Practical reasoning and enkrasia

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Abstract

Enkrasia is an ideal of rational agency that states there is an internal and necessary link between making a normative judgement, and forming an intention to act according to that judgement. Against this view, I argue that enkrasia does not require the formation of new intentional states; instead, it requires that the agent’s intentions do not contravene her normative judgements. The main argument for considering that an intention ought to follow from a normative judgement is the claim that the conclusion of practical reasoning is an intention. My aim is to show that this account is mistaken: practical reasoning aims at justifying certain action or intention, and thus its conclusion is a normative judgement. It might be argued, though, that an intention ought to follow from our normative judgements, because of certain requirements affecting not only practical reasoning, but rational agency. I argue that this conception of enkrasia is too demanding, and that it is based on a misconception on the difference between a negative intention and the lack of any intentional state. Enkrasia, I suggest, is better understood as a restriction over our (actual) intentions: they ought not enter into conflict with our judgements.

Introduction

The enkratic requirement has received increasing attention in the recent debates on the normativity of rationality. This requirement states that, in order to be rational, there must be an appropriate relation between one’s normative judgements and intentions. There are many ways to formulate a requirement that relates judgements and intentions. However, most of the accounts are committed to some version of normative judgement internalism (NJI), which claims that rationality requires an intentional state to follow from a practical judgement of the agent. This is, if an agent believes that she ought to φ, then she is rationally required to intend to φ. In Section I, I examine wide and narrow-scoped formulations of the enkratic requirement that endorse the NJI approach. This conception of enkrasia is is justified by the assumption that the conclusion of practical reasoning is an intention, inferred from certain premises, which can be intentions or normative judgements. Section II criticises this assumption, through arguing that it confuses three different processes: practical reasoning, theoretical reasoning, and rational agency. I will argue that the difference between theoretical and practical reasoning is not that the latter concludes in an intentional state, but that they aim at different tasks: describing and
justifying. The conclusion of practical reasoning is a normative judgement; the process of forming new intentions, whether guided or not by normative judgements, is a matter of rational agency. I agree with judgement internalism in that intentions are rationally constrained by normative judgements; in Section III, I will present a formulation of the enkratic requirement. Enkasia would thus be a requirement of rationality over the agent’s practical agency, and not over her practical reasoning. Particularly, enkasia would be better described as a restriction: rationality requires that I do not intend to do $\phi$ and, at the same time, I believe I ought not to do $\phi$. I will also examine two further requirements of rationality: resolve and means-end coherence. The last section is devoted to the scope of the rational requirements I have presented, and a narrow-scope formulation of the requirements will be offered.

I. The enkratic requirement

Normative requirements have been the focus of recent debate on rationality and rational agency. Following the precepts of rationality is what makes action rational. Therefore, offering a correct formulation of these requirements is a central task for the philosophical discussion on rationality. Although there is a wide agreement in that there is a normative relation amongst the agent’s attitudes, the formulation of the requirements that express this relation correctly is controversial. The main point of disagreement concerns the problem of whether the normativity of these requirements is directional, this is, that holding certain mental attitudes makes it the case that another mental state ought to be hold (narrow-scope approaches), or on the contrary, the requirement only requires overall consistency over those attitudes (wide-scope) (the main views can be found in Broome 1999; 2007; Kolodny 2005; Setiya 2007; Brunero 2010; Way 2010). I will leave this controversy aside for now, and return to it later.

Now, what these two conceptions of rational requirements have in common is that they both assume that there is an internal and necessary connection between one’s normative judgements and one’s intentions. Particularly, normative judgement internalism (NJI) defends that rationality requires that an agent intends to do, or at least has a general disposition to intend to do, everything that she believes she ought to do (Wedgwood 2007, 27–8). Also within the scope of NJI, Broome (2010) suggests the following formulation of enkasia: It requires of the agent to intend to $\phi$ at time $t$ if (1) she believes at $t$ that she herself ought to $\phi$, (2) she believes at $t$ that, if she herself were then to intend to $\phi$, because of that, she would $\phi$, and (3) she believes at $t$ that, if she herself were not then to intend to $\phi$, because of that, she would not $\phi$. Clauses (2) and (3), Broome says, mean that it is up to the agent whether or not to $\phi$. Following Broome, the role of enkasia would be to make the results of deliberation practical, so beliefs about what the agent should do and her intentions to do it are connected. Thus, the two alternative formulations of the enkastic requirement would go as follows:

NARROW-SCOPE ENKRASIA: If you believe that you ought to $\phi$, then you are rationally required to intend to $\phi$.
WIDE-SCOPE ENKRASIA: Rationality requires that [if you believe that you ought to $\phi$, then you intend to $\phi$].
Narrow and wide-scope formulations have been the target of different critiques; I will discuss the scope of requirements in the last section of this paper. I need to make a clarification before, though. My aim here is to argue that judging that one ought to \( \varphi \) does not require to form any intention—although it is irrational to hold an intention that contravenes one’s judgements. Wide-scope accounts seem less threatened by this claim than narrow-scope formulations: I am denying the correctness of the narrow scope formulation of enkrasia as stated above. However, it could be argued that wide-scope formulations are still correct: if I believe I ought to \( \varphi \) and do not intend to \( \varphi \), I can change my judgement and still be rational. This misleads the aim of my argument: belief change is subject to other requirements of theoretical rationality, and I will not discuss them here. Thus, my aim is not to criticise the narrow-scope formulation of the enkratic requirement, but to argue that the link between normative judgements and intentions is not as straightforward as NJI defends.

NJIS may have different justifications. One of them, which is widely assumed, is that the conclusion of a practical reasoning process is an intention (Brandom 1998; Broome 2001; 2002; Stroud 2003).\(^1\). Of course, if we accept that practical reasoning consists in making an inferential move from certain premises (reasons or normative judgements) to certain conclusion that is rationally required by these premises (an intention), then NJI seems to be correct. Practical reasoning, under this conception, can take the form either of instrumental or normative reasoning. Instrumental reasoning takes intentions and beliefs as premises, and concludes in an intention:

- **Premise 1:** (I) I am going to leave the next buoy to starboard.
- **Premise 2:** (B) In order to leave the next buoy to starboard, I must tack,
- **Conclusion:** (I) I shall tack.

This example, taken from Broome (2001, 176), represents a piece of instrumental practical reasoning. He also offers the following case as an example of normative practical reasoning, which moves form a normative belief to an intention:

- **Premise 1:** (B) I ought to tack.
- **Conclusion:** (I) I shall tack.

The difference between them is that while instrumental reasoning moves from intentions and beliefs towards intentions, normative reasoning moves from a normative belief towards concluding an intention. Thus, in both cases, the agent concludes practical reasoning with the formation of an intention.

I will argue in the next section that this claim is false: the conclusion of practical reasoning is not an intention, but a normative judgement. Moving from a normative judgement, or from the fact that we intend to do something, to an intention is instead a matter of rational agency. An agent might be irrational for holding inconsistent intentions and normative beliefs, but this irrationality does not entail a failure in her reasoning process. Next section is devoted to defend this claim.

\(^1\) Other authors argue that the conclusion of practical reasoning is an action (see Dancy 2004; Tenenbaum 2007), or either an intention or an action (Walton 1990; Alvarez 2010). For an overview of the problem, see Streumer (2010).
Nevertheless, even if I succeeded in showing that practical reasoning does not conclude in an intention, it might be well possible that NJI is correct. After all, there may be other justifications of NJI. For example, it may be the case that NJI is the right way to connect practical reasoning and rational agency. Against this possibility, I will argue that NJI is far too demanding as a requirement (section III), so it makes irrational certain agents that are usually considered rational. I will instead suggest a formulation of enkrasia based on its restrictive (rather than requiring) nature.

II. Theoretical and practical reasoning

The distinction between theoretical and practical reasoning is quite intuitive and vague. On the one hand, practical reasoning has to do with actions, with what we will, or should do. On the other hand, theoretical reasoning concerns an appropriate relation amongst beliefs.

In his discussion of the two kinds of practical reasoning mentioned above (instrumental and normative), Broome argues that, if we reason about what other person will do, given her intentions and beliefs, we face theoretical reasoning, for the conclusion is a belief:

- Premise 1: (B) Leslie will leave the next buoy to starboard.
- Premise 2: (B) In order to leave the next buoy to starboard, Leslie must tack.
- Conclusion: (B) Leslie will tack.

I fully agree with Broome in that this is a piece of theoretical reasoning, taking two premises as evidence for believing that Leslie will, in fact, tack. But this is not because of the nature of the conclusion (a belief). This is so because this piece of reasoning aims to know how things stand. It is a descriptive statement. On the contrary, the conclusion of practical reasoning does not aim to describe how things stand; it rather aims to justify an action, a goal, or other fact or attitude.

