

# Is the *Enkratic* Principle a Requirement of Rationality?<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** In this paper I argue that the enkratic principle in its classic formulation may not be a requirement of rationality. The investigation of whether it is leads to some important methodological insights into the study of rationality. I also consider the possibility that we should consider rational requirements as a subset of a broader category of agential requirements.

**KEYWORDS:** John Broome – enkrasia – enkratic principle – rational requirements – rationality.

## 0. Introduction

There is a tradition in the philosophical literature that treats rationality, or at least part of rationality, as imposing requirements on the relations amongst our mental states. One part of this tradition is in particular con-

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cerned with consistency amongst the contents of the relevant mental states. As a basis for rational requirements, consistency looks like an attractive feature, especially when thinking about theoretical rationality and practical rationality as comprising separate islands of requirements. But at least some rational requirements that purport to link theoretical and practical rationality are not as obviously apt for explanation in terms of consistency.

One such requirement is the *enkratic* principle (EP). EP tells us that we are rationally required to intend to  $\phi$  whenever we believe that we ought to  $\phi$ . Pre-theoretically, EP holds much appeal. While familiar, the failure of individuals to act (or intend to act) as they believe that they ought is a persistent and disturbing aspect of human agency. On the view that rational requirements are consistency constraints on relations amongst the contents of an agent's mental states, the failure to satisfy EP will only be a rational defect if it turns out to be a form of inconsistency. Not all defects in agency are rational defects, or so I shall contend. Thus the question remains as to whether the failure to satisfy EP is a rational defect, or one of some other kind.<sup>2</sup>

In attempting to determine how to classify the defect of failing to conform to EP – as a rational defect or a defect of some other kind – it is tempting to rely on our intuitive judgements about what is rational and what is not. In many areas of practical philosophy, we give a certain priority to our intuitions and build our theories to fit them. Applied to theorising about rational requirements, we can identify two extremes in the relationship between intuitions and theories.

At one extreme, there is what one might call 'intuitionism'. Intuitionism about rational requirements relies, as its name suggests, on our intuitions to tell us which putative rational requirements are in fact rational requirements. At the other extreme there is what one might call 'algorithmic systematicity'. We develop an admissibility algorithm to tell us whether a relation amongst mental states is a requirement of rationality, and we designate it appropriately based on whatever features the algorithm takes into account.

Recent influential work by John Broome on EP takes a broadly intuitionistic approach, although he sees a kind of family resemblance amongst

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<sup>2</sup> The view that this is a rational failure is widespread and relates to the tradition of viewing *akrasia* as a rational failure. On EP as a positive rational requirement, see Broome (2013), Coates (2013), and Wedgwood (2007).

the requirements of rationality.<sup>3</sup> At the far opposite extreme, there is decision theory, in which rational requirements are based on a strong notion of logical or mathematical consistency. Under intuitionism, EP looks plausible to many philosophers, and I shall not challenge its pre-theoretical appeal.

The project of this paper is instead to explore how plausible it is to classify EP as a rational requirement, when we move towards the algorithmic end of the methodological spectrum and when we understand rationality as being principally concerned with consistency amongst an agent's mental states. In this sense, the paper offers a conceptual experiment, examining how well a particular methodological approach and a particular criterion for being a rational requirement can be squared with the common intuition that EP is a rational requirement.

This experiment, I shall argue, has three interesting consequences. The first is that EP cannot be generated from considerations of strict consistency. This is not a surprising consequence, but it does provide some insight into the limitations of treating rationality strictly in terms of consistency. The second consequence is that a widened notion of consistency can accommodate an EP-like requirement, but whether EP itself can be accommodated depends on exogenous theoretical commitments in action theory and the theory of normative reasons. The third conclusion is that we must be careful to remember that there is more to agency than rationality. Not all requirements of agency are rational requirements, and not all agential defects are rational defects.

## 1. The *enkratic* principle

The *enkratic* principle gets its name from John Broome (see Broome 2013), but it appears under a variety of other guises and came to central prominence in the work of A.C. Ewing.<sup>4</sup> There are also a number of va-

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<sup>3</sup> See Broome (2013) for a discussion of how rational requirements relate to a broad notion of coherence.

<sup>4</sup> Although there has of late been a revival of interest in the *enkratic* principle, there is an interesting literature on it dating back now over 50 years. See Dancy (1977), Ewing (1959), and Greenspan (1975) for some examples. In more recent literature, see Broome (2013), Skorupski (2010), and Wedgwood (2007).

riants of EP. We should distinguish between three versions of EP at the outset:<sup>5</sup>

- E1. Synchronic narrow-scope EP: You are, if you believe that you ought to  $\phi$ , rationally required to intend to  $\phi$ .
- EF1.  $\text{BO}\phi \rightarrow \text{RR}(\text{I}\phi)$

and

- E2. Synchronic wide-scope EP: You are under a rational requirement such that if you believe that you ought to  $\phi$ , then you intend to  $\phi$ .
- EF2.  $\text{RR}(\text{BO}\phi \rightarrow \text{I}\phi)$

and

- E3. Diachronic narrow-scope EP: You are required to intend to  $\phi$  at time  $t_2$  if you believe that you ought to  $\phi$  at time  $t_1$ .
- EF3.  $\text{B}_{t_1}\text{O}\phi \rightarrow \text{RR}(\text{I}_{t_2}\phi)$

E1 and E2 are synchronic rational requirements, and E3 is a diachronic rational requirement. In this paper, I shall be working with E2. Of course, philosophers who think that rational requirements in general are narrow scope and synchronic or who think that all requirements are diachronic may find this unsatisfactory. To them, I offer a brief apology.

This paper asks about EP's place as a rational requirement, where being a rational requirement is at least in part being a consistency requirement. Considerations of consistency are inadequate for producing interesting narrow-scope synchronic requirements. For very similar reasons, they are inadequate for generating interesting diachronic requirements.<sup>6</sup> So, I shall not evaluate EF1 or EF3 here.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Various qualifiers may be in order for each of these versions. I omit them to ease explication, as they do not affect the substance of the discussion in this paper. For an extensive discussion of further qualifiers, see Fink (2012).

