

# Minimal Rationality: Structural or Reasons-Responsive?

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**Abstract** According to a well-known view in the philosophy of mind, intentional attitudes by their very nature satisfy requirements of rationality (e.g. Davidson 1980; Dennett 1987; Millar 2004). This view (which I shall call Constitutivism) features prominently as the ‘principle of minimal rationality’ in de Sousa’s monograph *The Rationality of Emotion* (1987). By explicating this principle in terms of the notion of the formal object of an attitude, de Sousa articulates an interesting and original version of Constitutivism, which differs in important respects from other extant versions. In this paper, I explore this version of Constitutivism against the background of recent developments in the theory of rationality and make explicit its ramifications for the long-standing dispute over whether the mind is essentially normative. My focus will be on how to conceive of the form of the rationality requirements that attitudes as such must satisfy according to this principle. I argue that, although de Sousa seems officially to endorse a structuralist conception of rationality, according to which these requirements are requirements of coherence, his considerations on formal objects suggest that they are more aptly conceived in terms of a reasons-responsive conception of rationality. I further argue that which of these two readings we choose makes a significant difference to the prospect of vindicating the essential normativity of mind by invoking the principle of minimal rationality.

## 1. Introduction

A prominent theme in contemporary philosophy of mind is that intentional attitudes are constitutively rational. Rehabilitating a (broadly) humanist idea within a thoroughly analytic framework, several writers have argued that there are requirements of rationality which intentional attitudes as such necessarily satisfy (e.g. Davidson 1980, 2004; Dennett 1987; de Sousa 1987; Millar 2004). We can formulate this view more explicitly as follows:

*Constitutivism*: It is necessary for a mental state to count as an attitude (e.g. as a belief or desire) that it satisfies certain requirements of rationality.

To guard against possible misunderstandings, it bears noting that ‘attitude’ is here used exclusively for mental state types which admit of assessment in terms of their rationality and are, thus, subject to requirements of rationality in the first place.<sup>1</sup> This use includes many types of intentional state (such as e.g. beliefs and desires, but also intentions as well as emotions and sentiments), but not all of them (e.g. perception, memory). Plausibly, the relevant category comprises all and only those intentional states that we readily conceive of as attitudes in the ordinary sense of the term. These are limited to states that can sensibly be cited in response to questions such as ‘what is your attitude towards  $x$ ’, ‘what is your stand/take on  $x$ ?’ or ‘what

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<sup>1</sup> Traditionally, Constitutivism is restricted to propositional attitudes. Arguably, this restriction is largely an artefact of certain substantive assumptions concerning which intentional state types are subject to requirements of rationality in the first place. Cf. my remarks on propositional attitudes below.

do you make of  $x$ ?'. I shall here not argue for this point, though. Those readers who disagree may think of 'attitude' as being used stipulatively for intentional state types that are subject to rationality requirements.

One of the most original and far-reaching contributions of Ronald de Sousa's work to current thinking about mind and normativity concerns how best to understand and develop Constitutivism. This contribution may not have received the same amount of attention as other important insights of his regarding specifically the nature of emotion and their normative significance. However, as I hope to show, this imbalance is unjustified. de Sousa's remarks on Constitutivism in *The Rationality of Emotion* (1987) provide the resources for an attractive elaboration of the view, not least when viewed from the perspective of recent philosophy of normativity.

In his important monograph, de Sousa introduces Constitutivism as one among a number of claims that jointly articulate his general understanding of rationality. More specifically, the view is introduced as the 'principle of minimal rationality', which states that a mental state that counts as an attitude must fit some description under which it is rational.<sup>2</sup> What is noteworthy and distinctive about de Sousa's variant of Constitutivism is that he goes on to explicate this principle by invoking the notion of the *formal object* of an attitude. This notion specifies an attitude's condition of correctness (or, in de Sousa's terms, success). The formal object of belief is truth: believing that  $p$  is correct (successful) under the condition that  $p$  is true; desire's formal object is goodness: desiring that  $p$  is correct (successful) under the condition that  $p$  (or the prospect specified by  $p$ ) is good.<sup>3</sup> By putting formal objects at center stage, de Sousa's version of Constitutivism differs from familiar competing versions of the view in at least two interesting respects.

First, his version applies to a much broader range of attitudes. As the traditional, Davidsonian version of Constitutivism is commonly understood, it is explicitly restricted to attitudes with propositional content (e.g. Davidson 1980, 2004). This restriction is plausibly a consequence of the specific, structural understanding of rationality which Davidson assumes. According to this understanding, the requirements which attitudes must satisfy as such demand that they form coherent patterns, which are sustained at least in large part by relations holding between conceptual propositional contents (e.g. Davidson 1980, 221f.; cf. Millar 2004, 4ff.). However, there are reasons to suppose that the category of attitudes is not restricted to intentional states with propositional content. As de Sousa (1987, chapters 5 and 7) convincingly

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<sup>2</sup> de Sousa's principle applies to both attitudes and actions. Since my focus in this paper is with the rationality of attitudes, I will be concerned with this principle only insofar as it concerns attitudes.

<sup>3</sup> For a rivalling view of desire's formal object, cf. Lauria (2017).

argues, many emotions, such as e.g. fear of a dog or admiration of another person, can be assessed for their rationality even though they are not directed at propositions. Moreover, by showing that emotions, too, have formal objects (e.g. dangerousness in the case of fear; admirability in the case of admiration), de Sousa brings them within the purview of the principle of minimal rationality. In this way, he articulates an attractively unified version of Constitutivism which covers a much greater variety of states than the Davidsonian picture.

The second important difference concerns the nature of the rationality requirements which attitudes must satisfy as such. As illustrated by the common Davidsonian picture, traditional versions of Constitutivism tend to lean towards a structuralist understanding, according to which these requirements are requirements of coherence. Although de Sousa's official understanding of rationality (1987, chapter 6) largely corresponds to this view, his considerations on formal objects in connection with the principle of rationality at the same time point towards a different substantive view of the relevant requirements. On this view, rationality requires responsiveness to reasons. This is a significant aspect of de Sousa's account since, in their canonical contemporary forms, the structuralist and the reasons-responsive view of rationality requirements differ in important respects. Perhaps most interestingly, they seem to differ in respect of their capacity to vindicate the intuition that rationality is normative.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, de Sousa's explication of the principle of minimal rationality makes available a version of Constitutivism which importantly contrasts with more traditional variants in respect of its implications for the normativity of rationality and, as a consequence of this, for the normativity of attitudes themselves.<sup>5</sup>

In my contribution to this Festschrift in honor of de Sousa's work, I would like to spell out this version of Constitutivism and explore its implications for the normativity of attitudes. By doing so, I intend to elucidate the view's significance for the longstanding dispute over whether the mind is essentially normative. I should note that my aims in this paper are largely programmatic. Thus, I won't offer anything like sustained defense of the view I shall extract

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Kiesewetter (2017) and Lord (2018), who argue that structuralist versions differ from one particular version of the reasons-responsive account in this respect. Sylvan (2021) provides some grounds for thinking that also the currently dominant reasons-responsive version is better placed in this respect than structuralist views. Cf. section 5.

