which these requirements are (as I'll say) *decisive*. In labeling rational requirements decisive, I just mean to indicate that they are not the kind of things than can be outweighed by competing rational considerations.⁷

If I am rationally required to intend to spit on *Las Meninas*, then the rational status of my intending to spit has been decided. Being rationally required is not merely one rational consideration among many. It is the all things considered verdict that the rational domain provides.

But if narrow scope theses were true, then the notion of rational requirement would have an unnaturally non-decisive meaning. I could come to be rationally

⁴ Broome (2007); Kolodny (2007a).

⁵ For discussions of the normativity problem see Kolodny (2005); Southwood (2008); Hussein (2007).

⁶ For a similar line of thought see Way (2011).

⁷ Thus, decisive notions like rational requirement are to be contrasted with *pro tanto* (or contributory) notions such as the concept of a reason. The latter enter into weighing relations, whereas the decisive notions are the ones we use to capture the result of such processes of weighing. For similar thoughts see Dancy (2004) and Broome (1999, 2008b).

required to have an intention to x merely because I stupidly form a belief that I ought to x . Requirements are not this cheaply acquired, and they are not this myopic. I need to do more than form a ridiculous belief for rationality to mandate that I intend to spit on *Las Meninas*. And rationality is not plausibly like a horse with blinders on; if there are rational norms, then they presumably take all the relevant features of an agent's situation into account. For instance, they do not ignore the fact that my belief that I ought to spit on *Las Meninas* is wildly irrational.

Nonetheless, wide scope theses do not tell us the whole story about the topics they concern. In particular, they cannot capture the concept of *being committed* to believing or intending something. I'll contend that this commonsense notion of commitment is crucial for the theory of rationality. First, there are strong independent grounds for countenancing the notion of rational commitment: it is already a part of our common sense stock of normative concepts, and we constantly invoke it when engaging in rational evaluation. Second, appealing to rational commitment is a satisfying way of filling a gap that cannot be filled by wide scope theories. We turn now to a discussion of this gap.

2 The symmetry problem

Wide scope principles like Enkrasia_W are intuitively symmetrical in that they draw no normative distinctions between the different ways we might satisfy them. If you find yourself in the state that a given wide scope principle prohibits—for example, the state of believing that you ought to x and lacking the intention to x —then there are multiple ways to get out of that state and into compliance with the norm. In the *enkrasia* case, you can come into compliance by forming the intention to x , or by revising your belief that you ought to x . The point is that the principles themselves do not enjoin us to adopt a particular one of these methods. In fact, the principles are completely silent on the comparative rationality of these methods. For all that is said they are on a par.

Narrow scope principles like Enkrasia_N are different. If Enkrasia_N were true, then the person who finds himself in the *akratic* state prohibited by the principle would only have one rational option: forming the intention that corresponds with his ought-belief. So there would be no symmetrical prediction, as only one process of reasoning could bring the *akratic* agent out of his irrational state.

This general distinction, between the symmetrical consequences of wide scope accounts of rational requirements and the asymmetrical consequences of their narrow scope counterparts, has fueled worries about wide scope views. Mark Schroeder and Niko Kolodny, in particular, have objected to wide scope views because of the symmetry that they predict.⁸ In my view, there are two reasonable interpretations of their arguments. At times, the objection appears to involve the claim that wide scope theses predict symmetries.⁹ At other times, the objection

⁸ Schroeder (2004); Kolodny (2005). See also Finlay (2010) and Way (2011).

⁹ See e.g. Schroeder (2004, p. 3): "It is a symmetry predicted by the Wide Scope Account that is simply not sustained".

seems merely to be that wide scope theses fail to predict a certain type of asymmetry.¹⁰ The first version of the symmetry argument is unconvincing. The second version is a successful objection to wide scope theories. In this section I'll defend these claims and give my own slightly revised version of this objection.

The first version of the argument goes something like this. The symmetry that the wide scope enkrasia principle postulates is illegitimate. For one way of satisfying it is rational, but the other is not. Intending to x on the basis of your belief that you ought to x is rational; but revising your belief that you ought to x on the basis of your lack of an intention to x is not rational. Since Enkrasia_w predicts symmetry where there is none, it cannot be true.

This argument is not convincing. First, it's not true that if you believe that you ought to x , and come to revise this belief, then you must have done so on the basis of lacking the intention to x . You might simply have reevaluated the evidence and seen that you were mistaken in having the belief in the first place. Surely this sort of conduct is rational. Sometimes it will be maximally rational. So the fact that you can satisfy the wide scope principle by revising your belief does not in itself constitute a worrisome type of symmetry, since some such revisions are permissible.

Second, the theory of rationality in which particular wide scope principles are embedded may still vindicate the relevant asymmetry when it's present. Imagine that you do indeed revise your belief, not in the light of appropriate evidential considerations, but merely because you lack the corresponding intention. Then, though you will come to satisfy the enkrasia principle, you might violate some other principle—for instance, a principle that enjoins you to only believe that p on the basis of genuine evidence that p . So you will not escape the charge of irrationality.

The more plausible version of the symmetry argument is this. There is an asymmetry with respect to the two possible ways of satisfying Enkrasia_w . The principle cannot capture this asymmetry. This does not render it false; it just indicates that it can't explain everything about the topic worth explaining. Hence the thesis Enkrasia_w is not sufficient for a theory of enkrasia.

