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Ambivalence, Incoherence, and Self-Governance

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*Abstract*: The paper develops two objections to Michael Bratman’s self-governance approach to the normativity of rational requirements. Bratman, drawing upon work by Harry Frankfurt, argues that *having a place where one stands* is a necessary, constitutive element of self-governance, and that violations of the consistency and coherence requirements on intentions make one lack a place where one stands. This allows for reasons of self-governance to ground reasons to comply with these rational requirements, thereby vindicating the normativity of rationality. The first objection is that the account under-generates reasons, since not all cases of incoherence will involve a failure to have a place where one stands. The second objection is that the account over-generates reasons: we would have strong reasons to avoid both incoherence and ambivalence. However, if we follow Frankfurt in thinking that ambivalence is a “disease of the will” that is as irrational as having contradictory beliefs, this second objection doesn’t get off the ground. Thus, the first part of the paper is devoted to explaining why Frankfurt’s argument for the irrationality of ambivalence fails.

*Keywords*: ambivalence; self-governance; practical rationality; instrumental rationality; normativity; Frankfurt; Bratman

It’s time for dismissal on the last day of school. The bell rings, the school doors fly open, and a group of fifth-graders burst into a full-on sprint, screaming for joy and sending papers and backpacks flying in their wake as the freedom of summer awaits them. They are followed by another group of students walking arm-in-arm with tears on their cheeks, sad that they won’t have another class with their beloved teacher, already missing close friends and cherishing memories of a stage of life now complete. Neither group is ambivalent. One group is wholeheartedly happy as they celebrate the last day of school, while the other group is wholeheartedly sad. After they leave, I see my son finally come through the door slowly with a mild smile – clearly not rejoicing, but not expressing sadness either. I ask him how he feels, now that he’s officially done with elementary school. He pauses, reflects, and says, “I’ve got mixed feelings, Dad.” He goes on to explain that he’s happy about school ending because of all the joys of summer that lie ahead – long bike rides, swimming at the pool, endless tennis matches – but, at the same time, sad because he’ll miss his teacher and friends. He is ambivalent. And there’s nothing wrong with that. He’s not irrational, incoherent, unreasonable, or criticizable in any way. He’s got strong reasons to feel both happy and sad about the end of school. And he’s responding to those reasons.

The next day, however, is a different story. He intends to go on a bike ride, believes that he’ll do so only if he completes his chores (and also believes that he’ll complete them only if he intends to do so – he knows that’s not going to happen by accident) but doesn’t intend to complete his chores. He is exhibiting instrumental irrationality – particularly a form of instrumental irrationality called “means-ends incoherence.” He fails to intend means he believes to be necessary for achieving his end. This is something for which he is appropriately criticized.

One plausible explanation of his irrationality is that he violates a requirement of “structural” rationality. In other words, the rational “code” prohibits him from intending to E, believing that he must intend to M in order to E, and not intending to E.[[1]](#endnote-1) Much recent philosophical interest in structural requirements in driven by an interest in their normativity – specifically, interest in the question of whether we always *ought* or, more weakly, *have a reason* to comply with such requirements.[[2]](#endnote-2) Should we think of such requirements along the lines of the requirements of etiquette and fashion, where we may find ourselves with no reason to do what we required to do, or along the lines of the requirements of morality, which are, plausibly, thought to be such that we always have a reason to do what we’re required to do?

There are well-known problems for the view that rational requirements are normative. For one thing, it’s notoriously difficult to specify *what the reason is* to comply with rational requirements. For another, the view that we do have such reasons generates implausible results when combined with plausible principles governing the transmission of reasons to necessary means. (I’ll explain these difficulties in §2 below.) However, in a series of recent papers, Michael Bratman has offered a compelling answer to these difficulties, which I’ll call “the self-governance approach.”[[3]](#endnote-3) On the self-governance approach, the reason to be rational is a reason of self-governance. As Bratman puts it, “for planning agents like us, our reason for conforming to these norms of practical rationality derives in part from our reason to govern our own lives” (Bratman 2009a, 412). Drawing on work by Harry Frankfurt on wholeheartedness, Bratman argues that when someone violates the rational requirements of consistency and coherence governing intentions, as my son did in the example of means-ends incoherence above, his attitudes are such that there is no “fact of the matter about where [he] stand[s]” with respect to his end, and hence he is not self-governing (Bratman 2009a, 431).[[4]](#endnote-4) The appeal to this Frankfurtian idea of *having a place where one stands* plays an important role in the self-governance approach to rationality’s normativity: it allows for the reasons to comply with rational requirements to be traced back to reasons to be self-governing.

However, I think there are some difficulties with this Frankfurtian idea and how it functions within Bratman’s self-governance approach. And I think these difficulties can be brought out by considering the implications of the approach for the reasonableness of ambivalence and incoherence. In particular, the central aim of this paper will be to raise two related worries about the self-governance approach. The first worry is that the approach generates *too few* reasons: not all cases of incoherence will involve a person lacking a place where he stands (in the somewhat technical way in which Frankfurt, and following him, Bratman, are using the phrase), and so we’ll be unable to say that the reasons of self-governance will transmit to reasons to avoid incoherence in every case. The second worry is that the approach generates *too many* reasons: although most cases of incoherence will involve a person lacking a place where he stands, cases of *ambivalence* would involve this as well, and so there would be a (weighty) reason not to be ambivalent on this approach. But this would be in tension with what we observed above: that there need be nothing irrational, incoherent, unreasonable, or criticizable in any way about someone’s being ambivalent.

It’s worth noting at the start that my second worry about the self-governance approach assumes something controversial, namely, that there’s nothing wrong with being ambivalent. Frankfurt himself has described ambivalence as a “disease of the will” and a form of practical irrationality comparable to the theoretical irrationality involved in having inconsistent beliefs (Frankfurt 1999, 99-100). So, we need to discuss the nature of ambivalence – in particular, why we shouldn’t accept Frankfurt’s assessment of its rationality – prior to developing these objections to the self-governance approach.

Here’s the roadmap. I’ll start (§1) by discussing Frankfurt’s account of ambivalence, focusing in particular on whether he gives good reasons for thinking there’s something irrational about ambivalence. I’ll then (§2) lay out in more detail the problems for the view that rationality is normative – the problems that the self-governance approach aims to solve. Lastly, I will turn (§3) to the self-governance approach and develop the two central objections (§3.1, §3.2) to it. I’ll conclude (§4) with some more speculative remarks about strategies for developing the self-governance approach to meet these two objections.

