

## Moralės filosofija

### RATIONALITY: NORMAL MENTAL FUNCTIONING OR PSYCHOLOGICAL COHERENCE?\*

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*A version of the rationalist internalist argument, employing a pro tanto reading of the term “normative reason”, is often criticized due to its conception of rationality. It is said that the condition of rationality is insufficient to secure the necessary relation between the moral judgement and the respective motivation to act. I claim that such a criticism is based on the false supposition that rationality is to be identified with normal mental functioning. It is shown that for the rationalist internalists rationality does and should rather amount to inner psychological coherence, and that the respective conception of irrationality can account for all the purported counterexamples to the motivational internalism. In addition, I pinpoint that “full rationality” is neither an intuitive notion nor a necessary condition for the rationalist internalism to hold, therefore, a line of criticism employing the notion misses the target.*

**Keywords:** rationalist internalism, coherence, full rationality, pro tanto normative reason.

#### Rationalist Internalism

Rationalist internalism today can be taken to present one of the most promising attempts to defend a conditional variant of the motivational internalist thesis. The condition, under which the *a priori* necessary relation between a moral judgement and motivation to act accordingly holds, is

that of rationality of the agent. The whole argument that the rationalist internalist (RI) position consists in may be represented by Caj Strandberg’s flawless logical reconstruction of it<sup>1</sup> (Strandberg 2012: 6–7):

- (1) *Rationalism*: It is conceptually necessary that, for any action  $\phi$  and any person  $S$ , if  $S$  judges that it is morally right for her to  $\phi$ , then  $S$  judges that she has a normative reason<sup>2</sup> to  $\phi$ .

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<sup>1</sup> Which is not to say that I agree with Strandberg’s further interpretation of each claim, however, the initial presentation of the argument expresses the RI position accurately.

<sup>2</sup> First of all, I emphasize that the internalism/externalism debate primarily concerns normative rea-

(2) *Normative internalism*: It is conceptually necessary that, for any action  $\phi$  and any rational person  $S$ , if  $S$  judges that she has a normative reason to  $\phi$ , then  $S$  is motivated to  $\phi$ .

(3) *Rationalist internalism*: It is conceptually necessary that, for any action  $\phi$  and any rational person  $S$ , if  $S$  judges that it is morally right for her to  $\phi$ , then  $S$  is motivated to  $\phi$ .

The first and the second premises in the argument, however, employ a notion that is ambiguous: should “normative reason” be read in its *pro tanto* or in its *all things considered* sense? My view is that there could well be two versions of the RI in virtue of the different meanings of “normative reason”, each subject to a different kind of criticism. Therefore, one should be careful to specify which version one is discussing – defending or criticizing.

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sons, not motivating reasons. Thus, “reason”, unless noted otherwise, should be understood as a normative reason. Second, rationalists define reasons in terms of rationality: there are attempts to defend the rationalist internalist thesis without adhering to the definition of reasons in terms of rationality, as well as without endorsing the whole argument (e.g., John Broome holds the rationalist internalist thesis correct in virtue of the principle of enkrasia). Only with this in mind, the first claim can be termed ‘rationalism’ in a more familiar way. I maintain that rationalism is in essence and from tradition, a view on the nature of morality: that moral truths are knowable by reason alone; thereof the content analysis of the moral judgement. However, I hold that acknowledging adherence to rationalism in moral philosophy, one remains silent on whether there are other kinds of truths that can be determined by reason alone and on their strength. That is why I believe that to call oneself a rationalist implies only subscribing to the idea of moral normative reasons being determined by reason, but it does not imply subscribing to either *pro tanto* or *all things considered* reading of “reason”.

Besides, defining reasons in terms of rationality does not compel to define rationality as responsiveness to reasons. I highlight this without here going into the matter.

I take it that rather often the rationalist internalist position is by default understood to necessarily require the prevalence of the moral, thus, the argument is read in the *all things considered* sense<sup>3</sup>. For example, even Joshua Gert, intending to restate the true reading of Michael Smith’s “reason”, falls prey to it: “It is possible to read much of what Michael Smith has written and come away with the firm conviction that he means to ally himself with the traditional moral rationalists, and that he holds that moral requirements are rational requirements” (Gert 2008: 1). But Smith *does* hold that moral requirements are rational requirements. The widespread misinterpretation is rather due to the default reading of “reason” as an *all things considered* reason, and therefrom thinking that what is required is *all things considered* as well<sup>4</sup>. Whereas Smith claims that “rationalism might now be taken to be ... the claim that our concept of moral requirement is the concept of *a* reason for action; *a* requirement of rationality or reason” (Smith 1994: 64–65; emphasis mine – I. V.).