Thus, the conclusion of practical reasoning is a belief, and not an intention, neither an action:

We must distinguish between the conclusion of a practical argument, which I take to be a proposition, and what corresponds to it in [the subject]'s reasoning: concluding that reasoning, by inferring the conclusion from the premises. Typically, the conclusion will be the kind of proposition we think of as a practical judgment, and the concluding of the reasoning with that judgment will be an instance of judging that the action in question is, say, the thing to do.  

Practical judgements are belief about what we, or other people, ought to do. Certain facts, which are believed to be the case by the reasoner, justify or require an action: they make it correct, or appropriate.

Of course, the fact that we have certain goal, that we intend to perform an action, or the fact that we desire certain state of affairs to be achieved, can be used as premises; but, in every case, the inference in which practical reasoning consists moves from certain proposition to another: a practical judgement that expresses a normative belief. I will now suggest two arguments that support this thesis.

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2 Audi 2006, 68.
Second and third-person practical reasoning

First, although practical reasoning is directed towards action, it is not necessarily one’s own action; I can deliberate about what you should do, and judge that you ought to φ. Theories defending that the conclusion of practical reasoning is an intention, or an action, consider this form of reasoning theoretical. I find this misleading, for the kind of inferences that one makes when deliberating about what one should do are essentially the same to those made when deliberating about what a team, or someone else, should do. It can be argued that one has no agential authority over someone else’s actions; this is, that I can deliberate about what you should do given my policies, deliberative commitments, values and so on. But this poses no problem to the thesis that the conclusion of practical reasoning is a normative belief. The difference lies in that the conclusion of my reasoning exerts no control over your choices, nor you are rationally required to form the intention to do what I judge you should do. These two bonds (control and normative requirements) between deliberation and choice do not belong to practical reasoning, but to a broader picture of rational agency.

It can be argued that, when reasoning about what someone else should do, we are in fact engaging in a theoretical reasoning process. For example, Álvarez argues that “practical reasoning presupposes a goal in the person who engages in the reasoning, which is precisely the thing wanted and what gives the point of the reasoning and of the action to which the reasoning leads”; however, she adds: “Unless, that is, one is just reflecting on how practical reasoning works, or reasoning on someone else’s behalf, as a detective might when trying to guess how someone might have acted” (Alvarez 2010, 367). I believe that these two exceptions (exploratory reasoning and second-person reasoning) make it difficult to require practical reasoning to be driven by an agent’s goal. I agree in that practical reasoning is usually prompted in situations in which the agent faces a choice, or intends a goal; my point is that this is not necessarily the case, because being driven by a goal is not necessary for engaging in practical reasoning.

Second-person (or third-person) practical reasoning is prompted, amongst other situations, by situations in which an agent asks for advice, or that the deliberative agent wants to give some advice to someone else. Imagine, for instance, that a father advises his son: “Son, you should study law rather than philosophy; I have evaluated all the reasons you gave me, even under the lights of your own standards, but I do not see how they overcome the hunger you will experience as a philosopher”. The reasoning this father has done regarding his son’s academic future is very similar to the one he would have done when assessing whether to study philosophy himself. The difference between first and second-personal practical reasoning lies in (1) the amount of information available for each agent, and (2) the evaluation mechanisms used to assess the reasons for and against studying philosophy or law. Although, as Andreou (2006) argues, judgements about what an agent ought to do can be made from within the deliberative agent’s (the adviser) standards and values, or within the advisee standards and values; thus, the difference stated in (2) is not always the case.

Lastly, there is a kind of practical reasoning that is related to second and third-person reasoning.
Exploratory reasoning, which may be theoretical or practical, uses hypothetical facts as premises. For instance, I can deliberate about what I ought to do in certain scenarios that are not the case. Let’s take the following piece of practical reasoning: “What would I do if my building was being overrun by zombies? I think that, given my poor shooting skills, and my actual lack of guns, I should try to escape through the flat roof”. This is a piece of practical reasoning which I take to be correct. However, I do not believe that I am required to form the conditional intention to escape through my flat roof in case of a zombie invasion. Conditional intentions entail volitional commitments; however, they delegate the control of the goal (which, in this example, would be to survive a zombie attack) to “anticipated situational cues, which (when actually encountered) elicit these responses automatically” (Gollwitzer 1999).

In sum, the reasoning process in which I engage when considering what I ought to do is structurally similar to those reasoning process considering what someone else ought to do. I do not see why to considering these two instances of reasoning as being of a different kind.