The best way to characterize this asymmetry is as follows. If you believe that you ought to x , and you do not intend to x , then you are irrational. When you find yourself in this irrational state, you may proceed in several ways. You might form the intention to x ; you might give up the belief that you ought to x ; or you might remain in your irrational state. Now there is an important structural difference between these three ways of proceeding. There is *always something rational* about forming the intention to x , assuming that you do so in response to the distinctive nature of the situation—that is, in response to the fact that you believe that you ought to x . By contrast, there is not always something rational about giving up the belief, or remaining in the state you are in.¹¹

¹⁰ Schroeder (2004, pp. 10, 13) could be interpreted this way.

¹¹ We could resuscitate a related version of the first interpretation of the argument. It is never rational to revise your belief on the basis of your lack of a corresponding intention. But it is always rational, in *some sense*, to intend on the basis of your belief. The question is what sense we are appealing to here. This will be the topic of the next three sections.

Here's another way to make the point. There is a natural intuition about the asymmetry of enkrasia that we'd like to characterize. Schroeder and Kolodny say little about the precise nature of this asymmetry. Nonetheless, we can capture a central strand in their worries by appealing to the distinction between the formation of the enkratic intention, which is always rational in an important way, and the revision of the normative belief, which is not.

For example, Bob and Bill may each believe that he ought to ask Jenny on a date. Imagine that Bob believes for woefully insufficient evidence: in several attempts at casual conversation, Jenny has greeted him with nothing but scorn; moreover, Bob's fragile psyche should not, at present, be forced to endure the humiliation of rejection. Bill, on the other hand, has good reason to believe that Jenny would like to date him, and that the two of them will get along; in any case, he is hardened enough to brush off spurned attempts of this sort. Observe that both Bob and Bill seem rational, *in one and the same important way*, insofar as they form the intention to ask Jenny out. (This is compatible with there being another way in which Bill is rational and Bob is not.) Likewise, they seem irrational, *in one and the same important way*, if they refrain from forming this intention. (Again, this is compatible with there being a separate sense in which Bob is irrational and Bill is not.) On the other hand, if they were both to revise their normative beliefs, only Bob would be doing something at all rational.

These observations lead us to a very general thought that might help to illuminate some of the interest of the symmetry objection. If my earlier arguments were at all convincing, then it is plausible to think that the notion of rational requirement is to be distinguished by its decisive place in the rational domain. But symmetry considerations give us reason to suspect that decisive concepts might not be especially well suited to capture the whole story about rationality—or, to be more specific, the whole story about phenomena like enkrasia. This section has tried to motivate the idea that our intuitive understanding of the rationality of enkrasia appears to involve some kind of asymmetry. Suppose for the sake of argument that intending to do something on the basis of your belief that you ought to is somehow more “enkratic” than revising your belief (regardless of your reason for revision). The thing to notice is that, if what rational requirements are supposed to capture is rational decisiveness, then they will capture no relevant asymmetry. Sometimes it is more rational to give up your normative belief, and sometimes it is more rational to form a corresponding intention—this just depends on the rational justification you have for believing, or in other words on whether your situation is more like Bob's or Bill's. So as far as decisiveness goes, there is no general, interesting distinction to be drawn between the two potential ways of getting into conformity with Enkrasia_w. That means that if there is indeed some kind of asymmetry, we should expect to need something besides rational requirements to capture it. And even if we conclude that there isn't any relevant asymmetry, this line of thought gives us an explanation of some potential motivations for narrow scope views.

Let me make one final, related point. Apart from the fact that it is quite intuitive to think that forming enkratic intentions always involves *something* rational, the symmetry argument can be seen as drawing attention to another feature of our everyday discourse about rationality: the fact that there are certain forms of

reasoning that are distinctive and of special interest to human beings. This is perhaps most obvious in the case of enkrasia. We habitually counsel others to “let conscience be your guide”, to “follow your heart”, to “do what feels right”, etc. and we reserve a special type of condemnation (or empathy) for those who fail by these lights.¹² It is not unreasonable to think that these practices indicate that we regard the distinctively enkratic move—the move from all things considered normative belief to corresponding intention—as itself constituting an important part of proper functioning. We’ll now explore these general ideas in more detail.

3 A response and its inadequacy

John Broome is the most articulate proponent of wide scope conceptions of rational requirements, and in recent work he has acknowledged the general point I’ve been stressing—that the symmetry problem shows wide scope theses to be insufficient for a theory of rationality. Broome suggests that we fill this gap in the theory of rationality with the notion of *basing permissions*.¹³

Basing permissions are intended to play an important role in the theory of reasoning; they capture the ways in which we may permissibly hold attitudes on the basis of other attitudes (where ‘on the basis’ is a causal-explanatory relation). According to Broome, basing permissions have the following general form:

Rationality permits S that

S has attitude A at t_a and

S has attitude B at t_b and

S has attitude C at t_c and ...

S has attitude K at t_k and

S’s attitude K at t_k is based on S’s attitude A at t_a and B at t_b and ...

Applying this schema to the case of enkrasia, the suggestion would be that

Rationality permits S that

S believes at t_1 that she ought to x and

S intends at t_2 to x and

S’s intention to x at t_2 is based on S’s belief at t_1 that she ought to x

This basing permission is then supposed to entail the relevant asymmetry that is not entailed by Enkrasia_w.