<sup>5</sup> To be fair, other authors have defended versions of Constitutivism that invoke a reasons-response conception of rationality, too. Cf. e.g. Millar (2004, chapters 1.2, 1.5 and 2.2), Moran (2012), Bergamaschi Ganapini (2020). It is worth noting, though, that these authors tend to focus their considerations on belief and the idea that it is constitutively responsive to evidence. The version found in de Sousa's work differs from these both in respect of what beliefs are thought to be essentially responsive to (their formal object) as well as insofar as its concern with formal objects makes available a general, unified treatment of all types of attitudes. In this respect, it may be comparatively better placed to vindicate the normativity of attitudes qua rational across the board.

from de Sousa's work, but what I will say should be sufficient to appreciate that it makes for an original and noteworthy contender within the present debate on the nature of mind.

I begin by elaborating the principle of minimal rationality and show that de Sousa's initial illustrations of this principle and his general remarks on rationality invite a structuralist interpretation, according to which the rationality requirements which attitudes as such must satisfy are requirements of coherence (section 2). I then show that what de Sousa says about formal objects in this context sits much better with a reasons-responsive conception of rationality (section 3). I provide some grounds for thinking that this alternative reading makes for a *prima facie* plausible version of Constitutivism (section 4) and go on to spell out its ramifications for the debate on the normativity of mind by exploring an important difference between these two substantive conceptions of rationality (section 5).

## 2. Minimal rationality and coherence

Let me begin by formulating the principle of minimal rationality as stated in the sixth chapter of *The Rationality of Emotion* (1987, 160):

*Minimal Rationality.* It is a necessary condition of an intentional state's being describable as an attitude that under some true description it can properly (though perhaps vacuously) be said to be rational.<sup>6</sup>

de Sousa illustrates this principle by means of several examples. For our purposes, two of these are particularly instructive. The first refers to Quine's (1960) principle of charity in radical translation:

Why should I not allow myself to translate a native belief as something of the form '*p* & not-*p*'? Because an explicit contradiction could not intelligibly be posited as true (Quine 1960, 58). Such a proposition lacks the condition of minimal rationality and therefore cannot be the content of any belief. (de Sousa 1987, 160)

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<sup>6</sup> This formulation in fact differs slightly from de Sousa's own formulation, which invokes the distinction between categorial and evaluative rationality. The way I have stated the principle is true to its force while being somewhat simpler in that it deploys only the evaluative notion of rationality (on which 'rational' contrasts with 'irrational', as opposed to 'arational', as on the categorial notion). A further difference is that de Sousa takes the condition specified by the principle to apply also to behavioral events which are subject to rational evaluation and thus qualify as actions in a sense that parallels my use of 'attitude'.

The second example is primarily intended to illustrate a misuse of Minimal Rationality in connection with desire, but it also makes explicit how the principle is properly applied to this type of attitude:

One example of abuse is the “Socratic paradox,” the doctrine that no one desires the bad. The claim that desire is always *sub specie boni* depends on abstracting from precisely what determines whether or not a want is for something actually good. There is a grain of truth here: for a state to count as a want, it must posit that some proposition instantiates the proper [i.e. formal, JMM] object of wanting – that is, the good. The restriction of context insulates them from the broader context in which they can be seen to be irrational. They are therefore [...] rational under those minimal descriptions. (ibid., 161)

Looking more closely at these illustrations, three main features of the application of the principle stand out. First, the requisite description under which an attitude is rational is satisfied in a highly restricted context.<sup>7</sup> Thus, a desire is found rational in the requisite minimal sense in a context which abstracts away from other intentional states with which it might conflict and includes but the desire itself.<sup>8</sup> This feature may not be as salient in the first example. However, in this case, too, the assessment of the belief’s minimal rationality is confined to the belief itself in isolation from other attitudes.

A second salient aspect relates to the attitude’s formal object. For a mental state to satisfy the requisite description, the intentional content of the state must be apprehended as an exemplification of the corresponding formal object. As the example involving the principle of charity suggests, this is a prerequisite for the attitude to qualify as ‘minimally rational’. In a similar vein, the second example suggests that the representation of a desire as apprehending its propositional content as good is an essential feature of the minimal context in which a minimal description of the desire as rational applies.

Third – and this brings us to my main topic –, the satisfaction of the requisite description of an attitude as rational is tied to the satisfaction of certain requirements of rationality. Both examples suggest that these requirements are, at least in part, requirements of coherence. Since beliefs with self-contradictory contents are inconsistent with themselves, we can think of the

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<sup>7</sup> There are certain echoes here with the account Davidson (2004) offers of the satisfaction of rationality requirements by attitudes in the context of his treatment of irrationality.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. de Sousa’s remark on p. 69 of *Emotional Truth* (2011): “Context frames rationality: to judge some state – emotion, desire, or belief – to be rational at some particular time is to assess the appropriateness of that state in the context of all other coexisting states [...]”.

requirement articulated by Quine's principle of charity as a prohibition against a certain type of incoherence. As indicated by the case involving desire, the relevant coherence requirements also govern the relation between distinct attitudes, though: the satisfaction by a desire of the requisite minimal description seems to depend on its being insulated against conflicts with other desires. The case thus involves an implicit reference to a constraint of coherence with other attitudes. In light of this, it seems natural to suppose that de Sousa's explication of Minimal Rationality articulates a version of Constitutivism on which the rationality requirements necessarily satisfied by attitudes are, at least in essential part, requirements of coherence.

This interpretation is confirmed by another principle that de Sousa introduces in elaborating his broader framework of rationality. This further principle in fact suggests that the requirements that attitudes must satisfy are *exclusively* requirements of coherence. It reads as follows:

*Constraints.* Rationality never prescribes, but only constrains, by proscribing incoherence and distinctions without a difference.<sup>9</sup>

On this view, requirements of rationality do not specify which beliefs or desires we should hold, but rather which forms of conflict between (or within) attitudes to avoid. Since, as far as I can tell, de Sousa does not take the injunction against distinctions without a difference to be pertinent in the context of Minimal Rationality<sup>10</sup>, Constraints suggests that the requirements of rationality to be met by mental states qua attitudes are restricted to requirements of coherence.