Negative conclusion

Second, it is possible to deliberate about whether we should do something in particular; and the answer can be negative, as well as positive. If I wonder now whether I should do $\varphi$, and I conclude that I ought not, requiring me to form the corresponding intention not to do $\varphi$ seems too strong as a condition for considering my reasoning complete. The distinction between the absence of intention and the presence of a negative intention is often overlooked (Kolodny 2005). If the claim that the conclusion of (correct and complete) practical reasoning is an intention, then I would conclude every reasoning process in which I judge that I ought not to $\varphi$ with an intention not to $\varphi$. Suppose that I am visiting the Prado Museum, and while standing in front of Las Meninas, I recall a paper that analyses the belief “I ought to spit on Las Meninas” (Shpall forthcoming). Then, I deliberate about my reasons to spit on Las meninas, and I found that I only have reasons not to do it; therefore, I judge that I ought not to spit on Las Meninas. Do I have to conclude my reasoning process with an intention not to spit on Las Meninas? Requiring me to form the corresponding intention not to $\varphi$ seems too strong not only as a condition to find my reasoning complete, but also as a condition for rationality. I can avoid irrationality by merely not intending to do what I believe I ought not to do.

It may be argued that NJI states that there are some cases in which it is not necessary to actively intend to do what one believes one ought to do. Wedgwood (2007, 30) discusses the possibility of being rational even in the absence of intention. Wedgwood argues that NJI is true only of normative judgements whose content ($\varphi$) is something “of the appropriate sort”: the fact that the agent holds the intention to $\varphi$ has to make a difference to the chances of that agent’s $\varphi$-ing. Intending to do something the agent believes is almost impossible, even if she believes she ought to do it, is too demanding as a rational requirement: intending to do something has to have an impact over the actual world. For the same reason, it is also unnecessary to intend to do something that the agent is going to do even in the absence of actively intending to do it, such as breathing. Thus, if I conclude that I ought to breathe, I
am not normatively required to intend to breathe; NJI does not apply here.

This restriction of the scope of NJI partially solves the problem: there are some cases in which NJI does not apply. We may add to this exclusion group second and third-person reasoning, exploratory reasoning, and reasoning processes ending up in a negative conclusion, and NJI would be true of all the other normative judgements. However, this strategy makes things more complicated: a defendant of this view would have to develop the concept “appropriateness”, and draw a line between two kinds of normative judgements. For example, the way of understanding the impact of an agent’s intention to $\phi$ on her chances of $\phi$-ing is unclear and problematic. For instance, it is not clear whether it is necessary that one’s intention makes an objective significant difference, or it is sufficient that the agent believes that her intentions will affect the chances of her doing what is intended. A third and weaker option would require that the agent does not have the belief that her intentions to $\phi$ will not affect her chances of $\phi$-ing. Furthermore, it would be necessary to quantify, or at least specify to a higher degree, what “significant difference” amounts to. Training to be a professional athlete makes a difference in the chances of success, but the chances are objectively very low; thus, even if an agent believes she ought to become an athlete, rationality (following Wedgwood) would not require that she intends to achieve that goal. Therefore, I believe that creating a subcategory of normative judgements using the impact of intentions on the agent’s chances of success does not solve the problem, but creates a new one.

So far, I have tried to argue that (i) practical reasoning is not necessarily reflexive, which would be a necessary condition for having an intention as a conclusion, and (ii) practical reasoning can be perfectly complete without the formation of an intention, but it does require, in order to be complete, that the agent reaches a normative judgement. My aim now is to show that, even if we consider that forming an intention does not conclude practical reasoning, it may be well the case that rational agency demands that we form an intention, given our normative judgements.

III. Rational agency: enkrasia as a restriction

NJI could also be justified by a broader conception of the relation between judgements and intentions. Rational agency is much broader than practical reasoning: it includes second-order attitudes, future and present-directed intentions, or awareness of one’s goals and beliefs. Deliberation and practical reasoning are also central elements of the rational structure of agency.

It may be argued that enkrasia, as well as other rational requirements, does not require a correct relation between the elements of reasoning, but amongst the elements of agency. This would explain why we consider irrational an agent who intends to do something that she believes she ought not to do. I agree with this claim: enkrasia is a requirement on agency, not a requirement on reasoning. However, I disagree in that rationality requires that we form the intention to do what we believe we ought to do. As pointed out above in the analysis of negative judgements, requiring from agents to form an intention every time she has a normative judgements is too demanding. Under NJI, an agent who believes she
ought to $\phi$ and nonetheless does not intend to $\phi$ is being akratic, insofar she is violating enkrasia. My aim now is to show that there are many cases in which we would not consider an agent akratic, even if she does not hold an intention to do or not to do what she believes she ought to. I will defend a version of volitional internalism, which claims that an agent’s actual choices and intentions (either positive or negative) do bear a internal relation to her practical judgements.$^3$

It should be noted that I am using the concept of intention in a broad sense, to refer both to present and future-directed intentions. Of course, there are differences between the two of them. Mainly, in order to avoid akrasia, an agent who holds a future-directed intention to do something she judges she ought not to do can drop her intention; an agent who is acting intentionally against her better judgement can stop acting.