Recall that the main piece of data that needs to be explained is the fact that there is always something rational about responding to a belief that you ought to x by forming the intention to x, whereas there is not always something rational about

¹² I think something similar applies in the typical cases discussed by authors interested in rational requirements—means end coherence, intention consistency, and belief consistency and closure. All of these are distinctive and important ways in which we expect one another to regulate our attitudes structurally, *even when* we fail to regulate them in other appropriate, substantive ways.

¹³ For this account see Broome (2008b, p. 194).

responding to lacking the intention to x by revising the belief that you ought to x .¹⁴ On the face of it the enkratic basing permission appears apt for this task. It says that rationality permits a certain kind of response, namely the basing that obtains in cases of enkratic reasoning. And of course this is precisely the response about which we have concluded that there must be something rational.

The introduction of basing permissions has the virtue of looking for a response to the symmetry problem in the right place. Nonetheless, the proposal cannot succeed. Ironically, it is undermined by considerations analogous to the ones that Broome has eloquently appealed to in rejecting narrow scope formulations of rational requirements.

In presenting this picture of basing permissions, Broome is careful to point out that his formula "...does not imply that [S] may permissibly have any of the attitudes A, B, C...or K individually...because permission does not necessarily distribute over a conjunction" (ms: 194). His point is that, for example, being rationally permitted to have attitudes [A and B] does not entail that one is rationally permitted to have attitude A. This is crucial, since without this provision the proposal would be susceptible to the same kind of bootstrapping worry that plagues narrow scope accounts. In other words, if we could derive a rational permission to have A from a rational permission to have [A and B], then the basing schema would imply that in every case in which my intention to x is based on my belief that I ought to x , both the intention and the belief are rationally permissible. And this would amount to granting that the basing relation between my two attitudes is itself sufficient for making those attitudes rationally permissible. This is not a good result; the fact that my intention to spit on *Las Meninas* is based on my belief that I ought to is not enough to make the intention and belief okay by rationality's lights.

The problem is that a similarly troubling result is entailed by Broome's account of basing permissions. These permissions aim to capture the normative status of the basing relations that they treat, and they do so by appealing to the concept of rational permission. But the concept of rational permission is not the right one to capture the data. It is not always rationally permissible to base one's attitudes in the ways implied by Broome's schema.

While a basing permission does not permit the individual attitudes (A...K) implicated in the schema, it does permit the basing relation that holds between them.¹⁵ It is a natural consequence of this view that, for example, it is rationally permissible for me to base my intention to spit on *Las Meninas* on my belief that I

¹⁴ Of course the latter claim could be strengthened; plausibly it is never rational to respond in such a way. But this is unimportant in the present context. Note that if this stronger claim is true, then it is likely because there is a requirement of rationality forbidding revising beliefs (or some types of beliefs) on the basis of lacking intentions. This requirement, however, *does not* explain the piece of data that I've called the kernel of the symmetry argument. So appealing to such a requirement cannot alone constitute a satisfying response to the symmetry problem.

¹⁵ See Broome (2008b, p. 191), though he states the view for prohibitions rather than permissions: "A basing prohibition does not prohibit the attitudes themselves. Rationality may permit you to believe q , and also believe p and believe that if q then p . It prohibits you only from having the first of these beliefs on the basis of the second and third." Way (2011) briefly considers a similar proposal.

ought to spit on *Las Meninas*. So though Broome avoids saying that my intention is rationally permissible, he is committed to saying that the basis of my intention is rationally permissible. This is just as problematic. It is not rationally permissible for me to base my intention to spit on *Las Meninas* on my belief that I ought to spit on *Las Meninas*, because that belief is itself rationally impermissible. Allowing that such basing is rationally permissible amounts to a form of bootstrapping analogous to the one Broome has consistently worried about. The mere fact that I have a belief *with the proper formal properties*—that is, a belief with the content ‘I ought to x’—is not intuitively sufficient for making my basing an intention on that belief rationally permissible. The permissibility of basing A on B must depend essentially upon the permissibility of B.

Here is another way to put the idea. Imagine that I do base my intention to spit on my belief that I ought to. According to Broome, this basing is rationally permissible. But plausibly, I am rationally required to refrain from intending—this is the sort of intuition that has motivated wide scope views from the beginning.¹⁶ Moreover, it is highly likely that I’m also rationally required to revise my belief; by hypothesis, I lack sufficient evidence for it. But then I am rationally permitted to have an attitude that I’m rationally required to revise on the basis of another attitude that I’m rationally required to revise. This is, I submit, an untenable result. Hence basing permissions cannot be the right way to capture our asymmetry.

4 The lesson and an intuitive proposal

It will be useful to provide a brief diagnosis of the problem we encountered in the last section. This diagnosis will put us in a position to see why the solution I propose is a step forward.

The problem with basing permissions is that they appeal to the wrong normative concept. Our goal is to explain the sense in which there is always something rational about certain forms of reasoning. For example, there is a sense in which it is always rational to intend to x on the basis of your belief that you ought to x. But the claim that it is always rationally permissible to engage in these forms of reasoning is too strong. For example, the claim that it is rationally permissible for me to intend to spit on *Las Meninas* on the basis of my belief that I ought to is excessive to the point of implausibility. There is *something* rational about my intending to spit on the basis of my believing that I ought to; but whatever this something rational amounts to it cannot amount to rational permission.