<sup>6</sup> See Reisner (2009a) for a discussion why interesting diachronic requirements require more than consistency. Kolodny (2005) provides a good discussion of what beyond consistency is needed to generate interesting narrow-scope synchronic requirements. See Broome (2007) and Kolodny (2007) for more on the relationship between narrow scope synchronic requirements and diachronic rational requirements.

<sup>7</sup> See Broome (2007) for an in depth discussion of the difference between wide and narrow scope synchronic requirements.

It should also be noted that rational requirements in this paper are treated as sets of local judgements. It is tempting to think that a global judgement of an agent's rationality supervenes in a straightforward way on the satisfaction of all of her local rational requirements. The idea is roughly that  $A$  is fully rational if she has satisfied all of her local rational requirements. Alternatively,  $R$  is a local rational requirement for  $A$ , only if  $A$  is not fully rational unless she satisfies  $R$ . While such a relationship may hold between local and global rational requirements, none is assumed here.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Consistency and unity

To understand why the *enkritic* principle does not fit easily with other putative synchronic rational requirements, it will be helpful to consider two ways in which those other requirements count as consistency requirements. The first way is what I shall call 'strict consistency'. A requirement that can be explained by appeal to the consistency of the contents of the mental states that it governs, or by appeal to closure on the contents of those mental states, is a requirement that is explained by appeal to strict consistency. The second way is what I shall call 'unity', which I shall discuss in §3. This includes requirements that are not explained by appeals to strict consistency, but which might nonetheless be a type of requirement we mean to include in developing a consistency based theory of rationality.<sup>9</sup>

At least some practical and certainly many theoretical rational requirements may be apt for explanation or justification in terms of ensuring strict consistency amongst the contents of the relevant subsets of an agent's mental states. We can begin by considering the theoretical rational requirement not to hold contradictory beliefs (given here in its conditional form):

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<sup>8</sup> Some of the complexities of working out the relationship between local and global rational requirements are discussed by Cherniak (1986) and Fink (2012).

<sup>9</sup> I am taking it as an assumption that theories of rationality that might be said to pick up on a certain kind of psychological consistency are not presumed to be interested *per se* solely in strict logical or semantic consistency. If that were the presumption, then all rational requirements would have to be semantic consequences of the semantics of 'rationally required' and the attitudinal terms (and their contents). See Wedgwood (2007) for a discussion of this approach.

- T1. You are rationally required that (if you believe  $p$ , then you do not believe not  $p$ ).<sup>10</sup>  
 TF1.  $RR(Bp \rightarrow \neg B\neg p)$

This requirement preserves the consistency of the contents of a subset of an agent's beliefs. Consistency requirements can plausibly be generated for larger complexes of an agent's beliefs:

- T2. You are rationally required that (if you believe  $x$  and you believe if  $x$  then  $y$ , then you do not believe not  $y$ ).  
 TF2.  $RR\{[Bx \ \& \ B(x \rightarrow y)] \rightarrow \neg B\neg y\}$

This requirement ensures that the contents of a particular subset of an agent's beliefs are not logically inconsistent. It can be strengthened so that the contents satisfy *local closure*:<sup>11</sup>

- T2a. You are rationally required that (if you believe  $x$  and you believe if  $x$  then  $y$ , then you believe  $y$ ).  
 TF2a.  $RR\{[Bx \ \& \ B(x \rightarrow y)] \rightarrow By\}$

Closure requirements entail consistency requirements, but not *vice versa*. In both cases, one may explain the requirements by appealing in a general way to rationality's being concerned with the conformity of the contents of one's mental states to logic. Such are strict consistency requirements, whether they are grounded in consistency in the strictest sense or in closure.

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<sup>10</sup> This may be an idealised form of the requirements. Concerns about implausibility due to demandingness on cognitive resources lead many authors to add additional relevancy or interest constraints. These constraints are orthogonal to the discussion at hand and have been omitted to avoid complicating the requirements unhelpfully. For discussion of these constraints, see Broome (2013), Fink (2012), and Kolodny (2005).

<sup>11</sup> I am sceptical about closure requirements, at least for beliefs, because of concerns about demandingness. If there are closure requirements, I assume that they must be *local closure* requirements, which operate in a controlled way on the relevant subset of an agent's mental states. Spelling out how these requirements are localised is difficult to a degree that leads me to remain sceptical about their correctness. TR2a requires conformity only to *modus ponens* and is at least a candidate for being appropriately demanding.

At least some practical rational requirements are, or at least may be, explicable by an appeal to strict consistency. One example is the practical analogue of TF1:

- P1. You are rationally required that (if you intend to  $\phi$ , then you do not intend not to  $\phi$ ).
- PF1.  $RR(I\phi \rightarrow \neg I\neg\phi)$

Another is the instrumental principle, which in the simplified form presented here is an analogue of the theoretical *modus ponens* requirement:

- P2. You are rationally required that (if you intend to  $\phi$  and believe that  $\phi$  only if  $\psi$ , then you intend to  $\psi$ ).<sup>12</sup>
- PF2.  $RR\{[I\phi \ \& \ B(\phi \rightarrow \psi)] \rightarrow I\psi\}$

Although there are both beliefs and intentions in P2, the core requirement remains that their contents conform to *modus ponens*. It is important to note that recent work on the instrumental principle adds many constraints to PF2. For example, the believed necessary means must be an action that you take to be within your power to effect. It must also be an action, the results of which you do not believe will occur without your doing it. Indeed, other constraints may be appropriate, but once they are satisfied, it is relations amongst the contents of the states that ground the instrumental principle.<sup>13</sup>

There may also be probabilistic versions of both the practical and the theoretical rational requirements in the preceding examples, but I shall not attempt to set them out here. If there are genuine probabilistic requirements of rationality, then the underlying consistency norm will come from probability theory rather than classical logic.

Both the practical and the theoretical requirements set out above are justified or explained by an appeal to strict consistency (or some version of a closure principle). It is an implicit assumption of the schemata above that if any of the contents of the mental states in the requirements are norma-

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<sup>12</sup> Broome offers an elaborated form of this principle with many more constraints in place. See Broome (2013).

<sup>13</sup> This is discussed in Broome's earlier work on normative requirements. See Broome (2002).

tive, the fact that they are normative does no special work and need not be reflected explicitly in the formulation.