*§1. Ambivalence*

On Frankfurt’s account, ambivalence is a kind of “psychic instability or conflict” in a person’s will (Frankfurt 1999, 98). One could experience this instability or conflict to a greater or lesser extent, and so one can be more or less ambivalent. The opposite of ambivalence is what Frankfurt calls “wholeheartedness,” which is likewise a matter of degree. Ambivalence is understood as follows:

Insofar as someone is ambivalent, he is moved by incompatible preferences or attitudes regarding his affects or his desires or regarding other elements of his psychic life. This volitional division keeps him from settling upon or from tolerating any coherent affective or motivational identity (Frankfurt 1999, 99).

He provides some examples: someone might be ambivalent about committing to some career, being both moved to do so and moved to refrain from doing so. Likewise, someone might be ambivalent about committing to a certain person (Frankfurt 1999, 99).

Importantly, for Frankfurt, not every psychological conflict involves ambivalence. The unwilling addict suffers from a psychological conflict, but he is wholeheartedly on one side of the conflict. This is not a case of ambivalence. Frankfurt provides two necessary conditions for a psychological conflict to rise to the level of ambivalence: the conflict must “arise out of a person’s higher-order, reflective attitudes” and neither attitude involved in the conflict is “exogeneous” in that the person doesn’t identify with the attitude (Frankfurt 1999, 99). Neither condition is met in the case of the unwilling addict.

At his point, we could fill out one of Frankfurt’s examples, taking care to specify that these conditions are met. Let’s suppose that Sally is deciding whether to pursue a career in academic philosophy. Sally values philosophical teaching and research a great deal and would find a career in philosophy personally fulfilling. And so she is moved to commit to the career in philosophy, and head off to graduate school. At the same time, she is also moved to refrain from committing to a career in philosophy. The financial prospects of an academic career are not great, and it’s important to Sally that she have lots of available income to spend on charitable causes dear to her heart. If she were to work in Silicon Valley, she would have a much less fulfilling career, but be able to make a real difference in people’s lives through her charitable contributions. It’s plausible to think that both of the above conditions are met: Sally’s psychological conflict arises out of her higher-order, reflective attitudes, and she identifies with both her commitment to philosophy and to charitable giving.

We could also add, to ensure that our example fits other elements of Frankfurt’s characterization of ambivalence, that Sally “finds that fulfilling either of [her] conflicting desires is substantially unsatisfying” (Frankfurt 1999, 99, fn.11). This is plausibly a feature of Sally’s situation: if she fulfills her desire for the philosophy career, she will be unsatisfied in being unable to contribute effectively to charitable causes, but if she fulfills her desire to contribute, she’ll work an unfulfilling job. Also, we could add that it is true “neither that [s]he prefers one of [her] alternatives, nor that [s]he prefers the other, nor that[s]he likes them equally” (Frankfurt 1999, 100). There’s no difficulty adding this detail to our example. Indeed, career-choice examples have become standard illustrations of this possibility in the literature on incommensurability.[[5]](#endnote-5)

With Frankfurt’s account of ambivalence in place, we can now turn to his assessment of both the value and rationality of ambivalence. Regarding its value, Frankfurt, to some extent following Augustine, thinks of ambivalence as a “disease of the will.” In contrast, a healthy will is one that is “unified” and “wholehearted” (Frankfurt 1999, 100). But Frankfurt is careful to note that ambivalence could sometimes be better than wholeheartedness, all things considered:

Being wholehearted is not always warranted. There are circumstances in which it is only reasonable, no matter how uncomfortable it may be, for a person to be drawn in several directions at once. But while accepting ambivalence may sometimes be helpful or wise, it is never desirable as such or for its own sake (Frankfurt 1999, 102).

In responding to a criticism from Susan Wolf (2002, 239), Frankfurt expands upon this aspect of his view. He says that wholeheartedness is intrinsically valuable, and that “other things being equal, being wholehearted is better than being ambivalent” (Frankfurt 2002, 250). But even when things aren’t equal, we should see ambivalence as a “necessary evil” and something “we would prefer to be able to do without” (Frankfurt 2002, 251).

My primary focus in this paper is on Frankfurt’s views about the rationality of ambivalence, not its value, but I will make two brief comments here. First, the claim that wholeheartedness is intrinsically valuable – something to be placed on a list alongside other intrinsic goods, like pleasure, knowledge, and freedom – will be controversial. In discussing whether we have intrinsic reasons to comply with rational requirements, like the requirement of means-ends coherence, Niko Kolodny argues that it’s “outlandish” to place the kind of “psychic tidiness” you achieve through compliance with these requirements “alongside such final ends as pleasure, friendship, and knowledge” (Kolodny 2008, 286).[[6]](#endnote-6) And keep in mind that the psychic tidiness Kolodny is considering here involves avoiding criticizable irrationality, and it’s not obvious there’s *any* criticizable irrationality in cases of ambivalence. So, Frankfurt’s suggestion will appear even more outlandish to some.

Second, Frankfurt’s view of the value of wholeheartedness is rather strong. A competing view – compatible with thinking of wholeheartedness as intrinsically valuable –holds that wholeheartedness is *not unconditionally valuable* – that is, it’s not valuable in all conditions. (This view would parallel a standard reply hedonists give to the problem posed by base pleasures, according to which pleasure is intrinsically, but not unconditionally, valuable. When one obtains pleasure through, say, sadism, one is not in the relevant conditions for the pleasure to have value (Moore 2018, §2)). This view would allow us to avoid committing ourselves to the idea that there’s some respect in which it’s good for someone in Sally’s situation to be wholehearted. Similarly, we could avoid committing ourselves to the idea that there’s some respect in which it’s bad for Sally to be ambivalent. But it’s clear that this is *not* Frankfurt’s view. We’re told that even in cases where it’s better, all things considered, to be ambivalent, we should see ambivalence as a “necessary evil.” So, Frankfurt would think there’s some respect in which Sally’s ambivalence is bad. However, the puzzling feature of Frankfurt’s view is that we’re never given an *explanation* of why ambivalence in such cases would be, in some respect and to some extent, bad.[[7]](#endnote-7) But perhaps that explanation is to be found in the way in which ambivalence (allegedly) involves irrationality. Let’s now turn to this question.