Here is an analogy. Suppose that the fact that q is a reason for me to perform action x. Given some assumptions about q’s non-triviality that we can ignore, this entails that if I x for the reason that q, then there is something rational about my

¹⁶ Admittedly, a proponent of wide scope theses could say that it is only the intuition that I am *not required* to intend to spit that has been his motivation for rejecting narrow scope alternatives. But I think it is extremely natural, and in accord with our common sense practices of rational evaluation, to assume that in such situations I may be required to refrain from intending to spit.

action.¹⁷ However, this doesn't mean that I am permitted to x for the reason that q. It might be that the reasons to avoid x-ing are compelling, in which case I am required to refrain from x-ing for the reason that q. In general, then, the fact that there is something rational about a particular form of conduct (or reasoning) clearly does not entail that this form of conduct (or reasoning) is rationally permissible.

Once we see that the concept of rational permission cannot do the necessary work, a natural thought to have is that we should invoke the concept of a reason—we should say, in other words, that the asymmetry is explained by the fact that believing that you ought to x gives you a reason to intend to x. But this thought should be resisted. As Broome argues convincingly in 'Normative Requirements', bootstrapping worries plague the view that, e.g., believing that you ought to x gives you a reason to intend to x (and, more generally, the view that what's correct about these distinctive processes of reasoning is that there is always a reason to engage in them).¹⁸ If I don't have any reason to intend to spit on *Las Meninas*, then it's counterintuitive to think that my believing that I ought to spit generates a reason to have this intention. Similar worries likewise doom the view that you have a reason to base your intention to x on your belief that you ought to x. If I don't have any reason to intend to spit, then it's counterintuitive to think that I can have a reason to base this intention on my belief that I ought to spit.

So we seem to have shown that the dual concepts of rational requirement and rational permission cannot be the proper ones to utilize in our solution to the version of the symmetry problem I've presented. Likewise, we have good reason to suspect that the concept of a reason will not do either.

I now turn to introducing my own view about how we should respond to the symmetry problem. We need a distinct kind of concept to fill the gap in the theory of rationality that is left over once we've postulated wide scope rational requirements. Fortunately we are already in the practice of employing the concept that fits the bill. It is the concept of *rational commitment*.

In what remains of this section I'll argue that rational commitment is an intuitively legitimate category of normative concept. In the next section I'll provide an account of some of the central features of this concept. In Sect. 6 I'll explain why this account of rational commitment gives us a satisfying resolution of the symmetry problem.

Let's begin by noting that there are strong intuitive grounds for thinking that we use the term 'commitment' in English to pick out an interesting normative concept that is worthy of study and especially relevant to the theory of rationality. For our purposes, we will be concerned with only rational commitments; we will not discuss what I elsewhere call *moral commitments*—for example, the commitment that you have in virtue of having promised to do something—or *volitional commitments*—for example, the commitment that's constituted by your dedication to some person,

¹⁷ For suppose that I x, but my reasons for x-ing do not include the fact that q. Assume also that I am not motivated by *any* facts which constitute (good) reasons for x-ing. Then my action of x-ing is clearly more irrational than it would be if I x-ed for the reason that q. So there must be something rational about x-ing for the reason that q in virtue of which this is true.

¹⁸ Broome (1999).

object, or goal.¹⁹ But it is worth pointing out that we do use the term to describe a wide range of apparently normative phenomena.

Rational commitments are commitments that you have in virtue of possessing certain types of attitudes. We talk about rational commitments all the time, most commonly in the case of closing your belief under the relation of entailment. We say things like:

‘Your argument commits you to believing that z.’

‘That’s the best thing for Hume to say, given his commitment to the theory of ideas.’

‘Plato is committed to a wacky ontology.’ Etc.

Moreover, note that what we are talking about in these cases seems importantly different than what the notion of ‘rational requirement’ should be picking out. For instance, it’s not always the case that a philosopher is rationally required to believe the consequences of his theory—in some cases, he may be terribly irrational in accepting the theory in the first place. But we would nonetheless grant that, since he holds the theory, he is thereby committed to believing its consequences.

Before I offer further reflections about the nature of rational commitment a general point is in order. As my examples bring out, the English word ‘commitment’, when it is employed in an attempt to discuss rational commitments (as opposed to how it’s employed in statements like ‘I committed to attending Lisa’s party’) is paradigmatically used to describe cases of belief closure. Less commonly, we invoke rational commitments to intentions, e.g. when we say that your intention commits you to action, or that a belief that you ought to do something commits you to (intentionally) doing it. I should stress that though this language is less widespread, it is by no means confused. Rational commitment is an intuitively broad category, and the way we speak about it bears out this point.

