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Asymmetry, Scope, and Rational Consistency[1]

JULIAN FINK
Department of Philosophy,
University of Vienna

Suppose rationality requires you to A if you believe you ought to A. Suppose you believe that you ought to A. How can you satisfy this requirement? One way seems obvious. You can satisfy this requirement by A-ing. But can you also satisfy it by stopping to believe that you ought to A? Recently, it has been argued that this second option is not a genuine way of satisfying the above requirement. Conditional requirements of rationality do not have two 'symmetric', but only one 'asymmetric' satisfaction condition. This paper explores the consequences of this argument for a theory of the requirements of rationality. I seek to show that this view conflicts with another powerful intuition about the requirements of rationality, i.e. 'rational consistency': if rationality requires you to X, then it is not the case that rationality requires you to not-X. I shall conclude that 'asymmetric' satisfying is based on a misleading intuition, for which we should not sacrifice 'rational consistency'.

Keywords: requirements of rationality, asymmetry, conflicts, conditional requirements, wide and narrow scope

1.1 *Lora's case and rationality*

Consider Lora's situation. Due to a general anxiety disorder, Lora suffers from a severe clinical depression. Most of the time, Lora is so anxious and down that she does not make it out of her bed in the morning. Any coherent activity seems impossible for her. In fact, the only thing

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that relieves her from her depressive state is high doses of Valium, a strong tranquilising drug. Valium alleviates the symptoms of her depression and enables her to lead a normal life for a short time. But as soon as the tranquilising effect of Valium decreases, Lora is back in her own hell.

Because Valium has such a seemingly soothing effect on her depression, Lora comes to believe that she ought to take this drug on a regular basis. She takes the seemingly soothing effects as conclusive reason to take this drug. However, part of the devastating effects Lora's depression has on her psyche is that it makes her fail to be motivated by her normative judgements. She not only fails to *take* Valium regularly, her mental dysfunction also keeps her from forming an *intention* to do so. In short, her normative judgement fails to motivate her (to intend) to do what she believes she ought to do.

In consequence, Lora suffers from weakness of the will. Given that weakness of the will is a form of irrationality, Lora fails to be fully rational. She is irrational in not intending to do what she believes she ought to do, or so it seems.

But Lora may *not* be irrational in not intending to do what she believes she ought to do. Suppose part of the reason why Lora got depressed is that she dissociates from her feelings. She keeps them locked away, not allowing them to enter the forefront of her consciousness—although doing so is a precondition of ridding herself of her depression. Unfortunately, Valium strengthens the process of dissociation. It essentially keeps people like Lora depressed in the long term because it does not allow them to face their anxieties and to process the causes of their depression. Furthermore, taking Valium over a long period would leave Lora with a severe drug addiction. Valium would thus not only fail to heal the cause of her depression. It would also hinder Lora to overcome the cause of her depression and would make her dependent on Valium. In short, Lora has *conclusive reason* not to take Valium.

Given that Lora has conclusive reason not to take Valium, is it really true that she is irrational in not intending to take Valium? Does the fact that you have conclusive reason not to do what you believe you ought to do not make it irrational for you to do what you believe you ought to do?

Let us consider another twist in this story. Suppose Lora even believes that taking Valium will keep her depressed in the long term. Her psychologist explained to her that Valium will keep her dissociated from her feelings and the events that caused her depression, making it impossible to process them. Lora thus possesses *conclusive evidence* that she has conclusive reason not to take Valium. Nonetheless, she fails to respond to this evidence in the way she supposedly should respond to it. In particular, she fails to revise her judgment that she ought to take Valium. Consequently, Lora displays another form of irrationality. She fails to respond correctly to the evidence she possesses.

In sum, Lora finds herself in the following situation. On the one hand, she believes that she ought to take Valium. Her belief is reinforced by the fact that it relieves her from the symptoms of her depression. But because Lora is weak-willed, she fails (to intend) to do what she believes she ought to do. On the other hand, since Lora has conclusive reason not (to intend) to take Valium (because it would hinder her in the attempt to rid herself of her depression), Lora in fact does what she has conclusive reason to do. Furthermore, Lora is perfectly aware of this. She is in possession of evidence that she has conclusive reason not to take a tranquilising drug.

The way in which Lora responds to and manages her (normative) beliefs, reasons, intentions, and her evidential position entails that she satisfies and violates a number of putative *requirements of rationality* (or 'rationality requirements'). Obviously, she violates a *krasia requirement*[2] and an *evidence requirement*. She satisfies a *reasons requirement*. I will describe each requirement in turn.

> *Krasia requirement*. Rationality requires you (to intend) to *A* if you believe you ought to *A*.[3]
> *Evidence requirement*. Rationality requires you to believe that *A* if you possess conclusive evidence that *A*.
> *Reasons requirement*. Rationality requires you (to intend) to *A* if you have conclusive reason to *A*.

Obviously, my formulations of these requirement schemas are only approximations of the correct requirement schemas, yet they will suffice for my discussion. Lora violates a *krasia requirement* because she believes that she ought to take Valium without (intending to) take(ing) Valium.[4] She satisfies the *reasons requirement* because she in fact does what she has conclusive reason to. She violates an *evidence requirement* because she possesses conclusive evidence for a belief she does not have.

To add more substance to the following discussion, one may easily construe Lora's story such that she continues to satisfy a *reasons requirement* and continues to violate a *krasia requirement* and an *evidence requirement*. Yet, in addition, she violates a *consistency require-*

[2] I borrow this term from John Broome's 'Is rationality normative?'.

[3] I include 'to intend' in parentheses because I wish to remain neutral on the issue whether rationality requires an *act* or an *intention* of you. Whatever is the correct view, it will not make a difference for my argument in this paper.

[4] Just to give an example of why these requirement schemas cannot be entirely correct, consider a *krasia requirement*. I said that rationality requires you to intend to *A* if you believe you ought to *A*. This implies that you violate a *krasia requirement* whenever you believe that you ought to *A*, yet fail to intend to *A*. However, suppose that in this situation you also believe that [you will *A* even if you do not intend to *A*]. Your *A*-ing, for example, might be something you believe to be a consequence of some other act(s) of yours. If so, you do not seem to violate a requirement of rationality by not intending to *A* whilst believing that you ought to *A*. That is why my krasia-requirement schema cannot be entirely correct. (Cf. John Broome, 'Practical reasoning'.)

ment and a *means-end requirement*. Suppose that Lora's awareness of the evidence that she has conclusive reason not to take Valium leads her to believe that it is not the case that she ought to take Valium. However, Lora fails to suspend her judgement that she ought to take Valium. Hence, Lora violates the following *consistency requirement*:

> *Consistency requirement*. Rationality requires you not to believe that not-p if you believe that p.