In the background of Frankfurt’s argument for ambivalence’s irrationality is a conception of irrationality as self-defeat: “The essence of rationality is to be consistent; and being consistent, in action or in thought, means proceeding so as not to defeat oneself” (Frankfurt 1999, 97). And here’s the crucial passage in which Frankfurt argues that ambivalence involves such self-defeat:

A person is ambivalent, then, only if he is indecisive concerning whether to be for or against a certain psychic position. Now this kind of indecisiveness is as irrational, in its way, as holding contradictory beliefs. The disunity of an ambivalent person’s will prevents him from effectively pursuing and satisfactorily attaining his goals. Like conflict within reason, volitional conflict leads to self-betrayal and self-defeat. The trouble is in each case the same: a sort of incoherent greed – trying to have things both ways – which naturally makes it impossible to get anywhere (Frankfurt 1999, 99).

In short, the irrationality of ambivalence is a kind of instrumental irrationality – ambivalence prevents the effective pursuit of goals.

At this point, one might challenge the *narrowness* of Frankfurt’s conception of ambivalence, according to which ambivalence is a defect of the *will* – perhaps manifested when one is moved in opposite direction with respect to commitment to a career or spouse – the irrationality of which consists in its tendency to trip us up in pursuit of our goals. Surely, one might object, we can also be ambivalent with respect to states of affairs as well, where our goals are not implicated. In the example with which we started, my son was ambivalent about the last day of elementary school. Likewise, one can be ambivalent about historical events or hypothetical situations, neither of which need involve the will.

Other philosophical accounts of ambivalence are not so narrow. For example, Patricia Greenspan (1980, 223) takes ambivalence to involve contrary emotions with respect to the same object. Her central example of ambivalence is someone who loses a competition for a certain honor, such as being the Department Chair, to a good friend, feeling both happy and unhappy that the friend won. She is happy that the friend won because he deserves the honor and was hoping for it, but unhappy that he won because her own desire to be Chair has been frustrated (Greenspan 1980, 228). Greenspan’s account of ambivalence can easily allow that we can be ambivalent about historical events and hypothetical situations.

Perhaps Frankfurt would be willing to expand his conception of ambivalence to cover such cases. However, doing so would require some alternative explanation of the alleged irrationality of ambivalence, since the idea that ambivalence “makes it impossible to get anywhere” would be out of place here, since one need not be aiming to get anywhere in particular in such cases. For instance, in Greenspan’s example of the person who is both happy and unhappy about the friend winning the honor, there need not be any associated goals the pursuit of which becomes less effective because of the ambivalence. At least in the case of Sally, there are goals (having a personally rewarding career, doing good through charitable giving) that are directly implicated in her ambivalence.

Putting aside the worry about the narrowness of Frankfurt’s account, it’s not clear that the argument for ambivalence’s irrationality works even in the cases for which it was designed, like the case of Sally. Frankfurt’s claim that Sally’s “incoherent greed” makes it “impossible” for her to get anywhere is clearly hyperbole, since Sally could decide upon the philosophy career, and successfully achieve that goal, all the while remaining ambivalent about doing so because of the value she places on charitable giving. There’s no reason to think that Sally’s having mixed feelings about her commitment to philosophy would make it psychologically *impossible* for her to achieve her goal of becoming an academic philosopher.

However, the plausible observation that Frankfurt makes in the passage above is that ambivalence is a threat to the *most effective* pursuit of one’s goals. It’s plausible to think that Sally, for instance, would more effectively pursue her goal of becoming an academic philosopher were she wholehearted about it. Her ambivalence, we could imagine, makes her more vulnerable to being distracted, diverted, unmotivated, or tripped up in some other way. I say that this is a plausible observation, but I’m not going to commit myself one way or the other on the question of its truth. It’s a largely empirical question whether the wholehearted are more effective than the ambivalent in the pursuit of their goals, so it’s a matter for psychologists and sociologists to investigate. I’m simply going to grant Frankfurt this plausible empirical claim for the sake of argument. I’m instead going to be concerned with the view of instrumental rationality that’s needed, given this empirical claim, to generate the conclusion that ambivalence is irrational.

In Frankfurt’s view, ambivalence is as irrational as having contradictory beliefs. Let’s start by thinking about contradictory beliefs. Let’s suppose that I believe P, believe P🡪Q, and believe ~Q. Plausibly, there is some rational requirement prohibiting this combination of attitudes, such as the following:

*Belief Consistency*: Rationality requires that [if you believe P, and you believe P🡪Q, then you do not believe ~Q].

This is a “wide-scope” requirement in that it requires that I not have a certain *combination* of attitudes.[[8]](#endnote-8) I could come to comply with the requirement either by not believing P, not believing P🡪Q, or not believing ~Q. And it’s plausibly a genuine requirement of rationality. Now, we’re granting Frankfurt the empirical claim that ambivalence makes one less effective in the pursuit of one’s goals than wholeheartedness. The question, then, is whether there would be a rational requirement, parallel to Belief Consistency, that would condemn this. A natural thought would be the following proposal:

*Proposed Instrumental Requirement*: Rationality requires that [if you intend to E, and you believe M-ing is the most effective means to E-ing, then intend to M].

The idea would be that when you’re ambivalent, as opposed to wholehearted, you fail to intend what you believe to be the most effective means to your ends, and this failure is condemned as instrumentally irrational, according to the Proposed Instrumental Requirement. That would provide the needed explanation of ambivalence’s irrationality.

But is the Proposed Instrumental Requirement a genuine requirement of rationality? Suppose I intend to change college policy and the most effective means of doing so would involve getting rid of some college administrators. Other means of doing so, such as lobbying the Faculty Senate to put pressure on the administrators, would be less effective. Am I irrational if I don’t intend to take the most effective means to my ends? Surely not. Or suppose that I intend to recruit more graduate students to my classes and I know that bribing them with promises of good grades is the most effective way to do this. Am I irrational if I instead intend to take a less effective means to my end? Surely not. Our choices of means can be informed by our other ends and values, and it’s rationally permissible to opt for less effective means.

Likewise, in the case of Sally, if her commitment to the importance of charitable giving leads her to elect less effective means to becoming an academic philosopher, that need not involve irrationality. It could instead display sensitivity to other important ends and values about which she cares deeply. There’s no rational requirement for her to take the most effective means to her ends. A single-minded, zealous commitment to her academic ambitions, while perhaps the most effective means to becoming an academic philosopher, is hardly necessary for being rational. In choosing the “best means” to her ends, Sally should take into account her other values, including those that figure into her ambivalence about her chosen career.