Setting aside linguistic evidence, there are some very general reasons for treating the different cases in parallel fashion. Chief among them is the fact that the nature of the rational connection between the implicated mental states—that is, the connection between the states that ground the commitments, and the states that we are committed to having in virtue of those grounds—is analogously strong in each case: intuitively, you have got to be irrational in some major way if you fail to have an attitude that you are committed to having. So it is reasonable to hypothesize that we can acquire rational commitments in many ways—by having ‘all things considered’ normative beliefs about what we ought to do, by forming sets of intentions, by having beliefs about the necessary means to what we intend, and

¹⁹ It may be wondered whether these are really all commitments in the same sense, or whether there isn’t just ambiguity in our use of the term. Elsewhere I argue that moral and rational commitments are similar enough to be considered species of the same genus. I also think that there are interesting connections between these types of commitment and psychological commitments. For a more thorough presentation of the view see (Shpall 2011).

perhaps also as a result of having certain partial attitudes (if there are such things).²⁰ In the next section I sketch an account of rational commitment that allows for a unified treatment of these related cases.

5 Rational commitment

I now turn to a more detailed examination of the nature of rational commitment. The point of this section is to give us a better handle on the concept by articulating its essential features: commitments are *normative rather than psychological*, *escapable*, *agent-dependent*, *pro tanto*, and *strict*. In what follows I discuss these features individually, and I show that they suffice to distinguish rational commitments from rational requirements.

5.1 Commitments are normative rather than psychological

Rational commitment cannot be analyzed in purely psychological terms. Adam might believe that everything the Bible says is true, and he might believe that the Bible says that the world was created in 6 days. But it clearly doesn't follow that he believes that the world was created in 6 days. What follows is that he is committed to having this belief. So the commitment itself is not a mental state. Rational commitments are *relations* between mental states (the ground of the commitment) and other mental states (the object of the commitment). These relations obtain whether or not the agent in question actually satisfies them, and they have the flavor of normative relations.

5.2 Commitments are escapable

Rational commitments are *escapable*. They can be escaped by relinquishing the attitude(s) that constitutes the ground of the commitment. For example, Adam can escape his commitment to believing that the world was created in 6 days by revising his belief that everything the Bible says is true. So being committed to having A at t_1 is compatible with your being perfectly rational in failing to have A at t_2 , in so far as you've escaped the commitment. If commitments could not be escaped, this would not be so.

Notice that this feature of commitments seems to distinguish them from rational requirements; intuitively, requirements are not escapable. If you are rationally required to be such that [if you believe that you ought to x, then you intend to x],

²⁰ By using the vague terminology of 'partial attitudes' here I mean only to remain neutral on the complex questions of whether there are partial beliefs, whether there are partial intentions, and how these potential states are related. The point is just that if there are such partial attitudes then they will plausibly ground rational commitments in ways analogous to the ways in which full attitudes ground rational commitments. To mention one sort of example, a partial belief that Spain will win the World Cup, accompanied by certain other attitudes (like the belief that I ought to bet on Spain if it is likely to win me money) may rationally commit me to intending to take bet B, given the odds of B.

then this is so whether or not you have a belief about what you ought to do. In other words, you fall under the scope of the requirement no matter what you are like (at least in so far as you are a rational agent).²¹ Likewise, if you are rationally required to refrain from believing that you ought to spit on *Las Meninas* at t_1 , and no evidential facts change by t_2 , then you are still rationally required to refrain from having this belief. A reasonable explanation of this fact is that the rational requirement to believe in response to your evidence is inescapable.

5.3 Commitments are agent-dependent

By claiming that commitments are agent-dependent I mean primarily that, in order to come into existence, a commitment must be grounded in an *activity* of the agent who is to become committed. (The sense of activity I am after is somewhat opaque, but none the worse for that; importantly, it is *not* meant to imply anything ambitious about free agency.) The idea is that since rational commitments depend, in a broad sense, on the activities of the agent who comes to stand in the commitment relation, it makes sense that different agents are committed to different things. Another person—or, more generally, the world itself—does not have the power to commit you. It is fundamentally *your* mental states that constitute the ground of your rational commitments. This agent-dependence is what explains why agents' commitments vary widely.

Notice that the agent-dependence of commitments also serves to distinguish them from requirements, at least on one popular conception of requirements. It is often supposed that rational requirements exist independently of us—we are not responsible for bringing them into being in any robust sense. For example, it is not up to us that the evidence requires us to believe hypothesis H, or that the reasons require us to intend to x.²² And any two individuals in the same epistemic/normative situation will be required to believe H, and required to intend to x. But it isn't true that any two individuals in the same epistemic/normative situation will have the same rational commitments. You could easily be in the same epistemic/normative situation as I am—standing in the Prado, evaluating the same sets of considerations—and not believe that you ought to spit on *Las Meninas*. In that case you would lack a commitment that I have, the commitment to intending to spit.

5.4 Commitments are pro tanto

Sometimes you have reasons to do something that you should refrain from doing. In the terminology of Jonathan Dancy, reasons are *contributory*—a reason might be an ingredient in making it the case that you ought to do something, but it needn't play

²¹ As it is commonly conceived, the non-akrasia norm requires you *at all times* to avoid akrasia. In other words, you are governed by this requirement whether or not you have any beliefs about what you ought to do. Thus, there is a clear sense in which the norm is inescapable: you are governed by it no matter what.

²² Humeans about normative reasons might object to the latter claim, since they view normative reasons as grounded in the desires of individual agents. I find this view implausible but cannot argue against it here.

that role.²³ As John Broome puts it, there are reasons that are inconclusive but that still play a role in *normative weighing explanations*.²⁴ Dancy and Broome are both getting at the simple idea that reasons are pro tanto. They are to be contrasted with “all things considered” concepts (or “decisive” concepts, in my terminology from Sect. 1) like ‘ought’ and ‘requirement’ that do not merely weigh in favor of something, but rather indicate what emerges after the weighing has been accomplished.