Moreover, instead of suspending her judgement that she ought to take Valium, Lora comes, on the basis of her evidential situation, to believe that her judgement that she ought to take Valium is ill-formed. Lora believes that she ought not to believe that she ought to take Valium. But because of her mental dysfunction, Lora cannot bring herself to suspend her judgement that she ought to take Valium. The fact that taking Valium relieves her from the symptoms of her depression strongly reinforces her belief that she ought to take Valium—notwithstanding her beliefs to the contrary. To diminish the potential damage of her belief that she ought to take Valium, Lora decides *not* to do what she *thinks* she ought to do. That is, Lora forms a (complex) intention [to not-A if she realises that she believes that she ought to A][5]. But although Lora realises that she believes that she ought to take Valium, she nonetheless *fails* to form an intention *not* to take Valium. Consequently, Lora violates the following version of the *means-end requirement* of rationality:

> *Means-end requirement*. Rationality requires you to intend to B if you intent to [if A then B] and believe that A.[6]

1.2 *Conditional requirements and asymmetric satisfying*

The way Lora manages (and responds to) her (normative) beliefs, intentions, evidential situation, and reasons betrays that she suffers from a certain degree of irrationality. Lora violates a number of requirements of rationality. But how can she redeem her rationality? How can she take herself from this irrational state into a (more) rational one? Any credible theory of rationality should provide an answer to this question.

On the face of it, the answer to this question seems obvious. Lora can increase her rationality by increasing the number of rationality requirements she satisfies.[7] So far, so good. But *how* can she satisfy some

[5] The brackets are to indicate that the intention governs the entire conditional.

[6] I am aware that this is not the standard formulation of a means-end requirement. Nevertheless, I am convinced that my formulation is a correct scion of the standard formula. For given that the world is as you believe it is (i.e. A is true), making true that B turns out to be a *necessary means* to fulfilling your intention, namely to B if A. This is why I believe that the above means-end requirement is a correct variation of a necessary means-end requirement of rationality.

[7] Alas, it is not as obvious as it may seem at first sight. For one may also say that Lora can increase her rationality by *decreasing* the number of rationality

of the requirements she currently violates? We have a choice to make in answering this question.

Take the *krasia requirement* Lora violates. Lora believes that she ought to take Valium, yet she fails (to intend) to take it. How can she satisfy this requirement? One way of doing so seems obvious. She can (form an intention to) take Valium. But is there a *second* option when it comes to satisfying this requirement? Could Lora also satisfy the requirement by *ceasing to believe* that she ought to take Valium? Would this count as a genuine 'satisfaction' of the *krasia requirement* in question? In other words, are there two 'symmetrically' apt ways to satisfy a *krasia requirement*?

In his recent 'The scope of instrumental reason', Mark Schroeder argues against 'symmetric satisfying'. Schroeder calls this second option 'outright unintuitive'.[8] Dropping her normative belief, he insists, can by no means be interpreted as a *rational* way for Lora to respond to her situation. It is thus not a genuine way of satisfying a *krasia requirement*.

What makes this second option 'outright unintuitive'? After all, by suspending her normative belief, Lora no longer *violates* (*ceteris paribus*) the *krasia requirement*. To answer this, compare the following two scenarios. First, imagine your neighbours' house is on fire with your neighbours screaming for help. Shocked by this sight, you form a normative judgement that you ought to help your neighbours. Based on your judgement, you instantly form an intention to help your neighbours, which in turn causes you to help them. Assuming that the *krasia requirement* is a correct requirement of rationality, you clearly satisfy this requirement. You form an intention and/or perform an action that is rationally required of you by your normative judgement.

Compare this with a similar scenario. Suppose again that your neighbours' house is on fire and they scream for help. This time, however, you react differently to this circumstance. Though you come to judge again that you ought to help your neighbours, you fail to form an intention to help them. Instead, you suspend your belief that you ought to help your neighbours. Can it be said again that you respond 'rationally' to your normative belief? Do you satisfy the *krasia requirement* as above? Intuition tells us 'no'. In fact, you cheat or betray yourself.

requirements she *violates*. If the requirements of rationality take a 'wide scope' (I explain this at the end of this section), this answer amounts to the same as saying that she can maximise the number of requirements she satisfies. This is because a wide-scope requirement of rationality is *satisfied* precisely when it is *not violated*. However, if a requirement of rationality takes a 'narrow scope', not all ways of *not violating* this requirement imply that you have *satisfied* it. As I will argue in the end that the requirements of rationality take a wide, and not a narrow scope, I can safely ignore this subtle difference here and assume that you can increase your rationality by increasing the number of requirements of rationality you satisfy.

[8] Mark Schroeder, 'The Scope of Instrumental Reason', 339.

Suspending your belief does not make you more rational.[9] You do not satisfy the *krasia requirement* in this case—at best, you avoid it.

Schroeder's intuition is supported by another recent account of rationality. Niko Kolodny, in his major 'Why be rational?', defends an even stronger position than Schroeder's. Kolodny not only argues that forming a suitable intention is the exclusive way to satisfy a *krasia requirement*. In addition, your intention must be formed in 'the right way'. 'The right way' includes that your intention is the consequence of an intentional, and non-accidental reasoning process that takes you from considering the content of your normative belief to an apt intention. As there cannot be such a 'rational' reasoning process that leads one from the *absence* of an intention to *A* to suspending of your normative belief that you ought to *A* (as the absence of an intention has no content), the only way to satisfy a *krasia requirement* is to form an intention to *A* if you believe you ought to *A* by a rational reasoning process.

Schroeder and Kolodny both suggest that this point not only holds for a *krasia requirement*, but for further 'conditional' requirements of rationality. This suggests that some, if not all, conditional requirements of rationality have *asymmetric* satisfaction conditions.

> *Asymmetric satisfying*. If a conditional requirement of rationality, R_C, requires you to *Y* if *X*, then, if *X*, you can satisfy R_C only by *Y-ing*.