It is worth noting that, as with alethic modal formalisms, we give an explicit formal representation of deontic modal terms, because we think they do some load-bearing work and should be tracked in a way distinctive from their non-modal counterparts. This observation is at once obvious and important, when we come to evaluate putative rational requirements.

To make the point about alethic modals vivid, consider two uncontroversial claims:

$$\text{M1: } \Box P \rightarrow P$$

and

$$\text{M2: } P \rightarrow \Diamond P$$

I shall, idiosyncratically, call M1 and M2 ‘modal bridge principles’. By this I only mean that these are valid inferences from or to alethic modal propositions from or to non-modal propositions. The non-identity of the modal claims with the non-modal claims can be seen easily in that we deny M3 and M4, whereas removing the modal operators would yield tautologies:

$$\text{M3: } P \rightarrow \Box P$$

and

$$\text{M4: } \Diamond P \rightarrow P$$

Out of such modal bridge principles, we can build modal bridge rational requirements. One example will suffice:

$$\text{MR1: } \text{RR}(B\Box p \rightarrow \neg B\neg p)$$

I believe that this is a plausible rational requirement. A competent grasp of ‘necessarily’ requires this inference. It is logically<sup>14</sup> inconsistent to believe that necessarily  $p$  while also believing not  $p$ . The alethic modal rational requirement is generated the same way non-modal consistency requirements

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<sup>14</sup> It may be preferable to say ‘semantically inconsistent’, if modal logic is understood as giving a semantics for ‘necessity’.



are: by, in effect, grafting mental state operators onto the logic of a set of contents.

No such straightforward approach can be adopted in the case of deontic modals. Consider deontic versions of M1 and M2:

$$D1: \quad OP \rightarrow P$$

and

$$D2: \quad P \rightarrow \neg O\neg P$$

Neither D1 nor D2 are valid inferences. Consequently, we cannot explain any rational requirement merely by grafting appropriate mental states onto this set of contents and its logic. Importantly, D1 shares the contents of the mental states in EF2. If EF2 is to be counted a rational requirement, where rational requirements are broadly understood as consistency requirements, it will have to be on account of something other than what I have called 'strict consistency'.

There are no doubt many possible strategies for brining deontic modal inferences under the scope of rational requirements. One way, of course, is by intuition. Intuitively, many philosophers think, EP is a rational requirement. That may be the right way to do things. If, however, we want an algorithmic approach, and conditional on our having started with strict consistency as a criterion, we should look for the most conservative expansion of the admission criteria that we can. Excessive broadening of the admission criteria grows ever closer to intuitionism. I suggest something called 'unity' as a conservative, and not *prima facie* implausible, expansion on strict consistency.

### 3. Unity<sup>15</sup>

In this section, I shall look at a class of putative rational requirements that I shall call 'matching attitude requirements'. I shall argue that they are best understood as being grounded on the basis of *unity*, and that unity at

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<sup>15</sup> Much of the thought in this section originates from a discussion with Louis deRosset, who suggested to me looking at matching attitude requirements as a way of explicating EP.

least may be plausibly counted as part of what a consistency-based system of rational requirements is in fact trying to capture.

Matching attitude requirements (MARs) take the following form:

MAR: You are rationally required that: if you believe that you ought to have attitude *A* towards contents *C*, then you have attitude *A* towards contents *C*.

MARF:  $RR(BOA_c \rightarrow A_c)$

For example, it is rationally required of you that if you believe that you ought to fear the hungry tiger, then you fear the hungry tiger. These are matching attitude requirements, because the attitude within the scope of the ought is the same as the attitude that appears without a normative operator in the consequent.<sup>16</sup>

In the context of this paper, the question to ask about matching attitude requirements is why they are (or might be) requirements of rationality. The answer, I propose, is what I call 'unity'. This is perhaps not the best name for the phenomenon, but I lack a better one for it.

As agents who have the capacity to be responsive to perceived norms, we are able to couch our thought in both explicitly normative and explicitly descriptive terms. Thus, I can attribute certain descriptive states to myself: that I am afraid, for example. I can also make an evaluation about whether I am in fact as I ought to be – in this case, whether I ought to be afraid. Such judgements are, naturally, fallible, but without privileged access to the book of *oughts*, agents must rely on their self-ascriptions of normative requirements to decide whether they are in a correct or a defective state.

Consistency between one's normative beliefs, which are a form of normative self-ascription, and one's related attitudes constitutes a rationally successful unification of an agent's psychology. To make this point somewhat less gestural, consider an agent who sincerely utters, 'I believe that I ought to fear the tiger, but I do not fear the tiger'. It would be natural to hear such an utterance as an admission of a defect. It implies that by the agent's own lights, she is not as she ought to be.

It is not difficult to understand what an agent is saying in cases like this, and there is no logical inconsistency. The worry instead is of a kind of

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<sup>16</sup> Brunero (2013) discusses the impact of adopting something like MARs requirements. As he notes, MARs also follow from Kolodny's 'c+' and 'c-' requirements. See Kolodny (2005).

agential disunity. An agent's self-evaluation of correctness and her actual states do not match up. She has failed with respect to being guided by her normative beliefs, and thus she exhibits disunity in her theoretical reasoning about attitudes and in her actual state of being.

Disunity is a kind of inconsistency, although not the logical sort. I have no special argument that theorists who think that rational requirements stem from strict consistency must accept that some rational requirements also stem from considerations of unity. Indeed, I am not committed to the view that they must. Instead, I want again to emphasise that adding unity as a source of rational requirements is a conservative expansion on strict consistency. As far as it goes, it is a *prima facie* plausible and attractive way of generating bridge requirements between beliefs about how one ought to be and how one in fact is. Strict consistency alone secures for an agent the possibility of valid reasoning.<sup>17</sup> If one may employ, for example, two contradictory beliefs in one's theoretical reasoning, then one's reasoning could permissibly go anywhere. Two contradictory beliefs about necessary means to a given end would prevent instrumental practical reasoning from issuing the appropriate intention. Strict consistency based rational requirements, when conformed to, partially secure the possibility of a central agential activity: good reasoning.<sup>18</sup>

Unity serves something of the same kind of function. Agents need not merely act according to their inclinations, but instead are capable of reflective reasoning about what they ought to do. This kind of self-regarding normative reasoning involves a fallible self-ascription of a normative requirement, and failure to conform to it involves the implicit self-ascription of a defect. Thus, the man who believes that he ought to fear the tiger, but does not, implicitly regards himself as defective, as do we. It is tempting to classify this kind of defect as a rational error, because while not strictly paradoxical, there is a sense of tension between theoretical

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<sup>17</sup> And it only does so in quite a limited way, by avoiding reasoning that leads to logically invalid sets of mental states.