Notice that this distinction between the pro tanto and the all things considered may be more general than the distinction between reasons and oughts/requirements. Plausibly some obligations can weigh against each other, and are thus like reasons in that they merely contribute to, rather than constitute, what you ought to do. Rational commitments are like this. Being committed does not entail that you are rationally required to satisfy the commitment.

To see that rational commitments are pro tanto, simply imagine that you have intentions I_1 and I_2 that commit you to intending necessary means M_1 and M_2 that you believe to be inconsistent with each other. Suppose that acting on I_1 is more important than acting on I_2 . Then you are committed to intending M_2 , but you would be most rational if you refrained from intending M_2 and intended M_1 instead. So being committed to having attitude A can count in favor of having A , but it cannot do so decisively.

More formally, we can put the point like this. To be pro tanto is to play a non-decisive weighing role in the determinations of some normative domain D . To be all things considered is to encapsulate the final verdict of D , the verdict that emerges after the weighing has been done.

Rational commitments are pro tanto because they are not like these final verdicts. In other words, rational commitments are not rational requirements. The intuitive notion of requirement is just one kind of decisive normative verdict. The claim that a philosopher is required to discard his theory instead of accepting its implausible implications should be fleshed out as the claim that rationality (‘all in’) says that he must discard the theory. And the point is that commitments aren’t this strong. It may often happen that you are required to escape, rather than satisfy, a commitment. Thus, commitments play a non-decisive, or pro tanto, weighing role.

5.5 Commitments are strict

Commitments are pro tanto, but they are not to be understood on the model of reasons. There are tons of reasons that you can take or leave. I have a reason to intend to bring flowers to the secretary of the geology department—namely, the fact that it would brighten her day. I have a reason to intend to eat dim sum tomorrow morning—namely, the fact that I find it delicious. Yet it is perfectly okay for me to fail to have these intentions, and countless others. But it is not perfectly okay for me to fail to satisfy my commitments.

²³ Dancy (2004). See also Ross (2002) on *prima facie* duties.

²⁴ Broome (2008b). The actual account is a bit more complicated, but not in any way that’s essential for making the simple point I’m making in the text.

In other work I argue that commitments have a characteristic force that distinguishes them from our paradigmatic example of the pro tanto.²⁵ For present purposes it will suffice to make the following point. It is possible for a normative relation to be more forceful than the relation of having a reason, but to nonetheless not be *decisive*. In my terminology, rational commitments are pro tanto but *strict* rather than *slack*.²⁶

To begin, let us consider what it is about rational commitment that motivates the introduction of the distinction between the strict and the slack. Here is a simple categorization of the idea. If you are committed to believing that *p*, and you fail to believe that *p*, then there is something bad about that. But as we've seen, it can't be that this badness is decisive. In other words, it may be that you were rationally required to refrain from believing that *p*. So we need to look elsewhere for a way to characterize the badness of violating these commitments. The problem is that it is not plausible to think that the badness of violating a commitment is just the badness of believing or intending against a reason. That would, in an important way, severely underestimate the seriousness of commitments and distort their normative character.

Imagine that the moral theory I accept commits me to intending to give money to Doctors Without Borders. Whether or not this moral theory is ultimately correct, my friends may legitimately take me to task if I do not have the intention to give money to this organization. This would not necessarily be appropriate if I merely had a reason to give away the money in this manner. After all, I presumably have a reason to intentionally do many incompatible things with the money—give it to Oxfam or Human Rights Watch, spend it on my friends and family, bet it on the Lakers making a championship run, etc. But if I refrained from forming the intention to give the money to Oxfam, my friends could not reasonably take me to task. There is something distinctive about my rational commitment; it is not just a reason to intend to give to Doctors Without Borders.

The full elaboration of this point is beyond the scope of the present paper. For now the reader should just bear in mind that 'strictness' is a placeholder for the property of commitments that renders them stronger than reasons—or, to put it more neutrally, as bearers of a distinctive and interesting kind of (pro tanto) normative force.

This concludes my sketch of the essential features of the relation of rational commitment. It remains to be shown how the introduction of this notion solves the symmetry problem as I conceive of it.

6 The solution and two objections

Recall that the kernel of the symmetry problem was the inability of wide scope requirements, and later on basing permissions, to capture the sense in which it is

²⁵ Shpall (2011).

²⁶ The distinction between strict and slack normative relations is not a distinction with much explicit precedent. The notable exceptions are Bratman (1987); Broome (1999), and Schroeder (2009).

always to some degree rational to (e.g.) intend to *x* on the basis of your belief that you ought to *x*. This fact was what stood in need of explanation.

But we are now in a position to observe that the account of commitment I've sketched gives us a plausible explanation of precisely this sort. There is always something rational about forming the intention to *x* in such a way because doing so constitutes the satisfaction of a commitment. Given that being rationally committed to having attitude *A* means standing in some kind of normative relation to *A*, it should be no surprise that there is something rational about forming *A* on the basis of the attitude(s) that grounds your commitment. In other words, it is the fact that attitude *B* commits you to having attitude *A* that explains why, *invariably*, having *A* on the basis of *B* involves some degree of rationality, or some admittedly limited form of rational success.