In order to get clear about the precise form of rationality requirements pertinent to this understanding of Minimal Rationality, it is helpful to precisify Constraints in terms of the canonical contemporary regimentation of coherence requirements (e.g. Broome 2013; Easwaran & Fitelson 2015). According to this regimentation, coherence requirements are 'wide-scope'. That is to say that they are expressed by the operator 'rationality requires', which takes wide scope over a sentence that logically combines two or more attitudes.<sup>11</sup> (A widely acknowledged exception is the requirement not to believe self-contradictory propositions. Cf.

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<sup>9</sup> I have substituted 'incoherence' for 'inconsistency' in de Sousa's (1987, 163) original formulation since he understands the relevant constraints as prohibiting also forms of misfit between attitudes other than logical inconsistency. Since my use of 'coherence' governs a fairly large variety of intuitively fitting attitude combinations (see below), it may be slightly broader than de Sousa's use of 'consistency'. However, as far as I can see, this has little bearing on the exegetical accuracy of my rendition of Constraints. On the centrality of coherence to de Sousa's understanding of rationality, cf. also (2011, 69ff.).

<sup>10</sup> He illustrates this injunction in connection with Parfit's (1984, 124) famous case of future Tuesday indifference. Cf. (1987, 176). As de Sousa interprets this case, it does not violate Minimal Rationality.

<sup>11</sup> To be precise, 'attitude' should here be read so as to include the *absence* of an attitude.

Broome (2013, 155), Easwaran & Fitelson (2015, 62, n. 4).) The following is a paradigm candidate for a wide-scope requirement:

*Modus Ponens Requirement.* Rationality requires that [if  $S$  believes at  $t$  that  $p$  and  $S$  believes at  $t$  that if  $p$ , then  $q$ , then  $S$  believes at  $t$  that  $q$ ].<sup>12</sup>

As Modus Ponens Requirement illustrates, wide scope coherence requirements can be satisfied in more than one way. Thus, the requirement does not mandate believing that  $q$  when one believes that  $p$  and believes that if  $p$ , then  $q$ . It can just as well be satisfied by giving up either of the antecedent beliefs. (In this respect, it differs from a corresponding ‘narrow scope’-requirement to believe at  $t$  that  $q$ , which is conditional upon believing at  $t$  that  $p$  and believing at  $t$  that if  $p$ , then  $q$ .) Echoing the coherence constraints articulated by Constraints, such wide-scope requirements thus only prohibit against certain forms of incoherence rather than telling us which attitudes to adopt or give up. In light of this, one might think that Minimal Rationality is aptly understood as demanding that attitudes answer to a true description under which they satisfy coherence requirements which are (with the plausible exception of the injunction against self-contradictory beliefs) wide scope. Thus understood, Minimal Rationality articulates a specific *structuralist* version of Constitutivism.

If my remarks thus far are sound, this reading of Minimal Rationality is consonant with the examples de Sousa offers by way of illustration and even appears to be mandated by his official stance on rationality. Still, one may see reason to question whether it is ultimately the most plausible reading. Taking a closer look at the role de Sousa ascribes to formal objects in the context of this principle, it in fact seems that the rationality requirements pertinent to his version of Constitutivism might be better conceived as taking a different form.<sup>13</sup> As I argue in the next section, this role plausibly invokes a reasons-responsive rather than structuralist conception of rationality.

### 3. Minimal rationality and reasons-responsiveness

What has been said about Minimal Rationality up to this point does not yet make transparent

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<sup>12</sup> For expository purposes, I ignore some plausible amendments proposed by Broome (2013, 157ff.).

<sup>13</sup> One might wonder whether Constraints also conflicts with a further principle of rationality defended by de Sousa, according to which the origins of an attitude are relevant to assessing its overall rationality. Cf. (1987, 161f.). Prima facie, this principle might seem to sit better with a reasons-responsive conception of rationality. (I elaborate on this conception in the next section.) However, it is not clear that this interpretation is mandatory. Thus, Modus Ponens Requirements is plausibly concerned with the origins of belief whilst being a bona fide wide scope coherence requirement.

why the minimal context in which attitudes are rational displays them as apprehending their intentional content as an instance of the corresponding formal object. Looking more closely at de Sousa's account of formal objects it seems that the reason for this tells against the structuralist reading of the principle outlined in the previous section. More specifically, this reading seems to conflict with an important link which de Sousa forges between Minimal Rationality and the conditions of an attitude's intelligibility.<sup>14</sup>

As de Sousa indicates on several occasions (1987, 139, 159), Minimal Rationality is in fact a generalization of a specific thesis concerning the conditions of intelligibility of emotions. This thesis relates an emotion to a specific aspect of its intentional object (which de Sousa calls 'motivating aspect'):

*Intelligibility Condition.* Motivating aspects must be rationally related to the emotion they cause, in the sense that they must constitute intelligible rationalizations for the emotion. (ibid., 118)

According to this thesis, fear of an approaching dog is intelligible as such only if it is rationally explained by some feature of the dog (its aggressive demeanor, say), which motivates the emotion. For this feature to motivate the emotion is, at least in part, for it to stand in a rational relation to this emotion.<sup>15</sup> As I read de Sousa's further remarks on motivating aspects (ibid., 122, 133), they in fact largely owe their motivating force to being apprehended by its subject as exemplifying the corresponding formal object. This suggests that, according to de Sousa, an emotion's intelligibility ultimately depends on the apprehension of the emotion's intentional object as an instance of its formal object: what makes fear of  $x$  intelligible is that it is motivated and thus rationally explained by a purported danger posed by  $x$ . Taking into account that Minimal Rationality generalizes this view of the condition of emotional intelligibility, de Sousa seems moreover to suppose that parallel claims hold true of other types of attitude: believing (desiring) that  $p$  depends for its intelligibility on  $p$ 's being apprehended as true (good).

This perspective on Minimal Rationality sheds light on the role of formal objects in connection with this principle. Qua generalization of Intelligibility Condition Minimal Rationality is principally concerned with the condition of an attitude's intelligibility. Taking

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<sup>14</sup> Again, there are some echoes here with Davidson's (1980, 2004) version of Constitutivism. In line with Quine's considerations on the principle of charity, Davidson's claims concerning the rationality requirements to be met by attitudes as such are motivated by considerations on the intelligibility of their ascription. That said, de Sousa's way of forging this connection is special in that it invokes the notion of a formal object. See main text below.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also de Sousa's (ibid., 118) claim that "[m]otivation, in the relevant sense, belongs to the sphere of rational discourse. It must therefore aspire to conformity with rational norms."



our cue from de Sousa's conception of emotional intelligibility, this condition ultimately requires for there be a rationalizing connection between an attitude and its formal object (or what its subject apprehends as an instance of the formal object). This suggests that the point of the apprehension of formal objects in the context in which an attitude satisfies the requisite minimal description is to enable this connection: a rational explanation of the attitude in terms of its formal object is available only if the content of the attitude is apprehended as an instance of its formal object. In other words, what Minimal Rationality seems to require is that there is a minimal description under which an attitude is rationally intelligible in the sense of being rationalized by its formal object.