<sup>18</sup> It takes much more than consistency to fully secure the possibility of (good) reasoning. See Bratman (1999), Broome (2013), and Reisner (2009) for more discussion of reasoning.

commitment to a normative requirement and an attitudinal failure to make good on that normative commitment.<sup>19</sup>

Some philosophers worry about MARs. John Broome, for example, rejects them, as does Derek Parfit.<sup>20</sup> If we reject MARs, and unity, which generates them, as a consequence, then there is little hope for a non-*ad hoc* consistency based justification for EP in its current standard form, EF2. However, as unity is sufficient for generating a requirement that is similar to EF2,<sup>21</sup> it is worth considering – however briefly – why MARs may not be problematic as rational requirements. As a further point, although it can only be gestured at in passing here, it may prove difficult to argue against MARs without raising doubts about EF2 for reasons independent of one's account of consistency.

Worries about MARs typically arise because of the (debatably) non-pukka ways that one can form beliefs about which attitudes one ought to have. Suppose one accepts that there are state-given reasons for propositional attitudes, *i.e.* reasons for having a particular attitude that arise from incentives to have that attitude. State-given reasons stand in opposition to object-given reasons, which arise from the conceptual relation between an attitude type and its contents.<sup>22</sup> For example, suppose that Robert has been told by a billionaire that she will give him half of her fortune, if he fears that he will be eaten alive by a budgie. Robert consequently forms the belief that he ought to fear that he will be eaten alive by a budgie. It seems peculiar to think that on this basis, Robert has failed a requirement of ra-

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<sup>19</sup> Matching attitudinal requirements are wide-scope. The language in this section suggests some kind of priority is being placed on the belief that one ought to have a particular attitude towards *C*, but that is not in fact the case. One ceases to be disunified if one stops having the normative belief, and thus the wide-scope requirement may be satisfied either by negating the antecedent or affirming the consequent.

<sup>20</sup> See Broome (2013) and Parfit (2011).

<sup>21</sup> That is  $RR(BOI\phi \rightarrow I\phi)$ . See section §5.

<sup>22</sup> It has proven difficult to say just what an object-given reason is or just what relation obtains between an attitude type and its contents. A schematic way of understanding the relation is that it is the one of *fittingness*. If it is fitting for *A* to desire *p*, then *A* has an object-given reason to desire *p*. For a useful discussion, see Danielsson and Olson (2007) and also Piller (2006).

tionality by not fearing that he will be eaten alive by a small songbird, as that is an intuitively irrational seeming fear.<sup>23</sup>

Although the intuition in this example deserves respect, it does not tell against MARs *per se*. Like other rational requirements, MARs may be subject to certain restrictions. For example, consider any rational requirement, the consequent of which is an intention. For these requirements, one possible restriction is that one must at least not believe that one cannot carry out the intended action. And it is plausible that in the case of the instrumental principle, the requirement only applies to believed necessary means that an agent does not believe will obtain unless the agent takes action to cause them to obtain. For MARs, there may be a restriction on the basis upon which an agent comes to believe that she ought to have the relevant attitude. For example, a restriction could be added to the effect that if the agent believes that she ought to fear something solely because she has incentives to do so, then the requirement does not apply.

I am, nonetheless, sceptical that one need draw on such restrictions to defend the plausibility of MARs. When one has come to believe that one ought to fear something and does not or cannot fear it, there are several possible responses. I shall discuss two in particular.

One response is for the agent to reconsider whether she really ought to believe that she ought to fear *x*. There are requirements of theoretical rationality governing beliefs about which attitudes one ought to have and towards what. If state-given reasons are not reasons at all, or if they should not feature in grounding beliefs about which attitudes one ought to have, then what is rationally problematic about Robert is that he has come to believe at all that he ought to fear being eaten alive by a budgie. Nonetheless, given that he has that belief, the wide-scope MAR applies to him.

A parallel point may be made about EF2. One may have formed a belief about what one ought to do on insufficient or outright problematic grounds. An agent's background normative theory might be wrong, or even incoherent. Likewise, she may have systematically skewed empirical beliefs.

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<sup>23</sup> What ways of forming beliefs are *pukka* and which ones are not may depend on the background theory about reasons for having propositional attitudes. Morauta (2010) defends an entirely state-given reason account of reasons for intending and Booth (2012) does the same for belief. If views like Morauta's or Booth's are correct, then presumably there would be no rational defect evidenced by forming beliefs about what one ought to intend or believe in accordance with one's beliefs about one's state-given reasons for doing so.

The fact that one can arrive at beliefs about what one ought to do in strange ways is not a mark against EF2,<sup>24</sup> and it is not clear why it should be a mark against MARs.

Perhaps the difference between EF2 and MARs is supposed to be that, whereas one can voluntarily form an intention to do something that one believes that one ought to do, affective attitudes like fearing seem to arise spontaneously from one's beliefs and are not voluntary. Putting aside the question of whether one can will one's emotions or affective attitudes, it is certainly evident that there are indirect means of causing oneself to have certain attitudes. A hypnotist might be able to help Robert develop the fear that he will be eaten alive by budgies, or perhaps watching *The Birds* would be sufficient to have the same effect.