The account of enkrasia I defend is based on volitional internalism. Against judgement internalism, it considers that our mental attitudes need to stand in an appropriate way to our normative beliefs. The difference between judgement and volitional internalism is that the latter considers that rational requirements over mental attitudes requires that the agent holds those attitudes: the absence of belief or intention cannot enter into conflict with the agent’s normative judgements insofar there is nothing to enter into conflict with.

An akratic agent judges either that she ought to $\phi$ ($BO\phi$), or that one ought not to $\phi$ ($BO\neg\phi$). Her irrationality is the result of a conflict between her judgement and her intentional states. Given that an agent can intend to do something ($I\phi$), or to intend to refrain from doing something ($I\neg\phi$), and that she can also lack the relevant intentional state ($\neg I\phi$ and $\neg I\neg\phi$), the following combinations may obtain:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$I\phi$</th>
<th>$I\neg\phi$</th>
<th>$\neg I\phi$</th>
<th>$\neg I\neg\phi$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$BO\phi$</td>
<td>Enkrasia</td>
<td>Akrasia</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$BO\neg\phi$</td>
<td>Enkrasia</td>
<td>Akrasia</td>
<td>$\neg I\phi$</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Combinations of judgements and intentions

There are four uncontroversial cases: two of akrasia, and two of enkrasia: either the agent’s intentions are in line (enkrasia) or contradict (akrasia) the agent’s normative judgement. However, the absence of intention has to be examined more carefully.

First of all, it is unclear in what sense not intending to $\phi$ and intending not to $\phi$ are distinct in what refers to action; however, the latter refers to an actual mental state, while the former refers to the absence of any mental state. Usually, when an agent intends to $\phi$, she lacks the intention not to $\phi$; and vice versa, if she intends not to $\phi$, she lacks the intention to $\phi$. Nevertheless, it is important to

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3 The difference between judgement and volitional internalism is presented by Hinchman (2009).
distinguish between an intention and the absence of a contrary intention. It is possible to formulate
different version of the requirements of rationality, both theoretical and practical, through demanding
the formation of a mental state (beliefs or intentions), or only requiring the agent not to hold certain
mental states. Furthermore, the absence of intention is quite hard to conceptualize. It may well be the
case that an agent does not intend neither to $\phi$ nor not to $\phi$. For example, I do not intend neither to go
to Thailand next year, nor I do not intend not to go. It is simply an intention I do not have. Therefore,
although holding a mental state usually entails lacking from a contrary intention\(^4\), it is not true that
every time an agent does not intend to $\phi$, she intends not to $\phi$, or that if she does not intend not to $\phi$,
then she intends to $\phi$.

As I have argued above, it is too demanding that rationality requires an agent to form a negative
intention whenever she holds a negative normative judgement. To recall our example above, I can avoid
irrationality merely by not intending to spit on *Las Meninas*, given that I believe I ought not to do so.
Hence, my suggestion is to formulate *enkrasia* as a restriction, rather than a positive requirement to
form an intention: rationality requires that the agent’s actual intentions do not contravene her
normative judgements. This table represents the possible relations between judgements and intentional
states, regarding *enkrasia* and *akrasia*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$\neg I\phi$</th>
<th>Enkrasia-derived</th>
<th>$I\phi$</th>
<th>Akrasia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$B\phi$</td>
<td>$I\neg\phi$</td>
<td>Akrasia</td>
<td>$B\phi$</td>
<td>Enkrasia-derived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\neg I\phi$</td>
<td>Enkrasia-compatible</td>
<td></td>
<td>$\neg I\phi$</td>
<td>Enkrasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\neg I\neg\phi$</td>
<td>Enkrasia-compatible</td>
<td></td>
<td>$\neg I\neg\phi$</td>
<td>Enkrasia-compatible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Akrasia and three kinds of enkrasia.*