Rationality *does* require that we intend believed *necessary* means to our ends. As I mentioned at the start, my son is incoherent when he intends to go for a bike ride, but doesn’t intend to do his chores, which he believes to be necessary. We could formulate that requirement as follows:

*Means-Ends Coherence*: Rationality requires that [if one intends to E, believes intending to M is necessary for E-ing, then one intends to M].

Unlike our bogus Proposed Instrumental Requirement, Means-Ends Coherence is a genuine requirement of rationality.[[9]](#endnote-9) But while it’s plausible to suggest that ambivalence renders us less effective in pursuing some end than we would be were we wholehearted about it, it’s not plausible to suggest that ambivalence always involves means-ends incoherence. (And even it did, one would be rationally criticizable for the incoherence, not the ambivalence.) Instead of having a plausible empirical claim about ambivalence and an implausible claim about rationality, we would now have a plausible claim about rationality and an implausible empirical claim about ambivalence.

In summary, even if we grant Frankfurt that ambivalence makes us less effective in the pursuit of our ends, rationality doesn’t require that we intend the most effective means to our ends. So, Frankfurt’s argument for the irrationality of ambivalence fails.

*§2. Incoherence*

We noted above that there are some requirements of rationality, such as Means-Ends Coherence and Belief Consistency, that prohibit combinations of attitudes. There are others. For instance, rationality also prohibits us from failing to intend to do what we believe we ought to do. We could formulate this as the

*Enkratic Requirement*: Rationality requires that [if you believe that you ought to φ, you intend to φ].[[10]](#endnote-10)

There are also coherence requirements on belief that have a similar structure, such as:

*Believed Conclusive Reason*: Rationality requires that [if you believe that you have conclusive evidence for P, you believe that P.][[11]](#endnote-11)

There are surely many other similar requirements, and the precise formulations of all of them are up for debate. But a small set of roughly formulated requirements will be good enough to allow us to introduce two problems for the view that rationality is normative.

The first problem has to do with specifying the reason to be rational. If we think that you ought to comply with these requirements, or even just that you have a reason to do so, we should be able to specify *what* the reason is. Importantly, this reason would be a reason to comply with rational requirements in each and every instance, not just a reason to be *disposed* to comply with such requirements.[[12]](#endnote-12) Those who defend the normativity of rationality, and who think of rational requirements as being on a par with moral requirements as far as their normativity goes, want it to come out that there’s a reason to comply in each and every instance. But a reason to have certain rational dispositions is compatible with thinking we don’t have a reason to comply in each and every instance. And so this wouldn’t be enough to establish rationality’s normativity.

One possibility is that we have *instrumental* reasons to comply with these requirements. In other words, perhaps complying is a means to doing something else that we have reason to do. But it’s hard to see what that reason could be. It’s not as though we’re always made better off by compliance with rational requirements. Someone might revise in the wrong direction, ending up worse off as a result. (Suppose I overcome my *akrasia* by intending some harmful end I believe I ought to pursue.) Now, it might still be true that I’ve displayed some rational virtue in this case. But it’s not clear that the fact that it would display a virtue counts as a reason in favor of proceeding as I do. Kolodny (2005, 546-547) makes this point with the example of a moral virtue: the fact that the mafioso’s criminal action would display courage isn’t a reason for his performing that action.

Another possibility is that the reason to comply with rational requirements is *non-instrumental*. Perhaps it’s intrinsically valuable to have one’s mind arranged such that one complies with these requirements. This was the idea, noted earlier, about which Kolodny (2005, 545) was skeptical: “We have intrinsic reasons to care about persons, relationships, justice, art, science, the natural environment, and so on, for their own sake. All that is familiar enough. But is being subjectively rational another substantive value that we actually weigh against these others?” Although Kolodny is skeptical of this, we’ll see in the next section how the self-governance approach aims to account for the “non-instrumental normative significance” of rational requirements (Bratman 2009a, 419). It does so by showing how compliance with these requirements is a necessary, constitutive element of non-instrumentally valuable self-governance.

The second problem has to do with the implausible results generated when we combine wide-scope requirements, like Means-Ends Coherence, with plausible principles governing the transmission of reasons or oughts from ends to necessary means.[[13]](#endnote-13) Kieran Setiya (2007), drawing on work by Patricia Greenspan (1975), has considered how such transmission principles apply to cases in which one has unalterable attitudes – specifically, cases in which one cannot alter one’s end nor one’s instrumental belief. In Setiya’s example, we’re to imagine a smoker who can alter neither his intention to smoke nor his belief that intending to buy a pack is necessary for smoking. If Means-Ends Coherence applies to him, there’s only one way he can satisfy it: by coming to intend to buy a pack. If we now say that he ought to be rational – specifically, that he ought to comply with Means-Ends Coherence – then it would follow, given a plausible transmission principle I’ll state below – that he ought to intend to buy a pack. But that, according to the objection, is an implausible conclusion.

The transmission principle at work in Setiya’s argument governs the transmission of “oughts” from ends to necessary means. Here is Setiya’s formulation of the principle:

*Transmission*: If you should do E, all things considered, and doing M is a necessary means to doing E, you should do M all things considered, too (Setiya 2007, 656).[[14]](#endnote-14)

If you should comply with Means-Ends Coherence, all things considered, and intending to buy a pack is necessary for compliance, you should intend to buy a pack all things considered too.

One might raise a challenge to Transmission by looking to Jackson and Pargetter’s (1986) famous case of Professor Procrastinate, who is the ideal person to write a review of a new book which deserves a review, but who would, if he were to accept the invitation to review, procrastinate and never get around to writing it.[[15]](#endnote-15) It would be better for him to pass on the invitation to someone less suited to review it, but who will get the job done, than to accept the invitation and never write it. Jackson and Pargetter defend a version of “actualism” according to which Procrastinate ought to decline the invitation, since what would happen were he to accept is worse that what would happen were he to decline. However, that same actualism would hold that he ought to write the review, since what would happen were he to write it would be better than what would happen were he not to write it. But this poses a problem for Transmission, since Procrastinate’s accepting the invitation is a necessary means to writing it. If we held that Procrastinate ought to write the review, it would follow from Transmission that he ought to accept the invitation. And that’s precisely what Jackson and Pargetter deny.