Thus understood, however, the rationality requirements pertinent to Minimal Rationality seem to be of a different form than wide-scope coherence requirements. According to the standard account of rationalization, an attitude is rationalized by the reasons for which it is held. More specifically, we can think of rationalizing reasons as genuine normative reasons to hold that attitude, which are within the subject's ken, or what purport to be such. (I shall refer to both actual normative reasons possessed by a subject and what merely appear to be normative reasons within her ken jointly as 'apparent normative reasons'. After all, in possessing an actual normative reason to hold some attitude (e.g. in being aware of a reason to be afraid, such as the aggressiveness of an approaching dog) things will appear to one accordingly (it will seem to one that the approaching dog is aggressive).)<sup>16</sup> Conceived in this way, rationalization does not aspire to conformity with wide-scope coherence constraints, but invokes a reasons-responsive notion of rationality. In contrast to structuralist conceptions, which are concerned with relations of fit between attitudes, this conception is concerned with whether an attitude is *reasonable*, i.e. a response to apparent features of the world which speak in favour of it.<sup>17</sup> Correspondingly, what rationality demands, on this view, is not to be conceived in terms of wide-scope coherence requirements. In contrast to the common regimentation of the structuralist view of rationality, the rational requirements that come with the reasons-responsive conception are 'narrow scope':

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<sup>16</sup> I am assuming a quite common, de re understanding of apparent reasons. It is fair to say that this reading is not uncontroversial, though. Cf. e.g. Millar (2004, 14ff., 41f.) and Sylvan (2015) for critical discussion. I will not be able to defend this reading within the confines of this paper. However, it seems to me that it is mandatory when it comes to making sense of the rationalizing role played by formal objects on the present explication of Minimal Rationality. I am sympathetic to the view that the reasons for which we hold attitudes are also subject to requirement that invokes something closer to a de dicto understanding of apparent reasons. Cf. Müller (2021; n.d.-a). However, to keep matters simple, I will here set this aside.

<sup>17</sup> I here rely on the dominant version of the reasons-responsive conception of rationality. For different versions, cf. e.g. Kiesewetter (2017), Lord (2018), Fogal & Worsnip (2021). Cf. also section 5. Again, while not uncontroversial, this view strikes me as mandatory in order to appreciate the rationalizing role assigned to formal objects on the present reading of Minimal Rationality. It is worth noting also the difference between apparent reasons and the type of evidence-based reason in terms of which Fogal & Worsnip explicate the reasons-responsive view of rationality can be cogently motivated only in contexts that are larger than those in which attitudes are rational according to Minimal Rationality.

they require the adoption of a specific attitude, conditional upon the presence of corresponding apparent reasons. Or, to be more precise, on this conception, rationality requires that we respond to apparent reasons in favour of an attitude by adopting this attitude.<sup>18</sup>

If we take it that Minimal Rationality is effectively a constraint on attitudes' intelligibility, there are thus grounds to believe that mental states conforming to this principle satisfy a requirement of rationality on these lines insofar as they are rationalized by an apparent normative reason. This apparent reason is provided an apparent exemplification of the corresponding formal object. While this reading of Minimal Rationality is compatible with the claim that attitudes as such also satisfy requirements of coherence, it is worth stressing that this is not what, on this reading, the principle is about. The condition stated by the principle thus understood is a condition of an attitude's rational intelligibility which is satisfied in virtue of the availability of a rational explanation that cites its formal object as an apparent reason. On this explication of Minimal Rationality, the true minimal description which an attitude must satisfy according to this principle displays the attitude as *reasonable*. The explication thus invokes a different substantive notion of rationality than the structuralist reading sketched in the foregoing section. On this view, de Sousa's principle articulates a specific *reasons-responsive* conception of Constitutivism.

The alternative explication of Minimal Rationality that I have sketched in this section will no doubt strike many as unorthodox. Indeed, it comes with rather unusual commitments that can seem to cast doubt on its plausibility. Thus, it involves the claim that the formal object of an attitude is itself a normative reason to hold that attitude. This claim is by no means a staple of contemporary normativity theory. Although it is widely accepted that normative reasons for an attitude are intimately related to the attitude's formal object, few philosophers espouse the view that formal objects themselves speak in favour of the corresponding attitude.<sup>19</sup> Thus, while the standard, evidentialist view of normative reasons for beliefs conceives of them as indicative of the truth of their propositional content, the truth of this content itself is rarely conceived as being itself a reason to believe it. Indeed, as we shall see, de Sousa himself seems hesitant to ultimately endorse this account of formal objects. Moreover, in taking attitudes as such to be responses to apparent exemplifications of their formal object, the view is committed to the claim

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<sup>18</sup> One might wonder whether the apparent reasons that rationality requires us to heed on this conception should be further qualified as apparent *decisive* reasons. Although there are things to say in support of this amendment, I will here set this issue aside. Suffice it to say that with respect to the reasons relevant in connection with the proposed reasons-responsive interpretation of Minimal Rationality, i.e. formal objects, this constraint is plausibly satisfied. Cf. Engel (2010, 607f.) on truth and Mulligan (2017, 19) on the correctness-makers of attitudes.

<sup>19</sup> For exceptions, cf. Müller (2017), Mulligan (2017, 19) and, as regards the formal object of belief, Engel (2010, 607f.).

that attitudes are necessarily held for reasons constituted by such exemplifications. This is not a standard view of contemporary theorizing about reasons either<sup>20</sup> and seems, again, to conflict with some aspects of de Sousa's own conception of attitudes. For the reasons-responsive version of Constitutivism I have extracted from de Sousa's work to seem sufficiently plausible, these commitments thus need some defense. In the following section, I shall provide a number of considerations in support of these two commitments and dispense with a possible worry to be found in de Sousa's own treatment of formal objects. Although more would need saying by way of a full defense of this take on Constitutivism, what I say should be enough to show that it is worthy of further exploration. The final section will then point to some ramifications of the view which suggest that its further exploration is of genuine theoretical interest.