Asymmetric satisfying bears many significant consequences for a theory of rationality. In particular, it determines that a correct logical expression of a conditional requirement of rationality will take a *narrow scope*. That is to say, if rationality requires you to *Y* if *X*, 'if *X*' does *not* appear within the scope of 'rationality requires'. A correct formulation of this general requirement thus reads as follows: if you *X*, then rationality requires you to *Y*. The narrow-scope formulation is logically equivalent with *asymmetric satisfying* as formulated above. *Asymmetric satisfying* holds *if and only if conditional requirements of rationality have a narrow scope.* To show why, suppose, for example, a *krasia requirement* takes a *wide*, instead of a narrow scope. 'If *X*' then appears within the scope of 'rationality requires'. That is, rationality requires [if you believe you ought to *A*, then (intend to) *A*]. Rationality then requires of you the truth of the conditional 'if you believe you ought to *A*, then (intend to) *A*.' There is not only one, but *two* ways to bring this about. You could either (intend to) *A or* not believe that you ought to *A*. Both options would count as satisfying a *krasia requirement* as both options would guarantee the truth of the (material) conditional 'if you

[9] Mark Schroeder describes this intuition as follows: 'After all, we have a special name for the distinctive vice of changing your mind about what you ought to do, simply so that you don't have to do it. It is called *rationalization*. The whole point of conscience being your guide is that changing your beliefs about what you ought to do simply in order to avoid doing it is *not* an acceptable way to proceed' (Mark Schroeder, 'The Scope of Instrumental Reason', 349; original emphasis).

believe you ought to *A*, (intend to) *A*'. But this is exactly what *asymmetric satisfying* excludes. *Asymmetric satisfying* says that only (intending to) *A*(-ing) satisfies the *krasia requirement*. Only the narrow-scope preserves the asymmetric satisfaction condition of this requirement. Furthermore, suppose that the *krasia requirement* had two 'symmetric' satisfying conditions. You could satisfy it by not believing that you ought to *A* or by (intending to) *A*-(ing). But that means that rationality does not require you (to intend) to *A* whenever you believe that you ought to *A*. Instead, it requires you [(to intend) to *A* if you believe you ought to *A*]—which again is the wide-scope expression.

1.3 *Conflicting requirements of rationality*

Asymmetric satisfying and the narrow-scope form of conditional requirements of rationality put Lora in a tricky situation. They leave her with a number of (what I will call) 'conflicting requirements of rationality'. Lora is in a situation where on the one hand rationality requires her to *X*, and on the other hand rationality requires her to not-*X*. At least *prima facie*, she faces a set of requirements of rationality *S*, the contained individual requirements of which she cannot simultaneously satisfy. That is, she can satisfy a subset of *S*, say S_1; yet the satisfaction of S_1 will lead her to violate another subset of *S*, say S_2. For example, Lora cannot satisfy a *krasia requirement*, whilst she satisfies the *reasons requirement* or *means-end requirement* (and *vice versa*). The *reasons* and the *means-end requirements* require that Lora does not intend to take Valium, whereas a *krasia requirement* requires of her to take Valium. Further, she cannot satisfy the *evidence requirement* whilst satisfying the *consistency requirement* (and *vice versa*). Evidence requires Lora to believe that she ought not to take Valium, whereas consistency requires her to believe that it is not the case that she ought not to take Valium. Thus, satisfying some requirements of rationality will necessarily lead to the violation of other requirements of rationality Lora is under—or so it seems.

Moreover, conflicting requirements of *rationality* may not be the only form of conflict Lora faces. There may be further (underlying) conflicts of other sorts. One sort of further conflict may stem from the assumption that there is an intimate connection between how *rationality requires* you to be and how you *ought* to be. Such an assumption may result in obligations one cannot fulfil jointly.[10]

One way to construe this connection between rationality and normativity is to say that if you ought to *A*, then rationality requires you to *A*. Alternatively, I could say that if you have conclusive reason to *A*, then rationality requires you to *A*. I shall call this the 'ought-implies-rationally-required principle'. To be sure, this principle does not say

[10] Analogously to rational conflicts, I suppose a person faces a 'normative conflict' if she finds herself under conflicting obligations: for example, you ought to help your neighbours and, at the same time, you ought not to help your neighbours.

that responding correctly to reasons is *all* that rationality requires of you. Also, it does not entail that reasons are a source of rationality in the sense that the fact that there is a reason to be a certain way *explains* why rationality requires you to be that way.[11] All it entails is that rationality requires you to respond correctly to reasons.

The idea that rationality requires you to be the way you ought to be is plainly captured in the *reasons requirement*: rationality requires you to *A* if there is conclusive reason to *A*. To say that there is conclusive reason to *A* expresses two things: (i) that you ought to *A* and (ii) that there is an explanation for why you ought to *A*, namely whatever constitutes conclusive reason.[12] This makes the *reasons requirement* a normative requirement analytically, i.e. in virtue of the meaning of 'there is conclusive reason to'.

However, supposing that rationality requires you to be the way you ought to be does not add conflicts of normativity to Lora's situation. Instead, it results in the conflicts of rationality I have listed above. This is not surprising. The *reasons requirement* already instantiates the 'ought-implies-rationally-required principle' and was already considered in Lora's example.

To add *normative* conflicts to the already existing rational ones, one needs to construe the connection between rationality and normativity in a different manner. One needs to assume that if rationality requires you to be a certain way, then you ought to be that way. I shall call this the 'rationally-required-implies-ought principle'. Note that this principle is not entailed by the 'ought-implies-rationally-required principle'.[13] Of course, the 'ought-implies-rationally-required principle' entails that there is (at least) one requirement of rationality, say R_N, for which it is true that R_N implies that you ought to be as R_N requires you to be—given that there is one thing you ought to do.[14] But this does not follow for all requirements of rationality. So the 'rationally-required-implies-ought principle' should not be regarded as a trivial consequence of the 'ought-implies-rationally-required principle'.

Even so, many philosophers contend that you ought to be as rationality requires you to be. Some may suggest that this is a purely conceptual matter by reading 'require' as a normative term. But I agree with John Broome that 'require' need not express a normative relation.[15] For example, suppose that membership in a students' fraternity

[11] This would mean that the reason that explains why you ought to be a certain way also explains why rationality requires you to be that way.

[12] Cf. John Broome, 'Reasons', 35.

[13] It would be entailed if one would add the clause 'and this is all that rationality requires you' to the 'ought-implies-rationally-required principle'.

[14] Strictly, the 'ought-implies-rationally-required principle' does not entail that there is at least one requirement of rationality, say R_N, for which it is true that R_N implies that you ought to be as R_N requires you to be. Yet it does so if one adds the assumption that there is at least one thing you ought to do.