I think we can sidestep these worries by working with a weaker transmission principle. Note that accepting the invitation, while a *necessary* means for writing the review, is not a *sufficient* means to doing so. Suppose we instead work with:

*Weaker Transmission*: If you should do E, all things considered, and doing M is a necessary and sufficient means to doing E, you should do M all things considered, too.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Professor Procrastinate isn’t a counterexample to this principle, since accepting the invitation is insufficient for writing the review. But in Setiya’s example, intending to buy a pack is a necessary *and sufficient* means for complying with Means-Ends Coherence. So if we say that the smoker ought to comply with Means-Ends Coherence, it would follow from Weaker Transmission that he ought to intend to buy a pack. In short, we can generate the implausible result on weaker assumptions.[[17]](#endnote-17)

Another way to challenge the argument would be to deny the possibility of unrevisable intentions. On this strategy, whatever attitude Setiya’s smoker has toward smoking, it’s not an intention, since intentions are necessarily revisable. One obstacle that this strategy faces is that the attitude, whatever we call it, will still exhibit all of the other usual functions of intentions (terminating deliberation, guiding action, etc.) and will only differ from intentions with regard to revisability. And whatever we call the attitude – say a “schmintention” – it would, intuitively, still be possible to display instrumental rationality or irrationality with respect to that schmintention. If that irrationality is prohibited by a rational requirement, and the only way to comply with the requirement is by intending the means, the same problem for rationality’s normativity would reemerge, albeit couched in different terminology.

The self-governance approach is distinctive in that it doesn’t challenge the relevant transmission principle, nor the coherence of the description of the smoker’s attitudes. It concedes all of that. Indeed, there’s a sense in which the self-governance approach concedes the force of the Setiya’s argument: it concedes that the smoker case is one in which there is an applicable requirement of rationality, but there is no reason to comply with that requirement (Bratman 2009a, 433-434). But, as we’ll see, the approach does offer us an *explanation* of why the smoker case is a special case, and why there would normally be reasons of self-governance for us to means-ends coherent, but those reasons are “disabled” given the special features of this particular case.[[18]](#endnote-18)

In summary, we’ve seen two challenges to defenders of rationality’s normativity: the challenge of specifying the reason to comply with rational requirements, and the challenge presented by the application of Transmission to cases of unalterable attitudes. We’ve also seen, in broad outline, how the self-governance approach will aim to meet these challenges: by showing how compliance with the rational requirements governing intentions is a necessary constitutive element of non-instrumentally valuable self-governance, but those reasons of self-governance are enabled only in certain circumstances.

*§3. Self-Governance*

In the introduction to his *Structures of Agency* – a collection of essays, many of which are concerned with self-governance – Bratman explains the intuitive idea of self-governance:

What is self-governance? As an initial, basic step we can say that in self-governance the agent herself directs and governs her practical thought and action. Or anyway, that is the intuitive pretheoretical idea... (Bratman 2007, 4).

He goes on to further explain the idea of the agent herself directing her practical thought and action. The idea is that we identify certain attitudes of the agent as having “agential authority” such that “when [these attitudes] appropriately guide and control, the agent directs” (Bratman 2007, 4). There are various theories of self-governance available, and those theories will divide on the question of which attitudes have agential authority. Bratman himself presents a strong case for thinking that what he calls “self-governing policies” have agential authority.[[19]](#endnote-19) But the self-governance approach to rationality’s normativity doesn’t depend upon any particular theory of self-governance, so we won’t need to go beyond that pre-theoretical, intuitive idea. To be clear, the self-governance approach *will* require that we accept some specific, and in my view controversial, claims about self-governance, but those claims float free of any larger theory about which particular attitudes have agential authority.

Let’s turn to those specific, controversial claims. There are two claims that together form the heart of the self-governance approach. In the background to both of them is Harry Frankfurt’s remarks, in “Identification and Wholeheartedness,” about the importance, for self-governance, of there being a place “where … the person himself stands” (Frankfurt 1988, 166). The first claim is that having a place where one stands is *necessary* for self-governance. As Bratman puts it, “…it is only if there is a place where you stand that you are governing in the corresponding domain, for in self-governance where you stand guides thought and action” (Bratman 2009a, 431). Moreover, the idea is that having a place where one stands is a necessary, *constitutive* element of self-governance, rather than a means to self-governance. (This is important because, as we mentioned earlier, the self-governance approach is aiming to account for the distinctive “non-instrumental normative significance” of practical rationality.)

The second claim is that violating the norms of consistency and coherence governing intentions involves lacking a place where one stands. Here’s the crucial passage from Bratman:

Return to a Frankfurtian concern with where I stand. When I recognize inconsistency in my own intentions, I see that in this specific case there is no clear answer to the question, “Where do I stand?” This question about myself is, with respect to this domain, simply not settled; there is as yet no fact of the matter.

We can say something similar about means-end incoherent plans. If I intend end E but I do not now intend known necessary means intending which now I know to be necessary, there is no clear answer to the question, “Where do I stand?” with respect to E. With respect to this end, there is as yet no relevant fact of the matter about where I stand (Bratman 2009a, 431).

In a related paper, Bratman expands upon the metaphor of *having a place where one stands*, noting that in cases of means-ends incoherence, one’s planning attitudes do not unequivocally favor, nor unequivocally reject, E:

And now the point to note is that if I – a planning agent – intend E, but also intend what I believe to be incompatible with E, or do not intend what I believe to be necessary means to E, then, barring special circumstances, there is no clear answer to the question of where I stand with respect to E. In intending E, I seem to include E within my practical standpoint; but in intending something I believe incompatible with E, or in failing to intend believed necessary means to E, I seem to exclude E. In this local area of my psychology, there is a structure of planning attitudes whose functioning in the guidance of my thought and action does not unequivocally either favor or reject E. So with respect to E, there is no clear place where I stand (Bratman 2009b, 236).

If we put these two claims – that you need to comply with consistency and coherence requirements to have a place where you stand, and that you need to have a place where you stand to be self-governing – we get the result that self-governance requires compliance with consistency and coherence requirements. Assuming that we have a reason to govern ourselves[[20]](#endnote-20), this claim would generate a reason to comply with these consistency and coherence requirements. The self-governance approach would thereby meet the demand of accounting for the non-instrumental normative significance of rational requirements.