I have made a threefold distinction: enkrasia, enkrasia-derived, and enkrasia-compatible. My suggestion
is that an agent is enkatic as long as she does not intend to do something she believes she ought not to
do, and vice versa: that she does not intend not to do something she believes she ought to do. On the
other hand, as I will argue below, if an agent intends to $\phi$, then rationality requires that she does not
intend not to $\phi$; otherwise, she would have inconsistent intentions. Therefore, if an agent intends to $\phi$,
and believes she ought to $\phi$, she is not violating enkrasia, given that, by intending to $\phi$, she is also not
intending not to $\phi$. The label ‘enkatic-derived’ aims to stress that the rationality of acting according to
one’s judgements is derived from a requirement of not holding inconsistent attitudes. Finally, the
‘enkasia-compatible’ case is such that the agent believes she ought to $\phi$, and she does not intend to $\phi$,
or vice versa. This possibility may seem harder to accept. Suppose that an agent judges that she ought to
$\phi$, and at the same time she does not intend to $\phi$. This absence of intentional state is both compatible

\(^4\) Of course, it is possible for an agent to intend to $\phi$ and to intend not to $\phi$ at the same time; it is irrational (because of a
different requirement other than enkrasia, as I will argue below), but possible.
with not intending anything at all, which does not violate the enkratic requirement, and also with intending not to $\phi$, which does violate enkrasia. Thus, merely by not intending to do what one judges best, an agent is not violating the enkratic requirement, but akrasia is not ruled out. We lack of sufficient information to know whether, having judged she ought to $\phi$, the agent is being akratic (if she also intends not to $\phi$) or enkratic (if she does not intend anything at all).

There are many cases, it could be argued, in which an agent believes that she ought to $\phi$ and does not intend to $\phi$, and there is something irrational in her agency. For example, if I believe that I ought to work harder, and instead I do other things that prevent me from working, there is something irrational in my agency, even if I do not consciously intend not to work harder. I fully agree in that I am being irrational; but not because I am violating enkrasia.

The enkratic requirement is not the only restriction over agency that rationality imposes. For example, an agent ought not to hold inconsistent intentions, or that we revise our intentions without having a good reason to do so: this is what weakness of will consists in (Holton 2009). The difference between akrasia and weakness of will lies in that our practical judgements do not require that we intend to do what we consider we ought to do; on the contrary, our intention to $\phi$ does require that we intentionally $\phi$. This also entails that we are required to do (and to intend to do) what we consider we ought to do in order to achieve $\phi$. Otherwise, we would be intentionally doing not $\phi$. An agent displays weakness of will, Pettit argues, when she holds by intentional states in the light of which a certain response (an action) is required, and nonetheless she fails to act in the required manner. Although means-end coherence has drawn much more attention in the literature, there is a more basic requirement that links intentions and actions, which I will call resolve. It states that rationality requires that future-directed intentions lead to the formation of present-directed intentions. It is possible to formulate different requirements derived from resolve. For example, if an agent intends to $\phi$, and believes that by $\psi$-ing she will not be able to $\phi$, then she is required not to intend to $\psi$.

The means-end coherence requirement has elements both from the resolve and the enkratic requirements. It states that the agent’s means and ends should be coherent. If an agent intends to $\phi$, and believes that in order to achieve $\phi$ she ought to $\psi$, then the agent ought to intend $\psi$. Many of the examples of enkraia and akrasia are, in fact, applying the means-end coherence requirement. In many occasions, agents deliberate about what they ought to do, given the intentions they have. When they conclude their reasoning with a normative judgement, they ought to intend do what they believe they ought to do not because of enkrasia, but because of resolve. As Hinchman (2009) points out, an agent should trust her judgements about the best means to achieve an end. As I have argued in Section II, practical deliberation can be prompted by a choice situation, in which the agent intends to do

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5 (Pettit 2003). It should be noted that Pettit uses the concept of ‘akrasia’ to refer to this failure; I believe that the kind of irrational action he refers to is better characterized as weakness of will.

6 I borrow this name from Hinchman, who examines what he calls resolve internalism, "the thesis that intending, resolving or otherwise willing to $\varphi$ bears an internal relation to actually $\varphi$ing (or at least attempting to)" (Hinchman 2009, 396). Similarly, Cohen and Handfield use resolve to label the “capacity for resolute maintenance of one's intentions” (Cohen and Handfield 2010). Although I will not use the term exactly in the same sense that these authors, I believe it is useful for expressing an internal relation between intending and doing.
something in the first place; in these cases, the agent’s judgement is a belief about the means to achieve a previous goal. But this is not necessarily the case: one may engage in practical reasoning for other reasons. Thus, rationality requires to act according to our normative judgements only if the normative judgement serves a previous intention.