[15] Cf. John Broome, 'Does rationality give us reasons?', 321–37.

requires you to drink more than you feel comfortable with. It is very plausible that you ought not to do so. Nevertheless, one may still argue that you ought to be as rationality requires you to be. James Dreier, for instance, supposes that rationality requires you to take what you believe to be appropriate means for the attainment of your ends. But Dreier holds that you are not only *rationally* required to do so. It is also the case that '[i]f you desire to [*E*], and believe that by [*M*]-ing you will [*E*], then you ought to [*M*].'[16] That is, there is a conclusive reason to take appropriate means to your ends. John Mackie makes a similar remark.[17] If one, in a generous spirit, extends this to rationality in general, this implies that if rationality requires you to *Y* if *X*, then, if *X*, there is a conclusive reason for you to *Y*.[18]

Assuming that you ought to be as rationality requires you to be adds a number of normative conflicts to Lora's situation. The *krasia requirement* implies then that Lora ought to take Valium, whereas the *reasons requirement* and the *means-end requirement* both imply that Lora ought not to take Valium. Moreover, an *evidence requirement* then implies that Lora ought to believe that she ought not to take Valium, whereas the *consistency requirement* implies that she ought not to believe that she ought not to take Valium. Hence, Lora faces a number of normative conflicts.

In summary, I have looked at conflicts of rationality that arise from various requirements of rationality. I then looked at the conflicts that arise from adding that (i) if you ought to be in a certain way, rationality requires you to be that way. I noted that (i) does not add to the number of conflicts on the table since it was already in play with the *reasons requirement*. I then looked at the conflicts that arise from holding that (ii) if rationality requires you to be a certain way, then you ought to be a certain way. This left us with a number of conflicting obligations. Clearly, (i) and (ii) may be true at the same time. It may be true after all that the set of things that are rationally required matches the set of things that are normatively required of you. If so, every conflict of rationality is a conflict of normativity, and *vice versa*.

[16] James Dreier, 'Humean doubts about the practical justification of morality', 93.

[17] "'If you want *X*, […] [y]ou ought to do *Y*" […] will be a hypothetical imperative if it is based on the supposed fact that *Y* is, in the circumstances, the only (or the best) available means to *X*, that is, on a causal relation between *Y* and *X*. The reason for doing *Y* lies in its causal connection with the desired end, *X*; the oughtness is contingent upon the desire' (John Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, 27–8).

[18] For the *reasons requirement* this is again trivially true. Replacing Y with 'not to take Valium' and X with 'there is conclusive reason not to take Valium', entails that if there is conclusive reason not to take Valium, then there is conclusive reason not to take Valium.

1.4 *Rationality and consistency*

Should we just accept that sometimes a person will be unable to satisfy jointly all rationality requirements that she is under? I think we should not. It is incompatible with a powerful intuition about the requirements of rationality we should not be willing to dispense with easily. I will call this intuition 'rational consistency'.

> *Rational consistency*. If rationality requires you to *X* (at t), then it is not the case that rationality requires you to not-*X* (at t).

Rational consistency excludes the possibility that a set of two or more requirements of rationality can individually require you to make true a proposition and its negation at the same time. But why should we accept this constraint on rational requirements?

There is a simple answer to this. It would be awkward if a theory of rationality, propagating coherence and consistency among one's mental states, could issue requirements that, in combination, require one to be inconsistent. In other words, requirements of rationality should be jointly satisfiable.[19]

Thus far, my argument has shown that there are two powerful intuitions about the requirement of rationality that stand in conflict with each other. But are *rational consistency* and *asymmetric satisfying* doomed to lead to inevitable conflict? Can we perhaps avoid the conclusion that when one requirement of rationality requires you to *X* and another requirement requires you to not-*X*, then these requirements really conflict with each other in the sense that they violate *rational consistency*? Are such requirements just *prima facie* conflicting?

Before I turn to this question in the next section, I would like to highlight another type of 'conflict' present in Lora's situation. Thus far, I looked at one type of conflict where the antecedent of one requirement requires you to *X*, whereas the antecedent of a further requirement requires you to not-*X*. I now turn to another type of 'conflict'. I put *conflict* in inverted commas because strictly speaking this term seems out of place for what I will describe next; yet I have not found a better name for it. This conflict arises because of what I shall call the 'cancel-

[19] *Rational consistency* can also be derived from a conjunction of '*rationality requires* implies *can*' and the following agglomeration principle: 'if rationality requires you to *X* and rationality requires you to *Y*, then rationality requires you to [*X* and *Y*]'. Here is why: suppose rationality requires you to *X*, and rationality requires you to not-*X*. Agglomeration then implies that rationality requires you [to *X* and not-*X*]. But since you *cannot* [*X* and not-*X*], one of the premises from which we derived this result must be false. By assuming that agglomeration and '*rationality requires* implies *can*' are correct, we must give up the assumption that it is possible that rationality requires you to *X*, whilst rationality also requires you to not-*X*. Hence, *rational consistency*. Furthermore, *rational consistency* may also be a consequence of an equal principle of 'normative consistency'. Suppose that rationality is normative in the sense that you ought to *X* if rationality requires you to *X*. Then, if normativity is consistent in the same way as I suppose rationality is (i.e. if you ought to *X*, then it is not the case that you ought to not-*X*), *rational consistency* may simply be a consequence of 'normative consistency'.

ling relation'. This relation takes the following structure. Suppose two requirements of rationality, say R_1 and R_2, are such that the antecedent of R_1, say A, requires you to not-B, where B is the antecedent of R_2. If so, is R_2 still rationally requiring something of you? Recall Lora's example. The *krasia requirement* demands of Lora (to intend) to take Valium as she believes she ought to take Valium. However, an *evidence requirement* demands Lora not to believe that she ought to take Valium because she possess conclusive evidence that she ought not to take Valium. Is Lora still required (to intend) to do as she believes she ought to do? Note that through satisfying an *evidence requirement* by revising her belief that she ought not to take Valium, Lora not only satisfies an *evidence requirement*, but she is also no longer required (to intend) to take the Valium. She no longer believes that she ought to take it. But what if Lora fails to satisfy an *evidence requirement* in this way? Then Lora cannot rationally believe that she ought to take Valium (unless her evidential position changes). Does this make it the case that this belief no longer requires Lora (to intend) to take Valium? Is one requirement of rationality *conditional* upon other requirements in this way? I return to this question in the next section.

1.5 *Resolving the conflicts of rationality*

1.5.1 *Objective and subjective rationality*

One possible way to avoid the conclusion that *rational consistency* and *asymmetric satisfying* are leading to an inevitable conflict is to introduce a distinction between *objective* and *subjective* rationality[20]. *Objective* rationality requires you to do what you have conclusive reason to do; it requires a certain relation between your attitudes and/or actions and the reasons you have for them. *Subjective* rationality requires you to respond rationally to your mental/propositional attitudes. It requires you (to *intend*) to *A* if you *believe* you ought to *A*; it requires you (to *intend*) to *B* if you *intend* to [if *A* then *B*] and *believe* that *A*; and so on. It requires you to rationally respond to your attitudes, '*in abstraction from the reasons for them*',[21] to use Niko Kolodny's formulation.