Since commitments cannot plausibly be considered decisive, we also avoid the result that doomed narrow scope conceptions of rational requirements. The thought was that it was simply crazy to contend that, for example, I could be rationally required to intend to spit on *Las Meninas* merely in virtue of my believing that I ought to. That belief was, by stipulation, ridiculous. And so it was similarly ridiculous to suppose that the intention could be decisively rationally justified by the belief.

Our solution implies nothing of the sort. We grant that, all things considered, I would be crazy to intend to spit on *Las Meninas*. What we do claim is that I am committed to having this intention, and that there is something rational about my forming it on the basis of my belief.

Some readers might doubt even this weaker claim. Perhaps they think that there is absolutely nothing rational about such conduct. I have two responses to this worry.

First, it's important to appreciate that the worry is not especially troubling dialectically speaking. Most of the contributors to these debates agree that there is *something* reasonable about the symmetry objection.²⁷ Many of them would, I suspect, accept my categorization of the asymmetry.

Second, and more importantly, we should note that affirming the objector's point would leave us with a deeply impoverished theory. Specifically, it would leave us without the resources needed to vindicate common sense comparative judgments of agents' rationality.

To appreciate this point, imagine that John believes that moral theory *M* is true. Imagine too that John is rationally required to revise this belief, on the grounds that he has insufficient evidence for it. Nonetheless, John persists in believing *M*, and this belief shapes a significant portion of his intentional life. For example, John frequently engages in enkratic reasoning, or in other words reasons from the belief that he ought to *x* to an intention to *x*, and often the content of such ought-beliefs is either wholly or partially determined by *M*. Now suppose that there is nothing rational about intending to *x* on the basis of believing that you ought to *x*. Then it follows that there is nothing rational about John's habitually intending in accordance with *M*. But intuitively John

²⁷ Hence the responses that attempt to address the objection and still vindicate wide scope theses and/or theories, e.g. Broome (2008b) and Way (2011).

is far more rational than Jim, who also accepts M, but whose beliefs about what he ought to do, often influenced or determined by M, never lead him to form the corresponding enkratic intentions. The view under consideration leaves us no natural way of vindicating this comparative judgment. And that is a huge problem. For in our everyday lives, we constantly make judgments akin to the judgment that John is more rational than Jim. We take such judgments to be obviously true, and to underlie many important evaluative truths.

The problem is magnified when we observe that the majority of us are in John's exact situation. We irrationally accept certain moral (or, more generally, normative) theories, and allow these theories to structure our intentional lives. If there was nothing rational about enkratic reasoning as such, then there would be nothing rational about us, at least when we form intentions on the basis of our inadequately justified moral beliefs. But this is a highly counterintuitive conclusion. The natural thing to say is that, though we fall short of ideal rationality in virtue of accepting a moral theory on the basis of insufficient evidence, we still exhibit a rational virtue, or exemplify a distinctive kind of rational success, when we enkratically intend on the basis of our moral beliefs.²⁸

It might be responded that, though the various moral theories that people accept are inconsistent with one another (and, in some cases, internally inconsistent), they are all nonetheless sufficiently evidentially supported to make belief in them rationally permissible. Or, to make the claim a bit more attractive, perhaps it is that there is some privileged set of moral theories—excluding, say, those that are internally inconsistent, and those that no reasonable person could accept—for which it is rationally permissible to believe any member of the set. This view is not persuasive. Setting aside the substantial, and to my mind insurmountable, issues about how we would specify this privileged set, it is independently implausible to contend that it could be rationally permissible to believe any one of several moral theories which make flatly inconsistent claims. Indeed, one main goal of moral philosophy is demonstrating why it would be irrational to accept certain moral theories—namely, the theories that compete with the one we accept. So for example, opponents of Kantian ethics who object to the claim that we should always keep our promises presumably believe that it is irrational to believe such a claim. Their arguments purport to show, in other words, that by rationally reflecting we can come to know that there are instances in which we ought to break a promise. Hence these arguments hope to establish the rational impermissibility of believing the Kantian view about promises.

We proceed now to the second objection. One might worry that my solution doesn't explain the fact that it is always irrational to reason in certain ways—e.g. (let's call it 'rationalization') to revise your belief that you ought to x on the basis of

²⁸ It might also be thought that a theory that hopes to vindicate common sense assessments of comparative rationality needs to incorporate the thought that the *degree* to which a belief about what you ought to do is irrational influences the degree to which enkratic reasoning counts as rational success. I remain agnostic about the point here, but mention it as further illustration of how an adequate theory of rationality will have to be much more complicated than a theory consisting of only wide scope rational requirements; in some form or another, the theory will have to explain our intuitions about degrees of rationality, and I doubt this should be done by appealing to such requirements.

your lack of an intention to *x*. After all, what I've been claiming is that it is the notion of rational commitment that explains why, when having attitude *B* commits you to having attitude *A*, it is rational to some degree to have *A* on the basis of *B*. But I've done nothing to explain why rationalization is categorically impermissible by rationality's lights. Moreover, the introduction of commitments *cannot* explain this fact. For suppose we grant, for the sake of argument, that lacking an intention to *x* does not commit you to lacking the belief that you ought to *x*. Even still, we cannot derive the *presence* of a prohibition (or a requirement to refrain) from the *absence* of a commitment. So the introduction of rational commitments cannot give us a satisfying resolution of the symmetry problem.²⁹