#### 4. Formal objects as reasons

To support the claim that formal objects provide a normative reason for the corresponding attitude, we can look to an observation which de Sousa makes in one of his earliest treatments of them. As he points out in "The Good and the True" (1974, 538), formal objects can be cited in answers to reason-requests (cf. also 2011, 71f.):

A formal object, given in answer to the question, 'why do you want [believe] X?' is vacuous, but perfectly appropriate: 'because it is good [true]'. That is why it is *formal*: anything placed in the object slot of belief or a want expression must be or purport to be *a good or a truth*.

There is no doubt that such answers are peculiar in that they do not seem terribly informative. Yet, as de Sousa notes, they also seem to be entirely appropriate. There is an intuitive, albeit limited, sense in which such explanations display the corresponding attitude as being in good standing. What is implicitly invoked here is the idea that belief (desire) is an *appropriate* response to truth (goodness). In this respect, these answers display truth and goodness not only as reasons *for which* the corresponding attitude is held, but also as adequate reasons to hold it, i.e. as speaking in favour of this attitude.

We can corroborate this point on the basis of independent considerations which show that formal objects possess the deontic force of normative reasons. Borrowing an example from Gibbard (2005), suppose you throw a coin and hide the result from both us. What should I believe regarding its outcome? It seems that if the coin landed heads, there is a clear sense in

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<sup>20</sup> Two exceptions are Mulligan (2007) and Müller (2017).

which this is what I ought to believe. And this seems to be so even if I have no information about which side it landed on. In the relevant, objective sense, the question what to believe is settled by the fact that the coin landed heads. Given the plausible assumption that what I ought to believe is what there is most reason to believe, it follows the fact that it landed heads (and, accordingly, the truth of the corresponding proposition) qualifies as a normative reason for believing this. In the same vein, the fact that it would be good if more people got themselves vaccinated intuitively settles the question whether this prospect is something to be desired. That this would be a good thing makes it this prospect desirable and thus confers on this fact the force of a normative reason. To expand on this line of thought, one might develop the same core idea in terms of an inference to the best explanation regarding the regulative force of truth (goodness) in first-person doxastic (conative) deliberation. This argument exploits the observation that doxastic (deliberation) is transparent in that the first-person question of whether to believe (desire) that  $p$  immediately gives way to the question of whether  $p$  is true (good). I here won't be able to flesh out this further consideration, though it has been developed elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> I take it, though, that if we pre-theoretically regard truth (goodness) as settling the question of what we ought to believe or desire in the objective sense I indicated, this by itself should lend some additional pre-theoretical support to the idea that formal objects possess the normative role accorded to them by the reasons-responsive reading of Minimal Rationality.

Moving on to the further commitment of this reading, the claim that formal objects are also reasons to which attitudes as such are responses can be supported by expanding on de Sousa's observations concerning reason explanations that cite formal objects. As some further reflection suggests, such explanations are not only cogent, but in fact entailed by the very ascription of the relevant attitude.<sup>22</sup> To appreciate this, consider statements of the following form:

- $S$  believes that  $p$ , but not because for  $S$   $p$  has any appearance of truth at all
- $S$  desires that  $p$ , but not because  $p$  strikes  $S$  as even remotely positive or valuable
- $S$  fears  $x$ , but not because  $x$  appears even vaguely dangerous to  $S$

On the face of it, such statements are incoherent. What is expressed by the subordinate clause undermines the very intelligibility of the attitude ascribed in the main clause. This indirectly indicates that ascriptions of attitudes depend for their cogency on the supposition that these

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Engel (2010, 607f.) on the regulative role of truth in doxastic deliberation.

<sup>22</sup> One might think of de Sousa's (1987, 158f.) considerations on Moore's paradox as aiming into a similar direction. I develop this line of thought more carefully, focusing on emotion, in Müller (2017, 286ff.; *forthcoming*).

attitudes are responses to an apparent exemplification of the corresponding formal object. Since the content expressed by the respective ‘because’-clause cannot be cancelled, this seems in fact to be entailed by such ascriptions.<sup>23</sup> This observation is consonant with Intelligibility Condition as elucidated in the previous section: an attitude is intelligible only as a response to an apparent exemplification of its formal object. That is held for the reason that its formal object purports to be exemplified by its intentional content is necessary for the attitude to so much as make sense. If we combine this thought with the prior observations concerning the normative force of formal objects, it follows that, in the present context, making sense is a matter of rational intelligibility, that is, of the attitude’s being rationalized by an apparent normative reason.

In order to appreciate the plausibility of regarding formal objects as reasons for which we hold the corresponding attitude, it is important to be clear about what precisely is expressed by the relevant ‘because’-clauses. In his more recent work, de Sousa in fact seems hesitant as to whether the formal object of a belief, desire or emotion can ultimately be accorded this status. After identifying the formal object as the “most trivial possible reason” for the corresponding attitude in *Emotional Truth* (2011, 72), he cautions the reader against thinking of it as being a genuine reason. As he says, answers citing formal objects in response to reasons-requests of the form ‘why do you believe (desire) that *p*?’ effectively simply repeat the fact that one holds that same attitude (ibid.). One may read this remark as voicing some concern as to whether the connection between formal objects and attitudes is appropriately regarded as a bona fide rationalizing connection. Understood in this way, it can seem to point to a serious objection to the reasons-responsive version of Constitutivism I have extracted from his work.

However, I do not believe that this concern is warranted. The interpretation which de Sousa gives of formal object-citing explanations in justifying his reservations about their status as genuine reasons in fact conflicts with his own observation that such explanations seem perfectly appropriate. Note that, in contrast to ‘Because *p* is true (good).’, offered in response to the question ‘why do you believe (desire) that *p*?’ , de Sousa’s proposed analysis of what this type of statement amounts to (a simple reiteration of ‘I believe (desire) that *p*.’) does not make for an appropriate answer to this question at all. Accordingly, de Sousa’s own insight concerning the cogency of such answers shows that this interpretation cannot be right.

As far as I can see, de Sousa’s concern may ultimately rest on a confusion between two distinct sorts of mental states: attitudes held for reasons, on the one hand, and mental states which make available the reasons for which we hold attitudes, on the other. That is, his claim

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<sup>23</sup> To be precise, the fact that the content expressed by the ‘because’-clause cannot be cancelled is compatible with its being conventionally implied rather than entailed. However, as far as I can see, these statements can neither be reformulated in a way that does not imply this content, as would be required if it were a conventional implicature.

about explanations invoking formal objects seems to me to conflate a mental state that is implicitly referred to by the relevant ‘because’-statements with the attitude itself. Since this distinction is important for an adequate grasp of the rationalizing role of formal objects, let me try and explicate what it amounts to.

