

## **Rationality, Coherence Requirements and Normativity: Some Recent Disputes in Metaethics and their Analogues in Epistemology**

A Slightly Less Ambitious Reading Schedule for Kurt's Group

---

(Key: \*\*\* = highly advised; \*\* = very useful and relevant, but quite optional, \* = important, but totally optional, or perhaps redundantly overlaps with other material; ☐ = on Sakai; ☞ = in binder in Seminary 3)

### Meeting 1: Origins of the Disputes on the Normativity of RRs and the Wide/Narrow Divide

☐ \*\*\* Korsgaard, Christine. 1997. "The Normativity of Instrumental Reason" in Cullity, G. and Gaut, Berys (eds.) Ethics and Practical Reason. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

☐ \*\*\* Scanlon, T. M. Ms. "Structural Irrationality."

☐ \*\*\* Parfit, Derek. 2001. "Rationality and Reasons" in Dan Egonsson, Björn Petterson & Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen (eds.) Exploring Practical Philosophy. Aldershot: Ashgate.

☐ \* Hill, Thomas. 1973. "The Hypothetical Imperative." *The Philosophical Review* 82: 429 – 450.

☐ \*\* Scanlon, T. M. 1998. What We Owe to Each Other, chapter 1. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

### Meeting 2: Origins and Kolodny and Raz against Robust Normativity and Wide-Scopism

☐ \*\*\* Broome, John. 1999. "Normative Requirements." *Ratio* 11: 398 - 419.

☐ \*\*\* Raz, Joseph. 2005a. "The Myth of Instrumental Rationality." *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 1.1: 1 - 28. [http://www.jesp.org/PDF/6863\\_Raz-vol-1-no-1-rev.pdf](http://www.jesp.org/PDF/6863_Raz-vol-1-no-1-rev.pdf)

☐ \*\*\*\* Kolodny, Niko. 2005. "Why Be Rational?" *Mind* 114: 509 - 63.

☐ \*\* Broome, John. 2007. "Wide or Narrow Scope?" *Mind* 116: 359 – 370.

☐ \*\* Kolodny, Niko. 2007. "State or Process Requirements?" *Mind* 116: 371 – 384.

### Meeting 3: The Grounding Problem: Pessimism and Pritchard-Neglecting Confusion

☐ \*\*\* Broome, John. 2008. "Is Rationality Normative?" *Disputatio* 11: 153 – 71.

☐ \*\*\* Hussain, Nadeem. Ms. "The Requirements of Rationality."

[http://www.stanford.edu/~hussain/StanfordPersonal/Online\\_Papers\\_files/HussainRequirementsv24.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/~hussain/StanfordPersonal/Online_Papers_files/HussainRequirementsv24.pdf)

☐ \*\*\* Southwood, Nick. 2008. "Vindicating the Normativity of Rationality." *Ethics* 119: 9 - 30.

☐ \*\* Pritchard, H. A. "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" *Mind* 81: 21 – 37.

### Meeting 4: Solutions to the GP -- Self-Governance, Self-Control, First-Person Authority

☐ \*\*\* Bratman, Michael. 2009. "Intention, Practical Rationality, and Self-Governance." *Ethics* 119: 411– 443.

☐ \*\*\* Southwood, Nick. 2008. "Vindicating the Normativity of Rationality." *Ethics* 119: 9 - 30.

☐ \*\*\* Buss, Sarah. Ms. "Norms of Rationality and the Superficial Unity of the Mind."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> This isn't up yet, since I'm waiting for Sarah to send me a revision of it. Once she's sent it to me, I'll post it on Sakai. If she doesn't send it to me before the meeting, don't worry about it.

### Meeting 5: Solutions to the GP -- Cognitivism, Externalism, Etc.

☞\*\*\* Wallace, R. J. 2001. "Normativity, Commitment and Instrumental Reason." *Philosopher's Imprint* 1: 1 – 26.

☞\*\*\* Setiya, Kieran. 2007. "Cognitivism about Instrumental Reason." *Ethics* 117: 649 – 673.

☞\* Bratman, M. 2009. "Setiya on Intention, Rationality and Reasons." *Analysis* 69: 510 – 521.

☞\* Setiya, Kieran. 2009. "Reply to Bratman and Smith." *Analysis* 69: 531 – 540.