The objection is tempting but ultimately unpersuasive. I've introduced the notion of rational commitment both because it corresponds to a common sense concept that we all routinely employ, and because it solves the symmetry problem in its most interesting incarnation. As I've argued, the dual notions of requirement and permission are simply insufficient for a theory of rationality that hopes to address the most interesting worries brought up by the problem. None of this entails that rational commitments should be used to account for all possible rational asymmetries. In the present case, if it is true that it is always irrational to rationalize, then presumably there is a rational requirement prohibiting this kind of behavior. This *is* the kind of asymmetry that should be dealt with by an independent rational requirement, since it amounts to a blanket prohibition (analogous to the prohibition on *akrasia*). But this is simply irrelevant when considering whether rational commitments are necessary for accounting for other rational asymmetries.

7 Conclusion

Many rational requirements must be formulated as wide scope principles. This insight, however, does not settle several of the most important questions facing theorists of rationality. The symmetry problem shows this.

The concepts of rational requirement and permission cannot figure in a satisfying solution to the most interesting version of the symmetry problem. We should respond to the problem by introducing the notion of rational commitment. This does not constitute any revisionary addition, since we already employ the concept ubiquitously. And besides solving the symmetry problem and vindicating our linguistic and conceptual intuitions, the introduction of rational commitments promises to allow us to better capture common sense comparative judgments of rationality. These are more than sufficient reasons for amplifying our conceptual resources as I recommend.

Acknowledgments I'd like to thank Steve Finlay, Nate Gadd, Benjamin Kiesewetter, Errol Lord, Shyam Nair, Lewis Powell, Jacob Ross, Jonathan Way, Gary Watson, and Aness Webster for helpful discussions of this material. An anonymous reviewer for *Philosophical Studies* provided excellent criticisms on a previous draft. I'd especially like to thank Mark Schroeder for his consistent guidance and encouragement.

²⁹ I owe this objection to an anonymous referee.

References

- Bratman, M. (1987). *Intention, plans, and practical reason*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Broome, J. (1999). Normative requirements. *Ratio*, 12(4), 398–419.
- Broome, J. (2007). Wide and narrow scope. *Mind*, 116(462), 359–370.
- Broome, J. (2008a). Is rationality normative? *Disputatio*, 23(2), 161–178.
- Broome, J. (2008b). Rationality through reasoning. Manuscript of 2008.
- Brunero, J. (2010). The scope of rational requirements. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 60(238), 28–49.
- Dancy, J. (2000). *Practical reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dancy, J. (2004). *Ethics without principles*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Darwall, S. L. (1983). *Impartial reason*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Finlay, S. (2009). Against all reason? Skepticism about the instrumental norm. In C. Pigden (Ed.), *Hume on motivation and virtue*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Finlay, S. (2010). What ought probably means, and why you can't detach it. *Synthese*, 117(1), 67–89.
- Gensler, H. (1985). Ethical consistency principles. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 35(139), 156–170.
- Greenspan, P. (1975). Conditional oughts and hypothetical imperatives. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 72(10), 259–276.
- Hampton, J. (1998). *The authority of reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hare, R. M. (1971). Wanting: some pitfalls. In B. Binkley & A. Marras (Eds.), *Agent, action, and reason* (pp. 81–127). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Hill, T. (1973). The hypothetical imperative. *The Philosophical Review*, 82(4), 429–450.
- Hussain, N. (2007). The requirements of rationality. Manuscript of August 2007.
- Kolodny, N. (2005). Why be rational? *Mind*, 114(445), 509–563.
- Kolodny, N. (2007a). State or process requirements? *Mind*, 116(462), 371–385.
- Kolodny, N. (2007b). How does coherence matter? *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 107(1), 229–263.
- Kolodny, N. (2008a). Why be disposed to be coherent? *Ethics*, 118(3), 437–463.
- Kolodny, N. (2008b). The myth of practical consistency. *European Journal of Philosophy*, 16(3), 366–402.
- Korsgaard, C. (1997). The normativity of instrumental reason. In G. Cullity & B. Gaut (Eds.), *Ethics and practical reason*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ross, W. D. (2002). The right and the good. In P. Stratton-Lake (Ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schroeder, M. (2004). The scope of instrumental reason. *Philosophical Perspectives (Ethics)*, 18, 337–362.
- Schroeder, M. (2005). The hypothetical imperative? *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 83(3), 357–372.
- Schroeder, M. (2009). Means end coherence, stringency, and subjective reasons. *Philosophical Studies*, 143(2), 223–248.
- Setiya, K. (2007). Cognitivism about instrumental reason. *Ethics*, 117(4), 649–673.
- Shpall, S. (2011). Moral and rational commitment (ms).
- Southwood, N. (2008). Vindicating the normativity of rationality. *Ethics*, 119(1), 9–30.
- Wallace, R. J. (2001). Normativity, commitment, and instrumental reason. *Philosophers' Imprint*, 1(4), 1–26.
- Way, J. (2010). Defending the wide scope approach to instrumental reason. *Philosophical Studies*, 147(2), 213–233.
- Way, J. (2011). The symmetry of rational requirements. *Philosophical Studies*, 115(2), 227–239.