Recall the conflict between a *krasia requirement* and the *reasons requirement*, where rationality requires Lora (to intend) to take Valium and not (to intend) to take Valium. How does the distinction between objective and subjective rationality resolve this conflict? It does so by assuming that objective rationality *overrides* subjective rationality. I will call this the 'overriding assumption'. It says that if objective rationality requires you to *A* and subjective rationality requires you to not-*A*, then rationality requires you to *A*. In other words, subjective rationality requires you to be a certain way only if there are no conclusive reasons to the contrary.

[20] Niko Kolodny uses this distinction in his 'Why be rational?'.
[21] Niko Kolodny, 'Why be rational?', 509; original emphasis.

With the *overriding assumptions* in play, the conflict between the *krasia requirement* and the *reasons requirement* immediately disappears. Rationality requires Lora not (to intend) to take Valium because objective rationality requires this of her. The *reasons requirement* overrides a *krasia requirement*; no more conflict between *reasons* and *krasia*.

But what if two subjective requirements stand in conflict with each other? Does the *overriding assumption* help us to remove this conflict? Before I answer this question, I want to turn to a *prima facie* argument against the *overriding assumption*. One might doubt the correctness of this assumption on the following grounds: Applied to a *krasia requirement*, it implies that rationality requires you to *A only if* there is no conclusive reason to the contrary. (For if there is conclusive reason to not-*A*, the *krasia requirement* is overridden). Consequently the correct formulation of a *krasia requirement* reads as follows: rationality requires you to *A* if you believe you ought to *A and* there is conclusive reason to *A*. In other words, rationality requires you to *A* if you believe you ought to *A* and you ought to *A*. But this is highly implausible. What if you *rationally* believe that you ought to *A*, though it is not the case that you ought to *A*? (This must be possible, as the truth of *p* is clearly not a condition of rationally believing *p*.) In this case rationality seems to require you (to intend) to *A,* even if it is not the case that you ought to *A*. So it cannot be that objective requirements of rationality override subjective ones. Believing (or rationally believing) that you ought to *A* clearly suffices to require you (to intend) to *A*—notwithstanding the truth of this belief.

But this argument displays a significant flaw at one step. From 'there is no conclusive reason not to *A*' I inferred that 'there is conclusive reason to *A*'. This step presupposes that for all propositions *A* it is either true that there is conclusive reason to *A* or there is conclusive reason not to *A*. You ought to *A* or you ought not to *A*. However, there might be propositions for which it does not hold that you ought to make them true or ought not make them true. Take the proposition 'I use my ring finger instead of my middle finger to type the next letter on my keyboard'. We could imagine that it is neither the case that I ought to change my finger nor that I ought not to change my finger. This is why this argument fails to show that the overriding assumption is incorrect.

Nevertheless, if one accepts, perhaps in a consequentialist vein, that for all *A* it is clearly defined whether you ought to do *A* or you ought not to *A*, thereby licensing the above argument against the *overriding assumption*, just distinguishing between objective and subjective rationality may resolve the conflict between the *krasia* and *reasons requirement*. This follows if one assumes that *rational consistency* only applies within one domain, and not across domains of rationality. That is, if *objective* rationality requires you to *X*, then it is not the case that *objective* rationality requires you to not-*X*. If *subjective* rationality requires you to *X*, then it is not the case that *subjective* rationality requires you to not-*X*. Yet it does not hold that if *objective* rationality requires you

to *X*, it is not the case that *subjective* rationality requires you to not-*X*, and *vice versa*. Distinguishing between objective and subjective rationality therefore suffices to remove the conflict between a *krasia* and a *reasons requirement*.

But what about conflicts between two requirements of *subjective* rationality? Introducing a distinction between objective and subjective rationality does not help us here, at least *prima facie*. Surely, there can be conflicts between subjective requirements of rationality. Take again Lora's example. A *krasia requirement* demands of Lora (to intend) to take Valium, whereas the *means-end requirement* demands of Lora not (to intend) to take Valium. However, the objective/subjective distinction may resolve even this conflict. This depends again on the presumption that for all *A*, it is either true that you ought to *A* or that you ought not to *A*. By then again assuming that rationality requires you (not) (to intend) to take Valium if there is conclusive reason (not) to take Valium (i.e. the *reasons requirement*), the conflict is again resolved. However, as I pointed out, there might be situations in which you neither ought to *A* nor not to *A*. The necessity of assuming that for all *A* it is clearly defined whether you ought or ought not to *A* in order to resolve the conflict between *subjective* requirements of rationality by distinguishing between objective and subjective rationality seems one of the reasons why this solution is less than convincing. It *may* work for conflicts between *subjective* requirements of rationality and the *reasons requirement*, but not for all possible conflicts of rationality.

Here is a further reason to doubt that the objective/subjective distinction resolves *any* conflict of rationality. Suppose that rationality is normative, and that you ought to *X* if rationality requires you to. This is just the 'rationally-required-implies-ought' principle I introduced above. Take the *krasia requirement* Lora is under. She believes that she ought to take Valium. The *krasia requirement* and the 'rationally-required-implies-ought' principle then imply that she has conclusive reason to take Valium. However, we also know that Lora has conclusive reason not to take Valium. If both hold, then the *reasons requirement alone* produces two conflicting requirements; it requires her to take Valium and not to take Valium. We are back to the conflict.

At this point, most (I assume) will be convinced already that the objective/subjective distinction fails to provide a solution to the problem of conflicting requirements of rationality. Yet there is an even more straightforward reason for why this is so. What I identified as *objective* rationality is not really a part of rationality at all. Reasons do not *rationally* require you to be a certain way; the *reasons requirement* is no genuine requirement of rationality. This is because, intuitively, your rationality is a matter of consistency and coherence amongst your attitudes (and actions). It is a relation *purely* between your attitudes (and actions). Whether you are 'objectively' rational is not a matter of coherence amongst your attitudes. Instead, it is a matter of the relations that hold between your attitudes (and actions) and the reasons

your situation gives you for having these attitudes. It is a matter of the relations between (non-mental) facts and attitudes (and actions). That is why responding correctly to reasons is a not part of rationality. Not being as you ought to be does not entail that you are not entirely as rationality requires you to be; thus, the distinction between objective and subjective rationality cannot help in resolving conflicts between various requirements of rationality. Though abandoning the *reasons requirement* reduces the total number of potential conflicts of rationality, the conflicts between purely 'subjective' requirements of rationality remain untouched.