This brings out the second way of responding to worries about MARs. Wide-scope rational requirements govern material conditionals. A MAR would be satisfied if one believed that one ought to have attitude *A* towards contents *C* and also had attitude *A* towards content *C*. Unlike requirements of reasoning, which govern dynamic processes in which each sequential change in one's attitudes is grounded in one's prior attitudes, synchronic wide-scope requirements just specify acceptable combinations of mental states. Thus, while it might be difficult to fear being eaten alive by a budgie,<sup>25</sup> the fact that there is no immediate step in reasoning from believing that one ought to fear being eaten alive by a budgie to fearing being eaten alive by a budgie does not rule out the applicable MAR.<sup>26</sup>

And again, there is a parallel point to make for EF2. Sometimes one psychologically cannot form an intention to do what one believes that one ought to do. There may be many reasons for this. Jill may detest desiccated coconut, but she may also believe that her rare disease requires her to eat it in order for her to stay healthy. For her, too, it may take hypnosis, or a trip to the hospital to see what happens to those who do not eat their prescribed serving of desiccated coconut, to cause her to form the intention.

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<sup>24</sup> See Broome (2013) and Wedgwood (2007) for more discussion on this point.

<sup>25</sup> Or it might not be difficult to fear it. Perhaps a childhood trauma has led Robert to a lifelong fear that he will be eaten alive by budgies, and this happily eases his compliance with the MAR in question.

<sup>26</sup> Niko Kolodny disagrees. He argues that requirements of rationality and reasoning processes are conceptually linked. See Kolodny (2005; 2007). There is not space to take up his worries here. I argue against his view in Reisner (2009a).

Rather than the belief that she ought to eat desiccated coconut, it may be fear in the latter case that causes her to intend to eat it and hypnosis in the former, but she is still in compliance with EF2.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4. Unity and the enkritic principle

On the surface, unity looks like a promising explanation for EF2. It matches an action-related attitude, intention, with a normative belief about actions. However, in no strict sense is EF2 a matching attitude requirement. What we would need to explain EF2 would be something like unity and a rule that allowed unity to apply to requirements like EF2. In this section, I shall argue that such a rule looks *ad hoc*, although I shall say something about why it may in fact not be. More straightforwardly, I shall argue there is a nearby alternative to EF2 that can be explained on the basis of unity.

MARs match a normative belief about an attitude with the having of that attitude. Here is the general schema again:

MAR: You are rationally required that: if you believe that you ought to have attitude *A* towards contents *C*, then you have attitude *A* towards contents *C*.

MARF:  $RR(BOAc \rightarrow Ac)$

We can see that the same attitude appears both within the scope of the belief in the antecedent and on its own in the consequent. That EF2 is not a MAR is easy to see, because there is an intention in the consequent that does not appear within the scope of the belief in the antecedent:

EF2.  $RR(BO\phi \rightarrow I\phi)$

Something closer to a MAR could come in two forms:

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<sup>27</sup> An option that remains open to someone who wants to argue against MARs and for EF2 is to note that intentions may sometimes be formed voluntarily and directly, whereas other propositional attitudes may not. I am sceptical about arguments in rationality and normativity that rely on the difference between certain attitudes being voluntary and others not so. For more discussion in the specific case of belief, see Reisner (2009b) and Reisner (2013).

EF2a.  $RR(BO\phi \rightarrow \phi)$

and

EF2b.  $RR(BOI\phi \rightarrow I\phi)$

We may reject EF2a as a rational requirement on the view, assumed in much of the literature about this style of rational requirement, that rationality supervenes on the mental.<sup>28</sup> One may fail to perform an action for reasons having nothing to do with any mental failures. As an example, we may imagine someone who mistakenly, but consistently, believes that there are unicorns, and he is deceived into believing that a particular horse at the local stable with a narwhale horn glued to its forehead is in fact a unicorn. For whatever reasons, he forms the belief that he ought to ride a unicorn, and soon he canters off on the corned horse. The person in this example has, of course, failed to do what he believed that he ought to do, but this is not (or at least need not be) through any defect in his mental life. There simply are, unbeknownst to him, no unicorns, and thus he will certainly fail to do what he believes that he ought to. The failure here is not one of rationality, but of knowledge.

Since on the view considered here it is the price of entry for being a rational requirement that the *relata* of the requirement relation are mental states, only EF2 and EF2b are possible rational requirements. EF2 and EF2b are not logically inconsistent with each other. Whether EF2, EF2b, or both are rational requirements depends on whether we accept unity and certain restrictions thereon.

Let us consider a simple case for EF2's being the right version of the *enkratic* principle.<sup>29</sup> The story might go something like this. Intentions, like beliefs, are distinctive when we engage in reasoning about them in that they are transparent. They are transparent in the sense that first person reasoning about what to believe and what to intend has the character of being reasoning about the contents of the belief or the intention; ex-

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<sup>28</sup> As Christian Piller reminded me, the view that rational requirements also govern actions has a number of considerations in favour of it. See Anscombe (1957) for the modern *locus classicus* of this view. I am nonetheless persuaded that rationality does not govern actions.

<sup>29</sup> A much more elaborate case is made in Broome (2013).



plicit mention of the attitude itself is often otiose in the context of reasoning.<sup>30</sup>

Consider an example of reasoning that issues a belief and an example of reasoning that issues an action. I wonder whether it is raining out. I look out my window and see that the ground is wet and that ripples are forming in the puddles on the pavement. I consider that wet ground and ripples in puddles normally occur as a consequence of its raining out, and I say to myself 'It's raining'. At no point in the reasoning process do I use 'belief' or make any oblique reference to it. I just consider what is the case. In the case of intending, I might wonder whether I ought to go to the shops today, or if I ought to wait until tomorrow. I consider that the traffic will be more manageable tomorrow, once the weekend has started, so I say to myself 'I shall go to the shops tomorrow' or perhaps 'I ought to go to the shops tomorrow'. Here again, I need not make mention of my intention during any part of the reasoning process.

By way of contrast, when I consider whether to fear the tiger, I must either mention or make an oblique reference to 'fearing'. I consider that the tiger is likely to eat me if it is hungry, and that I cannot outrun it. I thus say to myself 'I ought to fear the tiger'. Substitute other attitudinal terms, and the story will be the same, whether for desiring, admiring, wishing, etc. Yet, reasoning about what to do does not directly yield an action, it yields an intention. Similarly, reasoning about what is the case does not yield some event in the world such that the conclusion of my reasoning must take hold.<sup>31</sup> Rather it results in a belief.