☞\* Brunero, John. 2005. "Two Approaches to Instrumental Rationality and Belief Consistency." *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 1.1: abc – xyz.  
[http://www.jesp.org/PDF/016b\\_Brunero-vol-1-no-1.pdf](http://www.jesp.org/PDF/016b_Brunero-vol-1-no-1.pdf)

☞\*\*\* Lord, Errol. Ms. "Correctly Responding to Reasons and the Normativity of Rationality."  
[http://www.princeton.edu/~edlord/Site/papers\\_files/normativity%20of%20rationality.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/~edlord/Site/papers_files/normativity%20of%20rationality.pdf)

☞\*\*\* Jackson, Alex. Forthcoming. "Appearances, Rationality and Justified Belief."  
*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.

☞\*\* Way, Jonathan. 2010. "Defending the Wide-Scope Approach to Instrumental Reason."  
*Philosophical Studies* 147: 213 – 233.

### Meeting 6: Problems for Wide-Scopism -- Bootstrapping, Asymmetry, Normativity *Bootstrapping* (we'll read only very small parts of these articles):

☞\*\*\* Raz, Joseph. 2005. "The Myth of Instrumental Rationality." *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 1.1: 1 - 28. [http://www.jesp.org/PDF/6863\\_Raz-vol-1-no-1-rev.pdf](http://www.jesp.org/PDF/6863_Raz-vol-1-no-1-rev.pdf)

☞\*\*\* Setiya, Kieran. 2007. "Cognitivism about Instrumental Reason." *Ethics* 117: 649 – 673.

☞\*\*\* Schroeder, Mark. 2009. "Means-Ends Coherence, Stringency, and Subjective Reasons."  
*Philosophical Studies* 143: 223 - 248.

#### *Asymmetry* (ditto):

☞\*\*\* Schroeder, Mark. 2004. "The Scope of Instrumental Reason." *Phil. Perspectives* 18: 337 – 364.

#### *Normativity* (we'll actually read most of this):

☞\*\*\* Kolodny, Niko. 2008a. "How Does Coherence Matter?" *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 107:1: 229 – 263.

#### *Other material on these topics:*

☞\*\* Kolodny, Niko. 2008b. "The Myth of Practical Consistency." *European Journal of Philosophy* 16:3: 366 – 402.

☞\*\* Kolodny, Niko. 2008c. "Why Be Disposed to Be Coherent?" *Ethics* 118:3 (2008): 437 – 463.

☞\* Greenspan, P. S. 1975. "Conditional Oughts and Hypothetical Imperatives." *The Journal of Philosophy* 72: 259 – 276.

☞\* Klein, Peter. 1985. "The Virtues of Inconsistency." *The Monist* 68.1: 105 - 135.

### Meeting 7: Sophisticated Versions of Narrow-Scopism and Problems for Narrow-Scopism *Sophisticated Theories and their Problems: Transparency and Subjective Reasons*

☞\*\*\* Kolodny, Niko. 2005. "Why Be Rational?" *Mind* 114: 509 - 63.

- ☐\*\*Bridges, Jason. 2009. "Rationality, Normativity, and Transparency." *Mind* 118: 353 - 367.
- ☐\*\* Kolodny, Niko. 2009. "Reply to Bridges." *Mind* 118: 370 – 376.

- ☐\*\*\* Schroeder, Mark. 2009. "Means-Ends Coherence, Stringency, and Subjective Reasons." *Philosophical Studies* 143: 223 - 248.
- ☐\*\*\* Way, Jonathan. 2009. "Two Accounts of the Normativity of Rationality." *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 4.2: 1 – 8.  
<http://www.jesp.org/articles/download/TwoAccountsOfTheNormativityOfRationality.pdf>
- ☐\*\* Lord, Errol. Ms. "Correctly Responding to Reasons and the Normativity of Rationality."  
[http://www.princeton.edu/~edlord/Site/papers\\_files/normativity%20of%20rationality.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/~edlord/Site/papers_files/normativity%20of%20rationality.pdf)

*Against Kolodny's Arguments for Narrow-Scopism*

- ☐\*\*\* Brunero, John. 2010. "The Scope of Rational Requirements." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 60: 28 – 49.

Meeting 8: Are All RRs Coherence Requirements? How Broad a Notion is Coherence? Pt.1

- ☐ \*\*\* Darwall, Stephen. 1983. Impartial Reason, chapters 4, 5 and 8.
- ☐ \*\*\* Parfit, Derek. 1984. Reasons and Persons, chapter 6, sections 45 - 47. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ☐\*\*\* Korsgaard, Christine. 1986. "Skepticism about Practical Reason." *J. Phil.* 83.1: 5 - 25.