There is one scenario, however, under which the argument for excluding the *reasons requirement* from what rationality requires of you may break down immediately. It does so if one assumes that attitudes, and only attitudes, are reasons. Being as you have conclusive reason to be would then be matter of some type of coherence amongst your attitudes (and actions). Rationality could again require you to be as reasons require you to be—or so it seems.

Let me briefly test the plausibility of this view. I think it is dubious on the following grounds. Suppose you believe that little green men have invaded your garden and that they are about to turn your house into a massive block of cheese. Unsurprisingly, as I hope, I think the fact you have this belief is a conclusive reason to see a psychiatrist. This is perfectly consistent with the contention that all reasons are attitudes. Your belief is an attitude and thus potentially a reason under this view. But it does not seem that rationality requires you to see a psychiatrist on the basis of this belief. It may be that this peculiar belief coheres well with your other beliefs; it may for instance follow from them and you may even be rationally required to have it. Accordingly, there is nothing wrong with the coherence amongst your attitudes—hence rationality does not require you to see a psychiatrist even though your belief is a reason to see a psychiatrist. Contrarily, the fact that this belief coheres well with your other beliefs even *strengthens* the reason to see a psychiatrist, yet it *weakens* the claim that it rationally requires you to see a psychiatrist. Consequently, the *reasons requirement* is not a requirement of rationality even if all reasons are attitudes.

In sum, the distinction between objective and subjective rationality does not deliver a solution to the problem of conflicting requirements of rationality. It does not because what I identified as 'objective' rationality is not really a part of rationality at all. You are not rationally required to respond correctly to reasons. Although excluding objective rationality from what rationality requires of you settles a number of conflicts (namely those between the *reasons requirement* and other requirements), it does not help us to disentangle conflicts between purely subjective requirements.

1.5.2 *The cancelling relation*

Returning to Lora's situation, recall that a *krasia requirement* demands of Lora (to intend) to take Valium, for she believes that she ought to take Valium. The *means-end requirement* demands of Lora not (to intend) to take Valium, for she intends not to do what she believes she ought to do and she believes that she ought to take Valium—hence the conflict between two subjective requirements. However, Lora is also in possession of conclusive evidence that it is not the case that she ought to take Valium. Consequently, the *evidence requirement* demands of Lora not to believe that she ought to take Valium.

This is what I described as the 'cancelling relation': two requirements of rationality, R_1 and R_2 are such that the antecedent of R_1, say A, requires you to not-B, where B is the antecedent of R_2. In Lora's case, R_1 can be replaced by *evidence requirement*; 'A' then stands for 'Lora possesses conclusive evidence that it is not the case that she ought to take Valium' and 'B' stands for 'Lora believes that she ought to take Valium'. Clearly, if the cancelling relation holds and R_1 indeed cancels R_2 this would give a solution for the conflict between the *krasia requirement* and the *means-end requirement* as present in Lora's situation. Lora would no longer be required (to intend) to take Valium because evidence requires her not to believe that she ought to take Valium.

Does the cancelling relation provide a general solution for conflicts between requirements of rationality? This would need the truth of three conditions:

(i) If two requirements of rationality, say R_1 and R_2, are such that R_1 requires you to B if A and R_2 requires you to not-B if C, then there is a third requirement, say R_3, where D either requires you to not-A or to not-C.

(ii) If R_3 requires you to not-A, R_1 no longer requires you to B; if R_3 requires you to not-D, R_2 no longer requires you to not-B;

(iii) There is no further requirement, say R_4 for which it is true that E requires you to not-D, unless there is another (un-cancelled) requirement R_5, where F requires you to not-E.

In short, R_3 breaks the conflict between R_1 and R_2 if it either cancels R_1 or R_2 and remains itself un-cancelled. So given (i), (ii) and (iii), the cancelling relation may solve the problem of conflicting requirements of rationality.

However, to assume that whenever there is a conflict between two requirements, there is a third requirement that cancels one of the two conflicting requirements is highly dubious. For instance, imagine (the admittedly far-fetched) situation in which a person is only subject to two requirements of rationality and these two requirements stand in conflict with each other. Or suppose that, instead of possessing conclusive evidence that she ought not to take Valium, Lora possess conclusive evidence that she ought to take Valium. Then, *ceteris paribus*,

there would not be a suitable requirement that potentially cancels out the conflict between the *krasia* and the *means-end requirement*.

This suffices to doubt that the cancelling relation gives us a *general* solution to the problem of conflicting rationality requirements. Nevertheless, for many conflicts there may be a requirement available that, if (ii) and (iii) are correct, cancels out one of the conflicting requirements. For explorational purposes, I will thus go on and examine whether one requirement can cancel out another requirement in the way the cancelling relation suggests.

Take the *evidence requirement* Lora is under. It requires her to believe that it is not the case that she ought to take Valium. Suppose Lora comes to satisfy this requirement by suspending her belief that she ought to take Valium. Instantaneously, this breaks the conflict between a *krasia requirement* and a *means-end requirement*, since she is no longer rationally required (to intend) to take Valium. In this sense, satisfying this *evidence requirement* 'cancels' a *krasia requirement*. It does so by making false the antecedent of a *krasia requirement*. However, to fully resolve the conflict between the *krasia* and the *means-end requirement*, the *evidence requirement* would need to achieve this even if Lora does not satisfy this requirement. Put differently, it would need to achieve this in *all* possible situations in which Lora is under an *evidence requirement* and not only in those situations in which she happens to satisfy an *evidence requirement* that supposedly cancels one of the conflicting requirements. In Lora's situation, this would be the case even if she continues to possess conclusive evidence that she ought not to take Valium, whilst keeping her belief that she ought to take Valium.

The question becomes whether the mere fact that Lora's evidential position requires her not to believe that she ought to take Valium suffices to neutralise a *krasia requirement*. One thing an *evidence requirement* signals is that, unless her evidential situation changes, Lora cannot be fully rational and believe that she ought to take Valium. But does being irrational in believing that you ought to take Valium bring it about that this belief no longer requires you (to intend) to take Valium? In general, must you be rational in having an attitude such that this attitude can rationally require something of you?

Some philosophers accept that this is so without argument. Ralph Wedgwood, for example, writes that

> a choice is rational just in case the agent *believes* that the option chosen is (in the relevant way) a good thing to do. But this would not be a very plausible thing to say: if the agent's belief that the option chosen is a good thing to do is a grossly irrational belief, then surely the choice will be equally irrational. So it would be more plausible to say this: a choice is rational just in case it is *rational for the agent to believe* that the option chosen is (in the relevant sense) a good thing to do.[22]

[22] Ralph Wedgwood, 'Choosing rationally and choosing correctly', 203, original emphasis.