Therefore, while enkrasia is compatible with the lack of intention, resolve requires that the agent holds a present-directed intention to accomplish her future-directed intentions. A violation of this requirement can take several forms; for instance, by not forming the present-directed intention—in which case an absence of intention also counts as a violation—or through the formation of a future-directed intention that prevents the achievement of a prior (and not abandoned) future-directed intention. Weakness of will is a failure that concerns the consistency and coherence amongst intentional states, on the one hand, and the controlling function of intentions, on the other. While the absence of intention does not contradict a practical judgement, the absence of intention entails that the agent is intentionally doing something (whatever she is doing) that prevents her from achieving her prior future-directed intention. Practical commitments, of which future-directed intentions consist, entail a volitional commitment, this is, a bond between the agent’s intentions and actions through the control exerted by intentional states. If the agent fails to exert such control without abandoning her intention, she can be branded irrational. This claim holds in cases in which the agent has not suffered a total loss of control, because in these cases, the alternative action that prevents the agent from achieving her prior goal can hardly be described as intentional.

IV. The scope of the requirements

So far, I have suggested two main rational requirements (enkrasia and resolve) and a third requirement derived from resolve (means-end coherence). The formulation of these requirements could be either wide or narrow-scoped. For example, the enkratic requirement could take any of these two forms, considering a positive and a negative judgement:

**ENKRASIA (NARROW+):** If you believe that you ought to φ, then rationality requires that you do not [intend not to φ].

**ENKRASIA (NARROW -):** If you believe that you ought not to φ, then rationality requires that you do not [intend to φ].

**ENKRASIA (WIDE +):** Rationality requires that you do not [intend not to φ if you believe that you ought to φ].

**ENKRASIA (WIDE -):** Rationality requires that you do not [intend to φ if you believe that you ought not to φ].

I believe that wide-scope are problematic for two reasons. First, the symmetry of the wide-scope formulation fails to consider the rational constraints to belief change (Schroeder 2009). Wide-scope accounts try to avoid the possibility of being required to do something that, objectively, one ought not to do in the first place. Wide-scope emerges as an objectivist solution to the problem of coherence.
between beliefs and intentions. If an agent ought not to believe that she ought to \( \phi \), then she ought not to \( \phi \); she ought to change her belief instead. However, the problem of the conditions under which it is rational to change one’s mind is eluded. Second, wide-scope states that complying with the requirements of rationality is a matter of choice. An agent, facing an akratic state, can either change his belief that she ought to \( \phi \), or form the intention to \( \phi \). Or, she can remain in an irrational state. Letting aside this last possibility, the agent is then facing a choice. The agent, in order to make a rational choice, has to evaluate what reasons for choosing any of the alternative she has. Imagine that she judges that she ought to \( \psi \) [change her belief that she ought to \( \phi \)]; is she required to intend to \( \psi \)? No: she can choose between intending to \( \psi \) or abandoning her belief that she ought to \( \psi \). Choosing without an anchor leads to two possible scenarios: infinite regress, or arbitrary choice. The agent needs a point from which to deliberate and choose. Usually, this point is the agent’s initial aim, goal or intention: this is why critics of wide-scope formulation argue that it fails to account for the directionality of deliberation and choice.

On the other hand, narrow-scope has been criticised because it allows for detaching a normative requirement if the appropriate antecedent is true. For example, following resolve, if I intend to kill Ernie in the future, I ought to hold a present-directed intention to kill Ernie, which is counterintuitive. I believe the problem of detachting the requirement given the antecedent is not problematic if normative requirements, as well as oughts (which I take to be the same thing), are understood as perspective-dependent (Gibbons 2010). Lastly, even if rational oughts are taken to be perspective-independent, narrow-scope formulations also allow for choosing to abandon the judgement or mental state that triggers the requirement: this is what Lord (2011) calls exiting from the requirement —i.e. making it no longer apply to us through denying the antecedent. This is not a form of complying with it, but it does not violate it either. The form of the narrow-scoped normative requirement would be as follows:

**ENKRASIA (Narrow+):** If you believe that you ought to \( \phi \), then rationality requires that you do not [intend not to \( \phi \)].

**ENKRASIA (Narrow -):** If you believe that you ought not to \( \phi \), then rationality requires that you do not [intend to \( \phi \)].