This observation about reasoning might be used to support EF2. We could adopt a rule that says something to the effect that when a particular kind of reasoning has a transparent conclusion, then the most closely associated rational requirement, if there is one at all, should take a belief or an intention as the *relatum* that has the transparently presented content. This rule might be used to explain why EP, specifically in the form of EF2, takes a different form to that of a MAR, but is still a rational requirement.

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<sup>30</sup> See Hieronymi (2005), Shah and Velleman (2006), and Broome (2013) for more on the transparency of belief and intention.

<sup>31</sup> To put this point another way, just because I represent the world to myself as being thus and so, it does not result in the world's being thus and so. Representing it that way just is having the belief.

We may again notice that EF2 is not a MAR because of its antecedent. The normative belief is about what to do (strictly speaking, it is about a first-person action proposition); it is not about what to intend. Thus, unity does not straightforwardly apply. An application of something like the unity principle for generating rational requirements would yield EF2a:

EF2a.  $RR(BO\phi \rightarrow \phi)$

Of course, EF2a is not a rational requirement, insofar as we accept, as I do, that rational requirements exclusively take mental states as their *relata*. The suggested rule for dealing with cases like these attempts to resolve this problem. The implied line of argument is something to the effect that when we form normative beliefs about what to do, we would like there to be a rational requirement connecting the normative belief and our satisfying it, just as there is for attitudes that must be explicitly mentioned when we reason about them. Given that this is not possible due to the mentalistic restriction on rationality, we should adopt a kind of saving rule that picks up the nearest action related mental state, *i.e.* an intention.

This line of reasoning, however, is *ad hoc*, and it is essentially a concession to our having to decide what is and is not a rational requirement, in marginal cases, by our intuitions. Indeed, beyond being *ad hoc*, it is *post hoc*. Adding the transparency rule in this context is a way of arriving at a particular intuitive outcome: having EF2 as a rational requirement under a consistency-based theory of rationality. While it is a rule, its connection to the notion of consistency or unity is at best unclear. Adopting transparency suggests the method of slackening our understanding of consistency until we get all the requirements from our theory that we want. This method is a more appropriate response to an inquiry with different starting assumptions: one that assumes that EF2 is a consistency-based rational requirement and that consistency must be understood in such a way as to generate EF2.

To get something like EP from unity, we would need a MAR, and we have one in the form of EF2b. EF2b inserts an intention within the scope of the normative belief:

EF2b.  $RR(BOI\phi \rightarrow I\phi)$

EF2b is a MAR, and someone who were to fail to conform to it would have the kind of self-ascription failure that unity describes. Because the *re-*

*latum* in the antecedent has an attitude within the scope of the ought, the requirement would be exactly parallel to the fear requirement. Nonetheless, we rarely see a requirement of this kind proposed.<sup>32</sup> In the next section, I shall consider whether EF2b is a rational requirement, while also considering the view that EF2, the classic form of the *enkratic* principle, is a requirement of a broader agential kind.

Before doing so, however, it is important to point out that under some restrictions, EF2b collapses into EF2.<sup>33</sup> Let us restrict the kind of reasons that feature in the belief that one ought to  $\phi$  to object-given reasons, *i.e.* those reasons that depend on the goodness of the intended action. This ensures that all reasons to intend are also reasons to do. Whenever you believe you ought to  $\phi$ , you have the same grounds for believing you ought to intend to  $\phi$ , as there are exactly the same reasons for both, and necessarily so. It would therefore be a self-ascription error to believe you ought to  $\phi$  and also fail to intend to  $\phi$ . Scanlon's view requires a stronger claim, namely that what it is to believe that you ought to intend to  $\phi$  just is to believe that you ought to  $\phi$ . This would make EF2b strictly equivalent to EF2. The outstanding question is whether there is a good reason to restrict the kind of reasons that feature in the belief that one ought to  $\phi$  to object-given reasons. I shall set this point aside briefly, before returning to it later in the next section. For now, it is interesting to note that there is one potentially non-*ad hoc* argumentative strategy for getting EF2 from unity: get EF2b as a MAR, and then conceptually restrict reasons for intending to  $\phi$  just to being reasons to  $\phi$ .

## 5. A rational requirement and an agential requirement?

In this section I want to consider two claims that may appear to be in tension with each other. The first is that there is a rational requirement in the neighbourhood of EF2, that is, in the neighbourhood of the classic *enkratic* principle, but that it is in fact EF2b. The second is that there is a good reason why we are interested in EF2, and that it is an important re-

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<sup>32</sup> See Marauta (2010) for a good discussion of the norms of intention that might support such a requirement. See Booth (2012) for a related discussion of belief.

<sup>33</sup> I thank John Broome for directing me towards this point, originally made in Scanlon (forthcoming).

quirement, although not a requirement of rationality. I consider the effects of adopting Scanlon's view that EF2 and EF2b are equivalent, which solves one puzzle and raises a second. I then consider a puzzle that arises, if they are not equivalent. Jointly, they should perhaps make us think about positing a second category of requirements: agential requirements.

Since I am proposing that we at least consider a kind of requirement-type multiplication project, it is a good idea to defend the need to multiply. It is important to explain why it is theoretically desirable, or more likely to be true, that EF2b is part of the pantheon of rational requirements, while EF2 belongs, or might belong, in a new category of requirements. Let us consider first the case for including EF2b amongst the rational requirements.

Suppose that I have the following beliefs:  $BOI\phi$  &  $B\neg O\phi$ . These beliefs are not logically inconsistent, and they do not entail any very strong conclusions on their own. Consider a toxin puzzle case.<sup>34</sup> I shall receive a reward for having a certain intention, but performing the action will be bad for me to a limited extent. One reasonable enough reaction to such a case is the thought that I ought to have the intention, but that there is no particular normative requirement that I carry out the action. This is consistent with my believing that it is permissible for me to carry out the action, so there is no general difficulty with my ability to form an intention, when I believe that it is not the case that I ought to carry out the corresponding action.