Translated into the theoretic framework I am using in this paper, Wedgwood contends that you are rationally required to intend to *A* if you believe that you ought to *A only if* you are not rationally required not to believe that you ought to *A*; that is, if the *krasia requirement* is not cancelled out by another requirement.

I think this is mistaken. To explain why, I need to say a little more about how I conceive of the requirements of rationality. One thing, I assume, that all requirements of rationality have in common is that they require you to avoid having two (sets of) attitudes that, taken together, involve some sort of conflict. This is most obvious with the *consistency requirement*. I said that rationality requires you not to believe *p* if you believe not-*p*. Obviously, believing contradictious propositions involves a conflict, namely the conflict of taking a truth-taking attitude (i.e. believing) towards a set of propositions that cannot be true at the same time. Satisfying the *consistency requirement* resolves this conflict.

Satisfying a *krasia requirement* may resolve the following conflict. Believing that you ought to help your neighbours may be a (strong) approval of any attitude that will bring about that you ought to help your neighbours. This attitude may conflict with an intention not to help your neighbours (i.e. a false-making attitude towards the proposition 'I help my neighbours') or arguably with the absence of an intention to help your neighbours. In general, avoidance of some kind of conflict may be a common consequence of whenever you satisfy a requirement of rationality you are under. It may be that rationality requires you to be a certain way *because* not being that way involves some sort of conflict amongst your attitudes.

Accordingly, to lift the demands of a requirement of rationality it would need to be the case that the conflict giving rise to the requirement disappears. In Lora's example, this means that the mere fact that Lora is required not to believe that she ought to take Valium would need to resolve the conflict involved in believing that you ought to take Valium and not intending to take it. But it does not. The mere fact that Lora's evidential position requires her to change her belief that she ought to take Valium cannot achieve this. Of course, satisfying the *evidence requirement* by giving up her belief that she ought to take Valium removes the conflict. But if she fails to satisfy the *evidence requirement* by keeping her belief that she ought to take Valium, the conflict still remains.

This is why rationality requires you to intend to do what you believe you ought to do, even if you are not fully rational in believing what you ought to do. In consequence, what I dubbed the 'cancelling relation' is only a 'cancelling' relation *prima facie*. This relation fails to cancel individual requirements of rationality. It thus fails to resolve conflicts between requirements of rationality.

This is not to deny that in Lora's situation there may be some kind of *priority* attached to the *evidence requirement*. That is to say, being asked how Lora would be best advised to resolve the conflicts amongst

her attitudes, one should, it seems, answer that Lora would be best advised to discard her belief that she ought to take Valium. This priority may stem from the fact that through satisfying the *evidence requirement* by suspending her belief Lora maximises the number of requirements of rationality she can satisfy by changing one of her attitudes. This may thus be the best or most efficient means to resolve the conflicts amongst her attitudes and thus to satisfy various requirements of rationality Lora faces. But, as I argued before, this does not mean that rationality does not require Lora (to intend) to take Valium given her belief that she ought to take Valium. For if she fails to satisfy the *evidence requirement*, the conflict between her normative belief and the absence of an appropriate intention still remains.

1.6 *Asymmetric Satisfying, and Narrow or Wide Scope*

Up to this point in my argument, I have not found a convincing solution to the problem of conflicting requirements of rationality. Neither the subjective/objective distinction nor the 'cancelling relation' deliver a potent solution to 'inconsistent' requirements of rationality. As it is the conjunction of *asymmetric satisfying* and *rational consistency* that cause these irresolvable conflicts, I suggest that (at least) one of these assumptions will have to go.

This last section argues that *asymmetric satisfying* is untenable. I show that the intuition behind it is based on a misleading assumption. This opens up the possibility of satisfying a wide-scope conditional requirement of rationality, which in turn resolves the conflicts between the requirements of rationality, as Lora faces them.

First, take the *consistency requirement*. Though it is a conditional requirement of rationality, it should be clear by now that it plainly poses an exception to *asymmetric satisfying*. Suppose you believe p and you believe not-p. It would be incredible to argue that there is only *one* way to satisfy this *consistency requirement*. Both giving up your belief that p and giving up your believing that not-p would do the trick. Sure, if you are in possession of overwhelming evidence that p and thus, leaving dialethic intuitions aside, in possession of overwhelming evidence against not-p, then ridding yourself of the belief that p would not make you fully rational. But this is not because you still violate the *consistency requirement*. Instead, it is because you violate an *evidence requirement*. The fact that evidence requires you to believe p does not deny you the opportunity to satisfy a *consistency requirement* by giving up your belief that p. Being evidentially required to believe p does not 'cancel' the attitudinal conflict inherent in believing p and not-p.

The fact that the *consistency requirement* has two independent ways of being satisfied comes from the general understanding of the requirements of rationality I introduced in the previous section. I suggested that rationality requires you to X if by X-ing you remove a conflict from your attitudes. For example, rationality requires you not to have incon-

sistent beliefs because having inconsistent beliefs entails that you take a truth-taking attitude towards two propositions that cannot be true at the same time. Rationality requires you to intend the means necessary to your intended ends because by not doing so you take a truth-making attitude towards a proposition without taking a truth-making attitude towards another proposition you believe to be necessary for the truth of the proposition towards which you take a truth-making attitude.[23] Obviously there is always more than one way to remove these kinds of conflicts from your attitudinal system. As you have a choice with inconsistent beliefs, you have a choice, if you intend that *A* without intending what you believe to be a necessary means to *A*, say *B*. You could either form an intention to *B*, or suspend your belief that *B* is a necessary means to *A*, or give up your original intention to *A*. All three ways *satisfy* this requirement. This makes the requirements of rationality 'multiply satisfiable', as I shall put it.

Recall, however, that section 1.2 presented an example designed to establish that *krasia* (and other conditional) requirements are *not* multiply satisfiable. This example was supposed to justify *asymmetric satisfying*. I suggested, following Schroeder and Kolodny, that discarding your belief that you ought to help your neighbours when knowing that their house is on fire and hearing their screams for help would not count as satisfying a *krasia requirement*. For it would not count as a *rational* respons to the situation you are in. At best, you would avoid the requirement. I can now show why this example fails to support *asymmetric satisfying*. Though in the situation it is true that you are not fully rational by abandoning the belief that you ought to help your neighbours, this is not because you fail to satisfy a *krasia requirement*. Instead, you are not fully rational because by dropping your belief you violate an *evidence requirement*. Knowing that your neighbours' house is on fire and hearing their screams is conclusive evidence (I take it) that you ought to help them. That is why by dropping your *belief* that you ought to help them, you would not be fully rational. You would violate an *evidence requirement*. But it is not your failure to satisfy a *krasia requirement* that causes you not to be fully rational. In fact, you satisfy a *krasia requirement* by dropping your normative belief—it is just that you thereby violate an *evidence requirement*.