Consider, for example, Paula’s belief that it is going to rain, which she holds because the sky is grey. As is implicit in the relevant use of ‘because’, the reason for which Paula holds this belief – that the sky is grey – is made available by a certain mental state: Paula cannot hold this belief for this reason unless the reason is within her cognitive ken. What is crucial to note, though, is that this state is distinct from the belief because of the role it plays in its etiology. Reasons for which we hold attitudes help bring about and sustain them and they do so qua content of some mental state: the fact that is Paula’s reason must be within her cognitive ken in order to help bring about and sustain her belief. This state precedes her belief and also remains distinct from the latter once it has been formed since it contributes to sustaining this belief. The same holds true of the apparent normative reasons to which attitudes as such are responses. The apprehension of a content as exemplifying a formal object makes available a (real or merely apparent) exemplification of this formal object, which helps bring about and sustain the corresponding attitude. This reason is operative *qua apparent*, i.e. insofar as it is provided by the content of the apprehending state. Since this apprehending state plays a crucial role in bringing about and sustaining the attitude, it is distinct from this attitude.<sup>24</sup>

Although de Sousa clearly recognizes the need for the content of an attitude to be apprehended an instance of its formal object in order for the attitude to be intelligible, it seems that he supposes that attitudes themselves apprehend their intentional object in this way (cf. the passage on the application of Minimal Rationality to desires cited in section 2).<sup>25</sup> He thus does not seem to properly distinguish between the attitudinal response and the state which makes available the reason to which it responds. Arguably, as a result of this, de Sousa is misled by the fact that reason explanations such as ‘Because *p* is true (good).’ implicitly refer to a state that apprehends *p* as true (good) into supposing that this clause refers to the attitudinal response itself as opposed to the state making available the reason for which it is held. It may then seem

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<sup>24</sup> In the case of motivating reasons constituted by merely apparent exemplifications of the formal object, it is trivially true that they constitutively depend on the content of some mental state, as there is no corresponding mind-independent feature. The point I am making is a different one, however: it concerns the etiology of the attitude. Both actual and merely apparent exemplifications of the formal object are operative as reasons for which we hold attitudes only *qua apparent*, i.e. qua content of some distinct state.

<sup>25</sup> As far as emotions are concerned, this is suggested also by de Sousa’s claim that they are relevantly similar to perceptions. Cf. (1987, e.g. 149ff., 201; 2011, e.g. 8, 20f., 31f., 37, 60, 70). For criticism of the perceptual account of emotion, cf. e.g. Mulligan (2007), Deonna & Teroni (2012, chapter 6), Müller (2019, chapter 3), Naar (2020), Mitchell (2021, chapter 4).

that answering ‘Because  $p$  is true (good)’ in response to a corresponding reason request effectively reiterates the fact that one believes (desires) that  $p$ .

Once we clearly separate between attitudes and the states making available their apparent reasons, however, I do not think that such answers in any way tell against taking the rationalizing role they purportedly assign to formal object at face value. Although the rationalizing relation expressed by them is peculiar in that it is built into the attitudes themselves and thus does not afford any explanation that is not already contained in their very ascription, it is structurally on par with the type of rationalization of actions and attitudes that explicitly figure in common explanatory and justificatory discourse. This is not to say that the role accorded to formal objects on this reasons-responsive explication of Minimal Rationality admits of no further elaboration and defense. In particular, there is an important question as to the nature of the states that make available formal objects as apparent reasons to be responded to.<sup>26</sup> In what follows, I will suppose, though, that this explication is backed up by pre-theoretical considerations on the role of formal objects and possesses at least some initial plausibility. The remainder of my paper offers some thoughts on the wider theoretical interest which this view might hold for philosophers of mind.

## 5. The normativity of mind

Among the debates to which traditional formulations of Constitutivism have given rise, one of the most noticeable disputes is about whether the mind is essentially normative. Originally, it was supposed that this dispute is by and large decided by deciding whether Constitutivism is true. As traditional Constitutivists, such as Davidson (1980, 2004) and Dennett (1987), conceive of their position, it *entails* that propositional attitudes are essentially normative. Here, they rely on the assumption that rationality is inherently normative. Given this assumption, arguments in support of Constitutivism are ipso facto arguments in support of the view that attitudes are essentially normative.

The thought that rationality is inherently normative is clearly very intuitive. After all, in common rational discourse, the charge of irrationality is in and of itself a genuine form of criticism: in pointing out that someone violates the requirements of rationality we are implying that she commits a mistake. In order to do justice to this observation, we must suppose that these requirements have deontic force. That is to say that this observation commits us to the view that if rationality requires you to  $\phi$ , then it follows that you have a reason to  $\phi$ . Given this

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<sup>26</sup> I address this issue, for the specific case of the emotions, in Müller (2019, chapter 5; *forthcoming*). I also offer some suggestions as to the nature of cognitive foundation of beliefs in a further paper which defends the view that the truth of a proposition is a normative reason to believe it (Müller n.d.-b).

view, in violating requirements of rationality, you commit a mistake insofar as you fail to heed the reasons they provide.<sup>27</sup>

Although this view of rationality is very natural, it has in fact been denied by some participants in the dispute over the normativity of mind. Pursuing a kind of deflationary strategy, these authors doubt that rationality is inherently normative and, accordingly, that the truth of Constitutivism would suffice to settle the question of whether the mind is normative. For example, in his assessment of Dennett's account of attitudes, Rey (1997, 276) asserts that

idealizations to rationality need make no more claim to how people *ought* to speak, think, or act, than do Boyle's idealizations about gases make some sort of moral claim about how gases morally *ought* to behave, or Kepler's laws about how planets morally *ought* to move.

In assimilating idealizations of rationality (and, thus, implicitly requirements of rationality) to laws of nature, Rey proposes a view of rationality as lacking deontic force.<sup>28</sup> This view no doubt flies in the face of a salient aspect of ordinary rational discourse. In light of this, it invites the charge of being overly revisionary (cf. Kiesewetter 2017, chapter 2). While one might think in itself is a good reason to reject Rey's view, I believe that deflationary proposals on these lines also indirectly highlight the need to accommodate for and vindicate this aspect in giving more substantive accounts of rationality.<sup>29</sup> Such proposals suggest that, in order for proponents of Constitutivism to maintain that their view displays attitudes as essentially normative, they are well advised to offer a substantive account of rationality requirements that clearly shows them to have deontic import.

Turning to the two interpretations of Minimal Rationality that I have distinguished in the preceding sections, it seems that these are not on a par when viewed against this background. Taking a look at the recent metaethical literature on rationality, it seems that reasons-responsive views of rationality are considerably better placed to vindicate the normativity of rationality than their structuralist rivals.<sup>30</sup> If this is right, it looks as though the reasons-responsive version

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<sup>27</sup> One might opt for the stronger claim that rationality requirements provide decisive reason to do what they require. Cf. Broome (2013, chapter 11), Kiesewetter (2017, chapter 2), Lord (2018, chapter 8). I believe this view is too strict and thus opt, in line with Sylvan (2021), for the weaker one expressed in the main text.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. also Churchland (1981). For critical discussion of this deflationary strategy, cf. Millar (2004, 28ff.).