As for meeting Setiya’s challenge, we need some principled way of denying that the smoker has a reason to intend to buy a pack. The general framework of Bratman’s solution is that the reason to be means-end coherent exists only when certain *background conditions* are met:

Given normal conditions C, there is a practical reason to avoid [Intend E but Not Intend M] (Bratman 2009a, 429).

And the case of the smoker is a case where conditions C do not obtain. Specifically, the idea is that a reason to govern ourselves exists only when self-governance is possible, and the psychological unmodifiability of the smoker’s intention to smoke renders self-governance impossible. In other words, the possibility of self-governance is the background condition that must obtain for there to be a reason to be means-ends coherent, and in the case of the smoker that background condition does not obtain.

Setiya describes his case as one in which there is no decision that would affect the smoker’s intention to smoke. Bratman, aware that he is somewhat going beyond what Setiya says, takes the intention to be unalterable because it “is grounded in something like a kind of psychological compulsion” (Bratman 2009a, 423). And it’s plausible to think that such psychological compulsions would undermine the possibility of self-governance in this domain. However, one might worry that the intention might be unalterable because of some fact that *doesn’t* threaten the possibility of self-governance in this domain. (Perhaps, unbeknownst to you, there’s a counterfactual intervener who would prevent you from revising your intention were you to try. You don’t try, and instead, through instrumental reasoning, form the intention to buy a pack. That seems like an exercise of self-governance on your part, although in the service of a harmful end. So, the impossibility of revising doesn’t here remove the possibility of self-governance.) I’ve developed this objection to Bratman elsewhere, and will here set it aside (Brunero 2010b).

In summary, Bratman’s view is that “if one has an intention that is not susceptible to modification in the light of reflection on reasons and rationality, then that would normally entail that in this specific domain one is not capable of being self-governing” (Bratman 2009a, 435). So, the reason to be means-ends coherent isn’t present in the case of the smoker, since the relevant background conditions are not met. So, there’s no reason *there* to transmit a reason to intend to buy a pack.

As we’ve seen so far, the self-governance approach promises to elegantly resolve the two main challenges to rationality’s normativity. There are, however, two significant objections to the approach: it threatens both to under-generate and over-generate reasons. On the under-generation objection, the basic worry is that there will be cases of incoherence where there is no doubt where an agent stands, and we wouldn’t have the aforementioned reasons of self-governance to avoid such incoherence. On the over-generation objection, the basic worry is that there are cases of perfectly rational *ambivalence* in which there isn’t a place where one stands, but the self-governance approach would incorrectly predict there are (weighty) reasons to avoid such ambivalence.

*§3.1 Too Few Reasons*

Frankfurt has emphasized that a person who is wholehearted and unified could still have attitudes that conflict with one another. In “Identification and Wholeheartedness,” he argues that an agent’s identification with one of two conflicting attitudes can change the *nature* of the psychological conflict, without removing it. Specifically, when he identifies with one of the conflicting attitudes, although the conflict could remain “as virulent as before,” it becomes a conflict between *the person* and an alien attitude, since the person is “no longer uncertain about which side he is on” (Frankfurt 1988, 72). We also noted, in §1 above, that in “The Faintest Passion,” Frankfurt also allows for the possibility of an unwilling addict who is also wholehearted. It’s worth considering the passage in which he discusses this possibility:

As in the case of the unwilling addict, the unity of a healthy will is quite compatible with certain kinds of virulent psychic conflict. Wholeheartedness does not require that a person be altogether untroubled by inner opposition to his will. It just requires that, with respect to any such conflict, he himself be fully resolved. This means that he must be resolutely on the side of one of the forces struggling within him and not in the side of any other. Concerning the opposition of these forces, he has to know where he himself stands (Frankfurt 1999, 88).

It’s clear from this passage that Frankfurt doesn’t take the idea of someone’s “knowing where he himself stands” to be incompatible with the existence of conflict among his attitudes.

But this presents a problem for the self-governance strategy. Suppose the relevant psychological conflict is a conflict between inconsistent intentions. Or suppose it’s the conflict involved in cases of means-ends incoherence. (While the former conflict is a conflict between the *presence* of one attitude and *presence* of another, the latter conflict is a conflict between the *presence* of two attitudes and *absence* of another.) These conflicts are prohibited by the requirements of consistency and coherence governing intentions. But, in Frankfurt’s view, one could come to have a place where one stands without resolving these conflicts, by identifying with one side of the conflict. But that means that, on the self-governance strategy outlined above, the reason to govern ourselves wouldn’t always generate a reason to comply with the requirements of consistency and coherence governing intentions. True, you would have a reason to have a place where you stand. But you could do that without resolving the conflicts governed by the consistency and coherence requirements.

Of course, it’s open to Bratman to part ways with Frankfurt and hold that the psychological conflicts governed by these consistency and coherence requirements always involve a person lacking a place where they stand. As an informal gloss on what’s involved in violating rational requirements, it’s certainly fine to *say* those in violation of the requirements “lack a place where they stand.” But the self-governance strategy isn’t presenting an informal gloss; rather, the idea of *having a place where one stands* is being used in a somewhat technical way in the argument, the idea being that violating these requirements makes one lack a place where one stands in the sense that one lacks attitudes that have agential authority in this domain. And it seems to me that Frankfurt is right to think that not all psychological conflicts will undermine the possibility of attitudes that have such agential authority.

It might help to illustrate this point with a concrete example of means-ends incoherence. Suppose that I intend to propose revisions to our graduate program, believe that a necessary means of doing so is getting a draft out to the faculty in advance of the faculty meeting, but I get distracted and never intend to get the draft together. But also suppose I am strongly critical of myself for this incoherence – specifically, I’m furious at myself for not following through, given how important the changes would be. We can also suppose that my intention to revise the graduate program is enforced by uncontested higher-order desires, reflects my deep enduring values, is a desire for something I believe I ought to accomplish, is in line with policies to give considerations related to improving the graduate program significant weight in my practical deliberations, and so forth. (In short, take whatever attitudes your preferred theory of self-governance takes to speak for the agent, and assume those attitudes are aligned with proposing revisions to the graduate program.) Despite my being means-ends incoherent, it’s abundantly clear where I stand with regard to proposing revisions to the program: I’m *for* it. (Of course, there *could* be cases of means-ends incoherence where there’s no clear answer to where I stand. But this case isn’t one of them.)