In such a case, I would be guilty of a self-ascription error, of violating unity, if I were not to form the intention to  $\phi$ . EF2 does not account for this case successfully,<sup>35</sup> but barring strong views about there being no state-given reasons for propositional attitudes,<sup>36</sup> it is difficult to see why having beliefs about what one ought to intend should not be just like having beliefs about what one ought to fear. Namely, by an agent's own lights, there is something wrong with her, if she fails to have the intention that she believes she ought to have. The only difference between EF2b and the fear

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<sup>34</sup> See Kavka (1983). In the toxin puzzle, you receive a prize for intending at a particular time, say midnight tonight, to drink a noxious, but otherwise safe, liquid the next day. You can keep the prize if you have the intention, even if you do not carry out the action.

<sup>35</sup> More specifically, EF2 is not violated because its antecedent is false.

<sup>36</sup> Indeed, this seems like the wrong place to be fighting such battles. I have defended the view elsewhere that there are state-given reasons for propositional attitudes. See Reisner (2009b). More directly on this topic, Morauta (2010) provides a compelling argument that all reasons for action are at bottom state-given reasons to intend.

requirement is that the  $A$ -place in the generic MAR schema is filled by an intention rather than a fear.

It is not at all clear that we are being parsimonious, *vis-à-vis* the total number of requirements, by leaving EF2 as a rational requirement. This is because we would still need a further rational requirement, namely EF2b, that accounts for this reaction to the toxin puzzle. We would then have two very similar rational requirements: EF2 and EF2b.

Now consider a stronger reaction to the toxin puzzle, one which at least some philosophers would endorse. One ought to intend to drink the toxin, but one ought not to drink it. We can attribute to someone with this view, who finds herself with a toxin offer, the following beliefs:  $BOI\phi$  &  $BO\neg\phi$ . If we accept EF2b and EF2, we get two competing rational requirements:

$$R1. \quad RR(BOI\phi \rightarrow I\phi)$$

and

$$R2. \quad RR(BO\neg\phi \rightarrow I\neg\phi)$$

And let us assume a third rational requirement:

$$R3. \quad RR\neg(I\phi \ \& \ I\neg\phi)$$

These three rational requirements cannot be jointly satisfied unless one gives up the belief in the antecedent of R1 or the belief in the antecedent of R2. But, it is unclear what is wrong with holding both of those beliefs. While certain substantive views about how to address the toxin puzzle or about there being no state-given reasons for propositional attitudes might tell against holding both beliefs jointly, those are substantive theoretical commitments that one would need to accept to do the job at hand. As I, for one, do not accept them, it seems unreasonable to me to use them as a basis for ruling out the rational permissibility of holding both the belief that one ought to intend to  $\phi$  and that one ought not to  $\phi$  (see Reisner 2009a).

As we are investigating a notion of rationality that is underpinned by consistency, we ought not to have rational requirements that cannot be jointly consistently satisfied without having to give up two very plausible beliefs that are logically and conceptually consistent with each other:<sup>37</sup> be-

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<sup>37</sup> This point could be fortified by claiming that someone who takes this stronger line on the toxin puzzle is rationally required to believe that he ought to intend to drink the

liefs about what one ought to intend, and do, in reaction to being presented with a toxin puzzle-like case.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, we will be forced to remove one of R1-R3 from the list of rational requirements. R3 is explained by strict consistency, and it should not be abandoned. R1, which is an instance of EF2b, is explained by unity. R2/EF2 is not *prima facie* well explained. In this circumstance, it is R2/EF2 that has the least firm grip on its position as a requirement of rationality. If it is a requirement at all, it looks to be a requirement of a different kind.

This is a straightforward thought that derives from the methodology being considered in this paper. We develop a set of criteria for admitting requirements to the pantheon of rational requirements, and EF2b meets it, while EF2 does not. An initial thought is that insofar as we adopt this methodology, we should be confident in saying that R2/EF2 is not a rational requirement. Instead, we should move it to a new category: agential requirements.<sup>39</sup> Agential requirements include all the rational requirements, but not all agential requirements are rational requirements.

However, on reflection, the toxin puzzle should lead us to proceed cautiously with recategorisation, at least based on the argument just given. This caution is due to concerns arising from action theory. One important aspect of the toxin puzzle is the question of whether or not one can win the prize on offer at all. The subject of the bet, call her 'Nina', knows that one need not drink the toxin to win the prize. Because of the time gap between when Nina is checked for having the relevant intention and when Nina would need to drink the toxin to carry out the intention, Nina can predict that she will not drink the toxin, there being no point to doing so. Many action theorists believe that not believing you will not do something is necessary for intending to do it,<sup>40</sup> and assuming that Nina is attentive to

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toxin, and that he is rationally required to believe that he ought not to drink the toxin. If this picture is correct, and I am unsure of whether it is, then the requirements of rationality would be formally inconsistent. For more discussion of the joint consistency of rational requirements, see Reisner (2009a).

<sup>38</sup> Note the strong similarity to Brunero's case of rational *akrasia*. See Brunero (2013).

<sup>39</sup> John Broome has pointed out to me difficulties with this approach that arise from considering the action-theoretic aspect of the toxin puzzle.

<sup>40</sup> See Bratman (1999) for an in depth discussion of the role of beliefs about what one can, and will, do and how they restrict intention.

her situation, it appears that she will not be able to win the prize. She will not believe that she will drink the toxin, and thus will not intend to.<sup>41</sup>

The severity of this problem hinges on there being a conceptual link between intending to  $\phi$  and believing that it is not the case that one will not  $\phi$ . Clearly, if this is the right view about intending and believing, it is a substantial concern for the puzzle set up by combining R1-R3, because the setup of the puzzle appears to make the MAR, EF2b, problematic, rather than EF2. The action-theoretic aspect of the toxin puzzle looks like the best argument for Scanlon's restriction on the contents of the normative belief in R1 and R2. We can get the prize in toxin cases only if we take our reasons to intend to be the same as our reasons to do.

If all these considerations add up, then we simply cannot make sense of R1 being a different requirement to R2, and there is no inconsistency.<sup>42</sup> However, it is difficult to tell, at least if we assume that there are state-given reasons, whether all the considerations do add up. Take the individual belief that there are incentives for me to intend to  $\phi$ . Suppose I have no view about whether I ought to  $\phi$ , because I have not thought about it. I could be subject to R1 without the toxin problem arising.