Meeting 9: Are All RRs Coherence Requirements? How Broad a Notion is Coherence? Pt.2

- ☐\*\*\* Wallace, R. J. 1990. "How to Argue about Practical Reason." *Mind* 99: 355 - 385.
- ☐\*\*\* Wallace, R. J. 1999. "Three Conceptions of Rational Agency." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 2: 217 - 242.
- ☐\*\* Smith, Michael. 2004b. "Humean Rationality" in The Oxford Handbook of Rationality. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Meeting 10: Are All RRs Coherence Requirements? How Inclusive is Coherence? Pt.3

*Smith's Old Takes: Rationality and Coherence Can Do a Lot for You*

- ☐\*\*\* Smith, Michael. 1995a. "Internal Reasons." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55.1: 109 - 131.
- ☐ \*\*\* Smith, Michael. 1995b. The Moral Problem, chapter 6.
- ☐\*\*\* Smith, Michael. 2004d. "In Defense of The Moral Problem: A Reply to Brink, Copp and Sayre-McCord" in Ethics and the A Priori. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ☐ \*\* Markovits, Julia. Ms. "How to Be an Internalist?"
- ☐ \*\* Markovits, Julia. Dissertation. Kantian Internalism, selections.

*Smith's Middle Period*

- ☐ \* Smith, Michael. 2004a. "Ethics and the A Priori: A Modern Parable" in Ethics and the A Priori. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ☐\* Smith, Michael. 2004c. "The Incoherence Argument: Reply to Schafer-Landau" in Ethics and the A Priori. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ☐ \* Smith, Michael. 2004d. "Internalism's Wheel" in Ethics and the A Priori. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### Meeting 11: Are All RRs Coherence Requirements? How Broad is Coherence? Pt.4

*Smith's New Takes and his Constitutivism*

☞\*\*\* Smith, Michael. Ms. "Beyond the Error Theory."

☞\*\*\* Smith, Michael. 2009. "Desires, Values, Reasons, and the Dualism of Practical Reason."  
*Ratio* 22: 98-125.

*Parfit against Subjectivism and his Contempt for Smith's Proposals; Sobel against Parfit; Deep Thoughts*

☞\*\*\* Parfit, Derek. Ms. On What Matters, chs. 3 - 4, 24

☞\*\*\* Sobel, David. Ms. "Parfit's Case against Subjectivism."

[http://mywebspaces.wisc.edu/shaferlandau/web/metaethics/workshop\\_2009/Papers/Sobel.pdf](http://mywebspaces.wisc.edu/shaferlandau/web/metaethics/workshop_2009/Papers/Sobel.pdf)

### Meeting 12: Is Rationality an Evaluative Concept or a Normative Concept or Both?

☞\*\*\* Parfit, Derek. Ms. On What Matters, chapter 5.

☞\*\*\* Dancy, Jonathan. 2003. Practical Reality, chapter 3. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

☞\*\*\* Gert, Joshua. 2004. Brute Rationality, ch.7. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

☞\*\*\* Kolodny, Niko. 2005. "Why Be Rational?" *Mind* 114: 509 - 63; selections.

\* TBA: other material.<sup>2</sup>

### Meeting 13: Are There Several Concepts of Rationality? Are the Disputes Terminological?

A lot of readings from The Oxford Handbook of Rationality. Definitely the following:

☞\*\*\* Hooker, B. and Streumer, B. "Procedural and Substantive Practical Rationality."

☞\*\*\* Drier, J. "Decision Theory and Morality."

☞\*\*\* McClellan, E. "The Rationality of Being Guided by Rules."

Here I might also simply write something of my own and improvise. Very little has been written explicitly on this topic, though there are obviously plenty of wide-ranging uses of "rational" in the literature that might encourage a positive answer to both of the questions. I'm not so sure that this is the right conclusion to draw. Indeed, I'm inclined to think that no substantive notion deserves the title of rationality. Even so, though, I think that there are still several importantly different ways in which we might understand what it is for a person to be procedurally rational. So, even if it's granted that rationality must be procedural, I still think the title questions are important, and I think have a lot to say about the appropriately restricted versions of them.

(I suspect that Sepielli has strong, interesting views about this topic, given his fascination with "taxonomy". I'll have to ask him if he's written anything of relevance that we could read.)