The example shows that means-ends incoherence isn’t always a threat to having a place where one stands. It also allows us to see where Bratman’s argument, quoted above, goes awry. In speaking of an inconsistent or means-ends incoherent agent, Bratman expresses a plausible idea: “In this local area of my psychology, there is a structure of planning attitudes whose functioning in the guidance of my thought and action does not unequivocally either favor or reject E.” But the problem is that it’s not clear *why* we must limit ourselves to the *local* area of the agent’s psychology. Why not consider those *other* features of one’s psychology, such as those specified in the example above (uncontested second-order desires, values, commitments, policies, etc.)? Once we do that it becomes abundantly clear where the agent stands. (In my example, I’m unequivocally *for* E-ing.) Without any special justification for narrowing our focus to the local conflicting attitudes, it’s clear that Bratman’s conclusion (“So with respect to E, there is no clear place where I stand.”) does not follow.

In summary, the self-governance approach generates too few reasons, since the proposed reasons to avoid incoherence wouldn’t apply to cases of incoherence where there is no doubt where the agent stands.

*§3.2 Too Many Reasons*

One crucial component of the self-governance approach is the claim that inconsistency and incoherence make it such that there is no clear answer to the question, “Where do I stand?” with respect to ends. But one might naturally worry that there’s no clear answer to this question in cases of ambivalence as well. Think back to our example, taken from Frankfurt, of Sally’s ambivalence about her career in philosophy, and Greenspan’s example of the woman who is ambivalent about losing the Department Chair competition to her good friend. There may also be no clear answer to the Frankfurtian question, “Where do I stand?” with respect to the career choice and the outcome of the competition. If that’s right, the self-governance approach would generate a reason to avoid *ambivalence*, as well as incoherence.

Of course, if Frankfurt’s assessment of ambivalence is correct, there’s no difficulty here at all. In his view, ambivalence is as irrational as having inconsistent beliefs. If that’s right, and if we think that rationality is normative, we would *want* it to come out that there are good reasons to avoid ambivalence. It would be a *good* thing for the approach to generate reasons to avoid ambivalence. But I think Frankfurt’s assessment of the irrationality of ambivalence is incorrect, and, as I pointed out in §1, his argument for ambivalence’s irrationality fails. And so I think the over-generation objection is a serious objection to the self-governance approach.

Others have raised worries along these lines. Benjamin Kiesewetter argues that the self-governance approach implausibly over-generates theoretical reasons, since it generates reasons against suspending judgment on the question of whether P is true. (Kiesewetter 2017, 106). (The idea here is that it seems out of place to insist that those who suspend judgment on P always have strong reason to take a stand on whether P.) However, it’s open to Bratman to respond by claiming that the self-governance approach is aiming to account for the normativity of *practical*, not *theoretical*, rationality, and the Frankfurtian idea of having a place where one stands concerns practical attitudes, and therefore need not commit us to any specific claims about reasons to form, retain, or abandon beliefs.

However, Kiesewetter goes on to argue that there are problems in the practical domain as well. He points out that it’s not true that we have a reason to determine our stance with respect to *each possible action* (Kiesewetter 2017, 106). There are lots of possible actions that are, understandably, off my radar, and it’s not plausible to say that I have a reason of self-governance to take a stand on each and every one of them. But Bratman seems committed to thinking there’s “a reason to determine for each possible action whether to intend it or not” (Kiesewetter 2017, 106). But I think Bratman would have a plausible reply available here as well. There reason to self-govern isn’t a reason to *maximize* the domains over which we’re self-governing. Rather, the idea is that when it comes to our actions, we have reason to have those actions be directed by ourselves, as opposed to by external forces. So, if some question will likely be relevant to our actions, we would have a reason to take a stand on that question, since this is necessary for self-governance. (To fill out this reply, we would have to say more precisely what it is for some matter to be *relevant to* our actions.) But it wouldn’t follow that we have a reason to take a stand on every possible action. I can permissibly ignore, for example, the question of the best way to drive in autumn from Bangor to Caribou, if I’m sure I won’t be driving in northern Maine anytime soon. (Remember also that having a place where one stands is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for self-governance. Taking more stands thus need not increase the extent to which you are self-governing.) We would only have a reason to take a stand on the *relevant* questions.

However, I think Kiesewetter’s over-generation objections are on the right track, and I think cases of *ambivalence* are excellent cases to use to develop the point. It’s implausible to claim, for example, that Sally has a reason to be wholehearted, either for or against, her career in philosophy. But the self-governance approach claims that she has a reason to take a stand here. (The two possible replies to Kiesewetter’s objections mentioned above wouldn’t be applicable here: Sally’s case concerns *practical*, not theoretical reason, and the question of her career choice is one that is clearly of *relevance* to her.) And so the self-governance approach generates too many reasons.

One possible response to the over-generation objection would be to accept the allegedly implausible result that there’s a reason to avoid ambivalence. In support of this, one could point to the possibility of lightweight reasons, which can be easily outweighed. Perhaps reasons to avoid ambivalence would always be outweighed, and so it would never come out that one *ought* not be ambivalent. I’m not optimistic about this line of reply. Keep in mind that rational requirements, like intention consistency and means-ends coherence, present *demands* on us – they have a “strictness” (John Broome’s term) or “stringency” (Mark Schroeder’s term) to them.[[21]](#endnote-21) As Broome explains, when you violate a requirement, you are “definitely failing to see to something you ought to see to” (Broome 2000, 81). If we thought that rationality was normative merely in the weak sense that you always have *a reason* to be rational, we would leave this strictness unexplained.[[22]](#endnote-22) (After all, it could be that you have a reason to φ, and don’t φ, and yet are entirely as you ought to be, as when that reason to φ is outweighed.) To explain strictness, we need it to come out that you have *conclusive reason* to do what rationality requires you to do. So, we wouldn’t want to allow that the reason to be rational is easily and often outweighed. The self-governance approach needs to have the reason to have a place where one stands be a significantly weighty reason in cases of incoherence. And it’s hard to see why the weight of the reason would drastically diminish in cases of ambivalence.

In summary, the self-governance approach generates too many reasons, since the reason to have a place where one stands seems applicable both to cases of incoherence and cases of ambivalence.

*§4. Conclusion*

This paper has explored Bratman’s development of the Frankfurtian idea that having a place where one stands is necessary for self-governance. The self-governance approach promises to elegantly solve two pressing challenges to rationality’s normativity. However, I’ve argued in this paper that it is subject to two objections: it both under-generates and over-generates reasons. And, to justify a crucial assumption underlying one of these objections, I’ve also objected to Frankfurt’s take on the irrationality of ambivalence.