I shall not try to address this problem further here. If Scanlon's restriction holds, perhaps due to toxin style worries, then R1 and R2 can never come into conflict. If we do not accept Scanlon's restriction, then they can conflict. What should be noted in either case is that the truth in action theory and the theory of reasons matters for how we resolve the conflict amongst R1, R2, and R3.

If R1 and R2 do conflict, then it may make sense to move R2 into a new sphere of requirements, those of agency. Of course, agency is a fuzzy notion. At minimum, it is a way of understanding human (and some non-human) beings as having the capacity to act and think on the basis of reflective normative thought. In philosophy of mind, this is commonly asso-

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<sup>41</sup> In fact, it is likely not required that Nina be attentive to her situation on many views about intentions. On such views it is constitutive of being an intention that one not believe that one will not carry out the intended action. I am sceptical about this as a constitutive requirement on intending. I may believe that I will not do as I intend to do, because something usually gets in the way of me carrying out my intentions. Nonetheless, I may still intend it, or so it seems to me.

<sup>42</sup> At least if we take the equivalence of reasons/oughts to intend and reasons/oughts to do as conceptually identical, as Scanlon seems to. If they are conceptually distinct, but metaphysically identical, then EF2 does not collapse into EF2b.

ciated with there being mental-to-mental and mental-to-physical causation (see Kim 1996). Thinking can cause action, and thinking of a special sort, reaction to normative considerations, can do so in particular.

We need not make commitments of such a strong kind here, but rather make the thinner observation that agency importantly connects our thoughts about our proper place in the world with our interactions with the world. Requirements of rationality in particular reflect a distinctive pressure on rational agents to be internally consistent and responsive to such reflections as far as mental-to-mental relations are concerned. Our mental life leads to worldly action in a mediated way, through the state of intending; our judgements about what we ought to do only lead to our doing so under ordinary circumstances through the formation of intentions. To put it metaphorically, intentions are the doorstep to action.

Thus, it is important that our judgements about what we ought to do, so long as we believe that doing so is within our power, bring us to the doorstep of action – to the formation of an intention. Reasoning and thought have no other agential reach into the world but through that route.<sup>43</sup> Individuals who fail to connect their beliefs about what they ought to do with forming the intentions to do so are agentially deficient. Reasoning about what one ought to do stays as a theoretical, rather than a practical exercise for such individuals. Practical agency requires the connection. The classic version of the *enkratic* principle may or may not be a rational requirement under the method adopted in this paper. If it is not, it is because it cannot be explained by the distinctive appeal to consistency, understood to include unity. And, it can conflict problematically with a requirement, EF2b, that can be explained or justified in that way. It is, however, a plausible thing to require of an agent; our understanding of agency is partially rooted in the idea that normative thought can lead us to the doorstep of action. The pre-theoretical importance that we commonly assign to EF2 may be better, or at least equally well, explained by its role in setting the norms of well-functioning agency, rather than as a requirement of rationality *per se*.

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<sup>43</sup> Except in deviant cases where thoughts, or their neural correlates, cause changes in ways unmediated by action. For example, consider an fMRI. One might intend that the fMRI show as active that part of the brain that lights up when one has the intention for the fMRI to show that part of the brain as lit up.



## 6. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that EP, classically understood as EF2, may not be a plausible requirement of rationality under a particular, conservative method of generating rational requirements. I have offered an as yet sketchy case that it may belong to a broader class of agential requirements. There are questions that I have not answered. Part of the argument for moving EF2 to the broader class of agential requirements was based on its ability to come into conflict with EF2b in toxin puzzle cases. Whether it does so depends on contested views in the philosophy of action and on the nature of normative reasons for intending and acting. And, as I have tentatively suggested that rational requirements are also agential requirements, there is now a conflict at the agential level, rather than the rational one. How that conflict would be resolved remains to be seen.

Lest one worry that agential requirements come out of thin air, it is important to note that they ought not be very contentious, at least not to philosophers who want a consistency based notion of rationality. It is clear enough so as not to require argument that there is more to agency than consistency. At bare minimum, reasoning is certainly a part of agency, and it cannot be based on consistency alone, strict or otherwise (see Reisner 2009a). Affective responses to aesthetic considerations, artistic creativity, and our distinctive modes of interacting with others may also fall under the rubric of agency; if they do, then they, too, go far beyond consistency. To the extent that some ways of reasoning, certain responses to aesthetic considerations, and certain ways of interacting with others are agential and others are not, the features of our agency restrict how we live and how we are.<sup>44</sup> These restrictions are descriptive features of how agents can interact with the world. Restrictions that distinguish well-functioning from poorly functioning agency are requirements, agential requirements. We can expect as diverse a set of requirements as we might expect to find under the heading of agential requirements to conflict formally. A simple example was offered in §5 of how inconsistency might arise between EF2 and EF2b.

Agency as a source of requirements may allow for unresolved conflicts, or it may have the resources for ordering individual conflicting require-

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<sup>44</sup> Sufficient irrationality, arbitrary responses to one's environment, and radical discontinuities in one's mental life can diminish the degree to which a person is an agent and can even put her outside the scope of agency altogether.

ments, so that it is possible to be as agency requires overall. Spelling out in greater detail what agential requirements are, and whether they can conflict all-things-considered, is a project for another paper. At the same time, I think there is some reason to think that agential requirements admit of conflict. It is distinctive of rational requirements that they are derived from consistency. If they are distinctively the agential requirements that are so derived, this suggests that consistency may not be a necessary condition on the overall set of ordered agential requirements. Whether this is so remains to be seen.

Absent from this paper, too, is a discussion of the right method for determining the correct set of rational requirements. The right method may fall towards the intuitionistic end of the spectrum, or towards the algorithmic end. The right criteria may be different from consistency and unity, as far as they go, or they may be closely related to them – or even be them. While a discussion of the right method is absent, it has been an aim of this paper to show the importance of being explicit about method and criteria when developing a theory of rationality, insofar as rationality comprises a set of rational requirements. It has also been an aim of this paper to show that whether putative rational requirements are genuine rational requirements hinges not only on method and criteria, but also on exogenous considerations arising at least from action theory and the theory of reasons. In the specific case of EP, its status as a rational requirement is surprisingly contingent on what turn out to be the right method, right criteria, and right exogenous theories of action and reasons.

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