### Meeting 14: The Perspective on Rationality Coming from Decision Theory

☞Material TBA. But there will certainly be selections from Jeffrey's Logic of Decision.

### Meeting 15: Rationality and Boundaries between Formal and Traditional Epistemology I

Material mostly TBA. But I'd like to discuss the following.

☞\*\*\* Jeffrey, Richard. 1965. The Logic of Decision, chs.11 - 12.

☞\*\*\* Jeffrey, Richard. 1970. "Dracula meets Wolfman: Acceptance vs. Rational Belief" in Swain, M. (ed.) Induction, Acceptance and Rational Belief. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.

---

<sup>2</sup> Here and elsewhere, announcements will be posted on Sakai when the TBA gets converted into some definite piece of reading.

☞\*\*\* Levi, Isaac. 1970. "Probability and Evidence" in Swain, M. (ed.) Induction, Acceptance and Rational Belief. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.

📖\*\*\* Field, Hartry. 1978. "A Note on Jeffrey Conditionalization." *Philosophy of Science* 45.3: 361 - 367.

📖\*\*\* Christensen, David. 1992. "Confirmational Holism and Bayesian Epistemology." *Philosophy of Science* 59.4: 540 - 557.

\*\*\* Christensen, David. 2004. Putting Logic in its Place. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

📖\*\*\* Weisberg, Jonathan. 2009. "Commutativity or Holism? A Dilemma for Conditionalizers." *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 60.4: 793 - 812.

📖\*\*\* Weisberg, Jonathan. Forthcoming. "Varieties of Bayesianism", part 3. <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/~weisber3/docs/Varietiesv3.pdf>

### Meeting 16: Rationality and Boundaries between Formal and Traditional Epistemology II

This will be a continuation of whatever we don't cover from the previous meeting. I think I'd also like to do some discussion of Dutch book arguments, but viewing them mostly from the perspective of the Kolodny/Broome debate. I think there are interesting new thoughts to be developed about the normativity of more precise formal requirements like various forms of conditionalization that flow from attempts to justify them *via* practical considerations in just the way in which Dutch book arguments try to do. So, though this material is very familiar, the way in which we're going to be approaching it will be very unfamiliar, at least to those in the formal epistemology coterie. So much the better, I say.

### Meeting 17: What is the Link between RRs and Reasoning?

I'm interested in the following question:

Q: Is a response to a conflict of attitudes an act of compliance with a RR *only if* it qualifies as a piece of \*reasoning\*?

"Reasoning" in Q isn't assumed to be some high-level, person-level, occurrent process; it could be some pretty low-level, subpersonal computational process. I think it's a mistake for people to answer questions like Q by presupposing an overly strong picture of reasoning.<sup>3</sup>

Kolodny and others (e.g., Hussain) favor positive responses to Q. To my knowledge, little has been written that gives a negative take on Q. For my part, I think the answer to Q is "no". So, I'll probably just improvise in this part of the group or write something up in which I argue for a negative answer to Q. This is certainly an important task, since Kolodny's assumption that Q

---

<sup>3</sup> And I'd generalize this point. It is a general mistake to object to views that claim that some sort of inference or reasoning is in play by presupposing an implausibly strong picture of inference or reasoning. One sees this mistake in epistemology a lot when people object to foundationalist theories as follows: "Theory T claims that beliefs of class C are inferentially justified if justified at all. But (i) it is obvious that these beliefs are justified, and (ii) obvious that virtually no one performs any explicit reasoning in arriving at these beliefs. Therefore, T is false." The inference from (i) and (ii) to the conclusion presupposes that T presupposes a strong picture of inference. This is a mistake, because any half-subtle foundationalist will cash out inferential justification in terms of \*basing relations\*, and \*not\* in terms of \*explicit, conscious inference\*, where basing relations can come to hold in virtue of low-level, subpersonal, but still cognitive processes. Mistakes like this also show up in critical discussions of Fodor's paradox of radical nativism. In Fodor's LOT1 argument, he appeals to the premise that concept learning is a species of hypothesis confirmation. Now, if that's read in some occurrent, high-level way, it's obviously false. But it is a mistake to dismiss Fodor's argument on this basis, because there is a weakened version of that premise that can play essentially the same role in the argument.

must have a positive answer (at least for “process requirements”) is absolutely essential for some of his main arguments for narrow-scopism. So, we’ll revisit him and I’ll try to undermine these arguments. If I find any other literature on Q, we’ll read it.