I don’t think these two objections to the self-governance approach are necessarily fatal. Rather, they indicate areas where the approach needs to be further developed. What might that further development look like? I’ll speculate. On the under-generation objection, we should keep in mind that having a place where one stands is *one* necessary condition for self-governance. Perhaps there are others. And perhaps we could show how, for each requirement of practical rationality, there is some necessary component of self-governance that is undermined when one violates the requirement. (For instance, perhaps self-governance requires not just that we *have* a place where we stand, but also that we *execute* our stance in relevant contexts. And perhaps means-ends incoherence prevents us from translating our stance into action. This is very rough sketch of an idea, and I mention it only to illustrate a possible extension of the self-governance approach for one requirement.) Of course, the plausibility of this strategy will depend on the plausibility of the various specific claims about what’s necessary for self-governance.

Likewise, there might be ways to get around the over-generation objection. We’ve already seen, in discussing Bratman’s reply to Setiya, that the self-governance approach holds that the reason to self-govern applies *only in certain conditions*. Specifically, there are no reasons of self-governance in place when one’s intentions are psychologically unmodifiable, since, according to Bratman, this removes the possibility of self-governance in that domain. Perhaps we could extend that strategy to cases of ambivalence. Perhaps the reasons to have a place where one stands *are* in place in cases of incoherence, but *not* in place (or in place, but not as weighty) in cases of ambivalence. Of course, we don’t want this to be an *ad hoc* amendment to avoid a troublesome case. These claims would have to be grounded in plausible claims about the nature of self-governance, as Bratman aims to do in his response to Setiya. So, here as well, the success of the approach would depend upon the specific claims about the nature of self-governance. Whether such strategies could be made to work remains to be seen.

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Notes

1. For *non-structural* explanations of the irrationality involved here, and in similar cases, see Kiesewetter 2017, especially Chapters 9 and 10, and Lord 2018, especially Chapter 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. See, for instance, Kolodny 2005, Broome 2005, Broome 2008, Southwood 2008, Kiesewetter 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. See especially Bratman 2009a and 2009b, as well as the papers collected in Bratman 2018. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. See Frankfurt 1988, 166, and Frankfurt 1999, 100. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. For instance, Joseph Raz (1986), who takes two options to be “incommensurate if it is neither true that one is better than the other nor true that they are of equal value,” (322) provides the example of someone choosing between a career as a clarinetist and a career in law (332). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. See also Kolodny 2005, 545. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. It’s also important to keep in mind the distinction between the value of a person’s ambivalence and the value of a person’s *response to* that ambivalence. It may be that someone responds in a bad way to ambivalence, without that making the ambivalence itself bad. This distinction is important in Velleman’s (2002, 101-105) discussion of Frankfurt’s account of ambivalence, in which Velleman looks in detail at the ambivalence involved in a case study from Freud (the “Rat Man”) in which the neurosis, Velleman argues, was largely to due to the way the patient dealt with his ambivalence, rather than the ambivalence itself. Likewise, Greenspan (1980, 239) emphasizes how we can control the behavioral effects of our emotions. It’s possible that we act well or badly in light of certain emotions, including in cases where we have mixed feelings, without that indicating anything about the value of the emotion itself. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. On wide-scope requirements, see Broome 2000, Brunero 2010a, and Brunero 2012. For criticism of wide-scope formulations, see Schroeder 2004, and Lord 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. For further discussion of this requirement, see Brunero 2020. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. This is a rough formulation of the requirement. For a more precise wide-scope formulation see Broome 2013, 170. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. See Kolodny 2005, 521. Kolodny, however, thinks this requirement is best interpreted as a narrow-scope requirement. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Much of the rationality literature understands the question of rationality’s normativity in this way. See, for instance, Broome 2013, 192-193. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. If we worked instead with narrow-scope formulations, the defense of rationality’s normativity is even more difficult. Consider a narrow-scoped version of the Enkratic Requirement:

    If you believe you ought to φ, rationality requires that you intend to φ.

    If you believe that you ought to φ, there’s only one way to comply with this requirement: by intending to φ. Suppose you ought to be rational. It would follow that whenever you believe you ought to φ, you ought to intend to φ. But that’s not correct. You can have false beliefs about what you ought to do, in which case it wouldn’t be true that you ought to intend to φ. (The weaker view of rationality’s normativity – that we have a reason to be rational – would generate a reason to intend to φ in this case. This isn’t much more plausible. It seems to license an illicit “bootstrapping” of a reason.) For further discussion, see Kiesewetter 2017, Ch. 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. A similar principle is discussed in Kiesewetter 2015, 922. For related principles that concern the transmission of reasons to necessary means, see Bratman 2009a, 424, and Schroeder 2009, 424. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. For discussion of this challenge to Transmission, see Kiesewetter 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. See Way 2010, 225, fn. 32, for a point along these lines. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. A similar response can circumvent John Broome’s (2013, 126) objection to Transmission. In Broome’s counterexample, you ought to see a doctor, and taking the day off is a necessary means to seeing the doctor. But it may not be true that you ought to take the day off. (Suppose you will not see the doctor, and just sit around all day feeling anxious. It’s not true that you ought to take the day off.) Here, taking the day off is necessary but not sufficient for seeing the doctor. So, Broome’s objection to Transmission would pose no threat to Weaker Transmission. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. The terminology of “enablers” and “disablers” comes from Dancy 2004. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. See the essays in collected in Bratman 2007, especially “Two Problems about Human Agency” and “Three Theories of Self-Governance.” [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. I’m going to grant, for the sake of argument, the assumption that we have a reason to govern ourselves. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. See Broome 2000, 81, and Schroeder 2009, 232. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. It’s worth noting that Bratman’s formulations of the consistency and coherence requirements on intentions read:

    *Intention Consistency*: The following is always pro tanto irrational: intending A and intending B, while believing that A and B are not copossible.

    *Means-End Coherence*: The following is always pro tanto irrational: intending E while believing that a necessary means to E is M and that M requires that one now intend M, and yet not now intending M. (Bratman 2009a, 413)

    He gives three examples of rare cases in order motivate the “pro tanto” formulations. But I take it that, these rare exceptions aside, he would endorse the strictness of rational requirements. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)