<sup>29</sup> In defense of the importance of this, cf. Kiesewetter (2017, chapter 2), Lord (2018, chapter 8).

<sup>30</sup> One might think of vindicating the normativity of rationality on either view by invoking the very idea that attitudes as such satisfy requirements of rationality. Cf. Korsgaard's (2009, 29ff.) claim that it is inevitable for agents to comply with the standards constitutive of agency. I will not be able to address this strategy here. Cf. Lord (2018, 216f.) for some critical remarks on this proposal in connection with wide-scope coherence requirements.



of de Sousa's Constitutivism is preferable to structuralist versions when it comes to defending the normativity of attitudes. To be precise, some caution is needed here since metaethicists who contrast reasons-responsive and structuralist views of rationality in this respect tend to defend a version of the reasons-responsive view which differs from the common version I have adopted in explicating Minimal Rationality (cf. Kieseewetter 2017; Lord 2018). On their alternative version, rationality requires responding to actual normative reasons that one possesses or which are available to one.<sup>31</sup> That said, the most recent contributions to this debate suggest that requirements to respond to apparent normative reasons can be shown to have deontic force, too (cf. Sylvan 2021). If this is right, the relevant asymmetry may hold also with respect to the conception with which I have been working. To close this paper, I would like outline (some of) these arguments in order to show why one might think that versions of Constitutivism based on this reasons-responsive conception of rationality stand a better chance of vindicating the normativity of attitudes than versions based on a structuralist reading. (Here, I will restrict myself to the regimentation in terms of wide-scope coherence requirements.) In doing so, I would like to demonstrate that the question of which of the two readings of Minimal Rationality one opts for marks an important choice point vis-à-vis the broader theoretical ramifications of de Sousa's take on Constitutivism.<sup>32</sup>

Beginning with the structuralist view of rationality, there are a host of reasons to suppose it fails to make rationality requirements intelligible as having deontic force (e.g. Kolodny 2005; Broome 2013; Kieseewetter 2017, chapters 4 and 5; Lord 2018, chapter 8). For reasons of space, I shall confine myself to noting one straightforward difficulty for the two most natural ways in which one might think of wide-scope coherence requirements as providing reasons to do what they require (cf. Kieseewetter 2017, chapter 5.2).

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<sup>31</sup> On the availability of normative reasons, cf. Kieseewetter (2017, chapter 8).

According to this alternative version of the reasons-responsive view of rationality, rationality does not require one to respond to what merely appear to be normative reasons within one's ken. It seems to offer a straightforward way to defend the normativity of rationality: if rationality requires responding to actual normative reasons which are available to one or which one possesses, it follows that one has reason to do what rationality requires. For different ways of developing this idea, cf. Kieseewetter (2017, chapters 7 and 8) and Lord (2018, chapter 8).

<sup>32</sup> What I will say below might be thought to show that all versions of Constitutivism which invoke the dominant reasons-responsive conception of rationality are in the same position when it comes to defending the essential normativity of attitudes. However, as noted in n. 5, unlike reasons-responsive versions of Constitutivism that mainly focus on the evidence-responsive character of belief, the reasons-responsive interpretation of Minimal Rationality explicitly offers a general, unified treatment of attitudes in terms of their formal objects and seems, for this reason, comparatively well-placed to vindicate the normativity of attitudes across the board. Moreover, the strategy which I shall propose (following Sylvan 2021) to vindicate the normativity of attitudes plausibly conceives of attitudes that respond to reasons which are, like evidential reasons, related to, but distinct from, the corresponding formal object as being at least indirectly responsive also to the formal object itself. Cf. n. 41. If this is right, any reasons-responsive version of Constitutivism pursuing this strategy is also committed to (at least part of) the significance possessed by formal objects on the reasons-responsive reading of Minimal Rationality.

If we consider what reasons there might be to do what wide-scope requirements demand, it seems natural to think that either these reasons derive from the fact that conforming to these requirements is conducive to doing something else for which there are reasons (such as being prudent or holding justified beliefs) or they are provided by the very requirements themselves.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, none of these options work. This is because of a widely held constraint on the normative reasons to which attitudes can be responsive. Consider Modus Ponens Requirement. This requirement can be satisfied either by forming or by giving up certain beliefs. According to the constraint in question, normative reasons to which we doxastically respond are considerations indicative of the truth of the response's propositional content (e.g. Moran 2012) or, if I am right, may also consist in the truth of this content. However, neither the fact that conformity with such requirements would be conducive to something else there is reason to do, nor the very fact that rationality requires that one either form the consequent belief or give up one of the antecedent beliefs are considerations that bear on whether the content of the beliefs one might form or give up is true. It follows that the reasons one might have to conform to this requirement would be reasons one could not respond to by satisfying the requirement. Yet, since normative reasons are necessarily such that one can respond to them accordingly, this is a very unwelcome result. Accordingly, the prospects for the structuralist view to vindicate the normativity of rationality seem fairly dim.<sup>34</sup>

On the face of it, things may not look much better in the case of the common reasons-responsive conception of rationality I have been assuming. To be sure, if rationality requires that one respond accordingly to apparent normative reasons, then there will be *apparent* reasons to do what rationality requires. Yet this at best vindicates the appearance that requirements of rationality are normative (cf. Kiesewetter 2017, chapter 5.6). What we are looking for, however, is a substantive account of rationality requirements that shows them to provide *actual* reason to do what they require.

This diagnosis is too quick, though. To see this, note first that there are familiar cases in which apparent normative reasons generate corresponding actual normative reasons.<sup>35</sup> Consider the following example. Gerhard is the head of an underground GDR band, whose

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<sup>33</sup> Reasons for conforming with wide-scope requirements might also be derivative insofar as the satisfaction of these requirements is constitutive of doing something which we have reason to do (such as functioning as a believer, desirer etc.). Cf. Kiesewetter (2017, 103ff.). This proposal slightly differs from the Constitutivist strategy indicated in n. 30. It faces the same problems as other variants of the idea that reasons for satisfying wide-scope requirements are derivative, though.

<sup>34</sup> This problem may not arise with all paradigm candidates for wide-scope requirements. But it clearly arises in the case of those that can be satisfied by means of doxastic responses and, for similar reasons, in the case of those satisfiable by means of other (e.g. conative or emotional) types of attitudinal response.