A variation of the example in question supports this conclusion. Suppose again that your neighbours' house is on fire and you hear them screaming for help. As before, you form a belief that you ought to help your neighbours. However, a split second before you form an intention to help and start helping them you realise that your neighbours' house is part of a big film set and that all the fire and panic are arranged as part of a dramatic scene. Would discarding your belief that you ought

[23] For an elaborated explanation of why not intending the means you believe to be necessary to the attainment of your intended ends violates a rationality requirement, see John Broome, 'Practical reasoning'.

to help your neighbours still count as an irrational response in this situation? Plainly not. Contrarily, evidence now seems to require you to stop believing that you ought to help your neighbours.

This shows that the intuition that you do not respond rationally by discarding your belief that you ought to *A* (at t_2) if you believe you ought to *A* (at t_1) depends on the *contingent* existence of a further requirement of rationality requiring you to believe that you ought to *A* (at t_2). If such a further requirement is not present, there is no reason to believe that you do not genuinely satisfy a *krasia requirement* by discarding you normative belief.

There is a further reason why discarding your normative belief is not necessarily an irrational way of responding to your situation. For *F* to be an 'irrational way of responding', I take it, it must be that the responder, say 'you', is not fully rational if you *F*. This is just to say that rationality requires you not to *F*. But this makes no sense if 'F' is replaced by 'it is not the case that you believe that you ought to *A* (at t_2) if you believe that you ought to *A* (at t_1)'. This is plainly no requirement of rationality. No conflict amongst your attitudes could be construed *just* out of believing something at one point and not believing it at a later point. Surely, rationality requires you not to discard your belief that *p* (at t_2) if you believe *p* (at t_1) *and*, for example, your evidential position regarding *p* remains unchanged. Yet this is a different requirement.

I conclude we can happily discard *asymmetric satisfying*. Giving up this assumption paves the way for giving up the narrow-scope interpretation of conditional requirements of rationality. Instead, conditional requirements of rationality take a wide scope. Expressed generally, this means that if rationality requires you to *Y* if *X*, then 'if X' appears within the scope of 'rationality requires'. This is also supported by what I called 'multiple satisfiability'. A conditional requirement of rationality is multiply satisfiable if and only if this requirement takes a wide scope. Take again the *consistency requirement* requiring you not to believe not-*p* if you believe *p*. If one reads this as a narrow-scope requirement, the *only* way to satisfy it is by not believing not-*p*. However, read as a wide-scope requirement, there are *multiple* ways to satisfy it. You could either drop your belief that *p*, or not believe that not-*p*, or both.[24]

[24] One may nevertheless argue that, in one sense or another, the narrow-scope consistency requirement is also multiply satisfiable. You can satisfy the requirement 'if you believe *A*, then rationality requires you not to believe not-*A*' by not believing not-*A*, or by dropping your belief that *A*. In both cases, you are no longer required to not believe not-*A*. Hence, even the narrow-scope version of the consistency requirement is multiply satisfiable, or so one may contend. But this cannot be correct. Being no longer required to do something does not mean that you satisfy any particular requirement. For example, suppose that a particular law that requires you to wear a black scarf around your face gets abrogated by the Supreme Court. One could not say that through the abrogation you now satisfy this law (independently of your wearing a black scarf, as it were), though it is true that you are no longer required to wear a black scarf. The same holds for the narrow-scope consistency requirement. Dropping your belief that *A* would not *satisfy* it. There would simply be no requirement to satisfy.

Construing the requirements of rationality as wide-scope requirements successfully resolves all the conflicts of rationality that Lora faces. Take again the conflict between the *krasia requirement* and the *means-end requirement* in Lora's example. Taking a wide scope, the *krasia requirement* requires Lora (to intend to take Valium if she believes that she ought to take Valium); the wide-scope *means-end requirement* requires Lora (to intend not to take Valium if she intends (not to take Valium if she believes she ought to take Valium) and she believes that she ought to take Valium). Can Lora simultaneously satisfy both requirements? She clearly can. For instance, she can intend to take Valium and drop her intention not to do what she believes she ought to do. Or she can intend not to take Valium and no longer believe that she ought to take Valium. Or she can just no longer believe that she ought to take Valium. All of these responses will satisfy *both* requirements *simultaneously*.[25]

In conclusion, assigning a wide scope to conditional requirements of rationality resolves the problem of inconsistent rationality requirements when applied to Lora's situation. But does it do so in *every* conceivable situation? Could it not be that rationality requires you to [*Y* if *X*], whilst rationality requires you to not-[*Y* if *X*]? I think it could not. Imagine what this would amount to. Rationality would then require you to *remove* a conflict among your mental attitudes, whilst requiring you to keep that conflict among your attitudes. How could such a situation be generated? Perhaps like this: suppose consistency requires you not to have contradictory beliefs, yet you believe that you ought to have contradictory beliefs. Are you then facing inconsistent requirements? If the requirements involved here take a wide scope, the answer to this is 'no'. You can still satisfy both requirements simultaneously if you do not have contradictory beliefs and drop your belief that you ought to have contradictory beliefs.

Here is another situation. Suppose an evil dictator starts a war if you fail to have a pair of contradictory beliefs. You thus have conclusive reason to have contradictory beliefs. Does this lead to inconsistent requirements? It does lead to an inconsistency of a sort. Rationality would then require you not to have a pair of contradictory beliefs, yet you ought to have them. But this is not an instance of 'rational *in*consistency'. It is rather a situation where you can do the right thing only on pain of becoming irrational. This situation would generate inconsistent requirements here if the *reasons requirement* were a genuine requirement of rationality. Then, consistency would rationally require you not to have contradictory beliefs, while reasons would rationally require you to have them. But since reasons do not *rationally* require something of you, no inconsistency is generated here again.

[25] In general, if rationality requires you to [*B* if *A*] and to [not-*B* if *C*], then there are *four* different ways to satisfy both requirements simultaneously: you can either [*A*, *B*, and not-*C*] or [not-*A*, *B*, and not-*C*] or [not-*A*, not-*B* and *C*], [not-*A*, not-*B*, and not-*C*].

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