This narrow-scope formulation states that the only thing that is required from an agent who judges she ought (not) to do something is that she does not intend to do something that violates her judgement. To put it differently: you ought not to intend to do something that you judge you ought not to do. This is why I have some reservations about considering enkrasia as a form of requirement: it is rather a prohibition. We are not required to do something, but to abstain from doing it. Of course, unintentional and non-reflective abstentions also count as complying with enkrasia. If I believe I ought not to lie, I do not need to form the intention not to lie every time I talk; not forming the intention to lie suffices for not violating enkrasia. Furthermore, a narrow-scope formulation of enkrasia does not exclude the possibility of exiting from the requirement by reconsidering one’s judgements. Given that narrow-scope formulations are conditionals, denying the antecedent makes the consequent no longer required.
However, there is an alternative way of understanding wide and narrow-scope. It consists in making them logically equivalent. Narrow-scoped formulations are directional, because the requirement is entailed by certain condition, whether an intention or a belief. A way of turning this formulation into wide-scope is to change the connector between the elements of the requirement: to use a conjunction instead of an implication. In fact, the formulation of the enkratic requirement I suggest is able to cover cases in which an agent forms an intention first, and later on judges that she ought not to do what she intends to do; here, the agent is being akratic, in the sense that she is violating enkrasia. It is possible to express the same rationality rule through a wide-scope formulation:

ENKRASIA (Wide +): Rationality requires that you do not [believe that you ought to \( \phi \), and intend not to \( \phi \)].

ENKRASIA (Wide -): Rationality requires that you do not [believe that you ought not to \( \phi \), and intend to \( \phi \)].

In fact, this formulation is logically equivalent to a wide-scoped one relating the judgement and the intentional state (or its absence) through conjunction rather than implication, given that \(-(p \land \neg q)\) is equivalent to \(p \rightarrow \neg\neg q\). The same goes for the other two requirements:

RESOLVE (Narrow+): If you intend to \( \phi \), then you are rationally required to intentionally \( \phi \).
RESOLVE (Narrow-): If you intend not to \( \phi \), then you are rationally required to intentionally not \( \phi \).
RESOLVE (Wide+): Rationality requires that you do not [intend to \( \phi \) and intentionally not to \( \phi \)]
RESOLVE (Wide-): Rationality requires that you do not [intend not to \( \phi \) and intentionally to \( \phi \)]

MEANS-END COHERENCE (Narrow+): If you intend to \( \phi \) and believe that in order to \( \phi \) you ought to \( \psi \), then you are rationally required to intend to \( \psi \).
MEANS-END COHERENCE (Narrow-): If you intend not to \( \phi \) and believe that in order not to \( \phi \) you ought to \( \psi \), then you are rationally required to intend to \( \psi \).
MEANS-END COHERENCE (Wide+): Rationality requires that you do not [intend to \( \phi \), believe that in order to \( \phi \) you ought to \( \psi \), and not intend to \( \psi \)]
MEANS-END COHERENCE (Wide-): Rationality requires that you do not [intend not to \( \phi \), believe that in order not to \( \phi \) you ought to \( \psi \), and not intend to \( \psi \)]

The advantage of this reformulation of the wide-scope account of rational requirements is that it avoids a false directionality. If it is possible to choose whether to intend to \( \phi \) or to revise one’s intention to \( \phi \), it is more appropriate to situate both options at the same logical level. However, as pointed out above, it would be necessary to integrate these normative requirements into a broader conception of rationality, taking into account the normative constraints of belief change.

The fact that narrow and wide-scope formulations are logically equivalent does not make them identical. Although it is possible, in both formulations, to change one’s judgement in order to remain
rational, it is normatively different to exit from the requirement (narrow-scope allows this) that to comply with the requirement through changing one’s belief (wide-scope). The preferableness of one formulation over the other depends on a broader account of rationality; particularly, on whether we endorse an objective or a subjective account of normative reasons, on the one hand, and of rational requirements, on the other. It is not my aim here to defend one of these possible alternatives, but to show that it is possible to reformulate both a wide and a narrow-scope versions of rational requirements without necessarily endorsing normative judgement internalism.

Concluding remarks

The aim of this paper was to show that any formulation of enkrasia that is committed to normative judgement internalism is too demanding as a rational requirement. These requirements are useful to understand the normative relations amongst different elements of agency, such as beliefs, intentions and actions. The enkratic requirement I have suggested is, in a way, weaker that the version of this requirement I have criticised, in the sense that every case considered rational by NJI is also considered rational under my account; however, there are some cases, in which the agent has not formed an intention, that would not count as a violation of my account of enkraisia, while these agents would violate NJI. I do not think that covering a wider range of phenomena weakens my account: on the contrary, I have pointed out the necessity to include other rational requirements, such as resolve and the means-end coherence, in order to get a more complex and adequate picture of rational agency.

References

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