<sup>35</sup> The following line of thought is elaborated in considerably more detail by Sylvan (2021).

success is largely due to the bandmates' mutual trust and shared musical and political agenda. One day one of Gerhard's bandmates decides to test his loyalty, dresses up as a secret State Security official and offers Gerhard the permission to regularly travel abroad on condition he agrees to secretly supply information on the bandmates' political and private endeavors. Lured in by the offer, Gerhard agrees. Although, given the facts of the situation, Gerhard does not actually betray his bandmates to the State Security, he clearly commits a serious mistake in accepting the offer. In light of the character and value of his relationship with his bandmates, it seems plausible that he violates a duty of respect. To be properly respectful of the value of their relationship, one might think, he ought not do what would amount to betrayal if the appearances were veridical. Correspondingly, although there is a merely apparent reason not to consent to spying on his friends, there is genuine normative pressure not to accept the offer. Insofar the value of the relationship calls for a certain type of respect, he has an *actual* reason not to do so. Assuming this diagnosis is correct, it follows that apparent normative reasons may generate corresponding genuine normative reasons.

While, in this example, the reason in question is a specifically moral reason which is owed to a duty of respect for the value of interpersonal relationships, a case can be built for thinking that the point of the example generalizes. Other, structurally similar cases which involve no interpersonal dimension and are less obviously morally charged come to mind. Thus, if you happen to conform to a legitimate rule or law despite acting recklessly with respect to it (e.g. deliberately doing what would violate the rule if things were as they seem to you) you are liable to a similar form of criticism. As in the case of Gerhard, the mistake for which you deserve criticism is made intelligibly by a duty of respect for the rule or law, where this respect is properly manifested not only by responding to relevant actual reasons you possess but also by responding to relevant merely apparent reasons. Given the rule's legitimacy, in having an apparent reason to  $\phi$  relative to this rule, you plausibly also have an actual reason to  $\phi$ . Moreover, supposing the legitimacy of a rule or law is (at least in part) a matter of conformity with constraints of justice<sup>36</sup>, this corresponding duty and, accordingly, the reasons it generates seem likewise to be (partially) grounded in value.

Relating these considerations to the focus of our discussion, one might see a parallel here with the kind of mistake we ascribe in calling someone irrational when they fail to heed apparent normative reasons (whether or not they are moral). In criticizing someone as irrational for failing to respond to strong purported evidence by forming the corresponding belief, say,

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<sup>36</sup> Such constraints plausibly do not only concern the results produced by adopting the rule or law but also the procedure by means of which it is adopted. Cf. Rawls (1996, 428).

we articulate a cognate form of agent-directed criticism: the charge of irrationality, much like the criticism levelled at those manifesting disrespect for relationships or rules, purports to be motivated by her failure to submit to a certain authority.<sup>37</sup> Note, further, that the type of explanation we give of the mistakes in the former two cases is available also in the present case. That is, the force of rational criticism can be made intelligible by supposing that actual normative reasons come with a duty of respect. For this to be plausible, we need not suppose that each and every normative reason generates a duty of respect of its own. Instead, taking our cue from the previous examples, we may exploit the more familiar idea that values demand respect. As it happens, we in fact find some resources for exploiting this idea by referring, once more, to the normative import of formal objects.<sup>38</sup>

Examining the standard candidates for formal objects, these can readily be found to be constituted either by (dis)value properties or by properties that are valuable. Thus, while goodness, danger and admirability are themselves thick (dis)value properties, truth is often thought to exemplify a thick (cognitive or epistemic) value. This opens up room for an account of formal objects as grounding corresponding norms of respect. As one might argue, formal objects qua (dis)valuable *merit* the corresponding response.<sup>39</sup> In line with the role of duties of respect in the previous examples, this account of formal objects makes available a congenial explanation of rational criticism on the following lines: whenever we fail to heed apparent reasons relevantly related to a formal object, we are violating a corresponding norm of respect.<sup>40</sup> Such failures comprise both failures to heed apparent exemplifications of formal objects as well as failures to respond accordingly to apparent facts or features suitably bearing on their exemplification (such as purported evidence of some truth or purported grounds of the goodness of some prospect). What accounts for the genuineness of the mistake committed in all of these cases is that, with the relevant norms being in place, such apparent reasons generate corresponding actual reasons: if we are to show adequate respect to the relevant values, we have

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<sup>37</sup> Arguably, the criticisms in the former two cases are charges of irrationality, too. I take it they are not *mere* charges of irrationality, though.

<sup>38</sup> Here I deviate from Sylvan, who defends duties of respect for normative reasons on the basis of considerations on domain-relative and overall blameworthiness. Cf. (2021, 3243). Sylvan, too, takes such duties to be grounded in value, though. Cf. (*ibid.*, 3152).

<sup>39</sup> In this connection, cf. also Hildebrand (1953, chapter 17) as well as Müller (2017) and Naar (2020) on emotion.

<sup>40</sup> One might doubt whether this proposal accommodates for duties of respect for all kinds of normative reasons. In particular, what about practical reasons? It seems to me that this strategy can be extended accordingly. Note that, plausibly, types of acts have formal objects, too. In this connection, cf. Naar (2020), Müller (*forthcoming*). A different way of defending duties of respect for practical reasons would exploit Sylvan's (2021, 3152) strategy. Cf. n. 38.

reason to avoid doing what would amount to failures to respond to them if the relevant appearances were actually indicative of their exemplification.<sup>41</sup>

As will be clear from these remarks, this strategy for vindicating the normativity of requirements to heed apparent reasons ultimately traces the deontic import of rationality to the authority of values. In this respect, it is committed to a substantive stance within current meta-normative theory, which requires some defense in its own right.<sup>42</sup> While further work is thus needed to show that this is ultimately the right way to proceed, the sketch that I have offered should provide some grounds for thinking that the prospects for vindicating the normativity of these requirements look comparatively better for theorists committed to this view of rationality requirements than they do for those committed to the common structuralist conception. If this is right, it follows that proponents of Constitutivism committed to this view find themselves at an advantage insofar as they wish to defend the essential normativity of attitudes *qua* conforming to those requirements. Thus, which of the two interpretations of Minimal Rationality we adopt might well make a considerable difference to the view of the nature of attitudes we ultimately end up with.

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<sup>41</sup> As far as I can see, the most plausible way of making explicit the idea of respect for values in this context implies that even in responding to reasons relevantly related to, but distinct from, the formal object, we are, at least indirectly, responding to the formal object, too. Compare: intuitively, if Gerhard had responded to the apparent reason not to accept the offer, he would thereby also have been responsive to the value of his relationship with his bandmates.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. also Sylvan (2021, 3152) on the axiological commitments of this strategy.

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