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<sup>3</sup> That may be due to the philosophical tradition where rationalism is mostly associated with Kant. Also, perhaps it is because of the belief that the promises of internalism have to meet very high criteria? After all, the internalists claim to be able to explain why we expect a sincere person to act in accordance with her moral judgement (and so adding the *ceteris paribus* condition is much of a disappointment or acknowledgement of defeat?). I leave it unresolved.

<sup>4</sup> Gert is preoccupied with refining the picture with the “permissible/required” distinction; he claims that some reasons rationally justify (permit), but not require certain actions, whereas others – not only justify, but also rationally require. Smith, however, does not make the distinction explicitly, but his “rationally required” in the *pro tanto* sense makes up for the “rationally permissible” to a certain extent. So Gert in (2008), before proceeding to critique of Smith’s account, is trying to do justice to Smith’s ‘reason’ restituting it the intended, but often missed *pro tanto* sense.

In this paper I will be interested primarily in the version of RI that holds normative moral reasons to be primarily *pro tanto* normative reasons. This means that the clearly paradigmatic exemplar of this version is Michael Smith. There possibly being more of the adherents, reference to his theory, when needed, will be sufficient for making the point I aim at<sup>5</sup>.

## Two Targets of Criticism

There are two lines of criticism concerning this variant of the RI that I would like to take on. First one of them is recurrent in several works of the critics of RI and threatens the RI thesis itself, i.e., claim (3). It asserts that the condition of rationality is insufficient for precluding some of the counterexamples to the motivational internalism. The other one is similar, but targets claim (2): the notion of rationality cannot secure the necessary relation between every normative reason that an agent has and the motivation to act accordingly. I will argue that both lines of criticism fail because they rest on a false presupposition about the nature of rationality. Let us explicate and respond to them in the order they were presented above.

## Criticism for the Claim (3)

This critical point is rather pervasive throughout the literature, however, it is grounded on a false supposition. As the RI

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<sup>5</sup> I do not intend to talk in his or the rationalist internalists' name, of course. It is rather probable that I make claims, especially when presenting my analysis of rationality as coherence, and elsewhere, that he would not subscribe to. That is my interpretation of his account, along with my own attempts to improve the rationalist internalist position.

can easily deal with the counterarguments of accidie, depression and such, attributing motivational indifference to the irrationality of the deliberators, critics have to target (ir)rationality itself. The criticism is mainly such that one or another conception of rationality is not able to secure the necessary relation between a moral judgement and the relevant motivation that the RI is after.

Let me outline the usual strategy the critics of the RI employ, and only then proceed to the personalia. A critic selects a conception of rationality and applies it to some cases. The selected conception then proves to be not apt enough to cover all the cases of motivational indifference: there are cases in which people can be considered rational or even *entirely* rational even without being motivated to act in accordance with their moral judgements. Therefore, it is said that rationality (or at least some plausible conception of rationality)<sup>6</sup> is not the right condition to secure the necessary relation between a moral judgement and the respective moral motivation. Therefore, the RI fails and motivational internalism is false.

The problem with this strategy is that these criticisms are based on a different conception of rationality than that of RI. Hence this approach only shows an apparent thing: RI does not work with the conceptions of rationality more or less randomly chosen by critics. This is not to say that none of the critics tried to approach the RI with the conception of ra-

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<sup>6</sup> Any other definitions that could account for all the cases of motivational indifference, it is argued, are either *ad hoc* or issue in other serious problems (e.g., Zangwill also argues for the latter in 2008: 116). So the same conclusion follows anyway.

tionality, and, accordingly, irrationality, that is supposedly presumed by the RI. Various philosophers have advanced this criticism from different perspectives on what rationality amounts to: the “follow-through” account, the instrumental and the (supposedly) common-sense conceptions of rationality. However, they all share one crucial feature: they attribute normal mental functioning to rationality as its core element, whereas irrationality necessarily indicates abnormal or impaired mental functioning. It is true that in many cases the internalists and externalists list various cases of mental malfunctioning as the apparent cases that internalism must account for if it is to be held plausible, but it is not sufficient to conclude that irrationality has to be identified with mental abnormality. I will argue that this element is not a necessary component of “irrationality” at all – at least given the way the RI understands it.

### **Irrationality and Mental Abnormality**

Let us see the described criticism in action. For instance, Elinor Mason supposes that, according to internalism, “it is abnormal in some way not to *do* the action you believe you ought to do” (Mason 2008: 150). However, she argues that we can imagine the whole scale of the indifference, at one end of which we find people with brain damage, some more familiar cases of accidie, rage, grief and laziness in the middle, and the wilful ignoring at the other end. In other words, it ranges from what “normal agents wouldn’t do”, “cases of faultiness”, the “abnormal” (which she considers to be what the RI can in some way account for), to the weak-will or wilful wrongdoing

which is “perfectly normal, and depressingly common” (Mason 2008: 150–1).

Actually Mason’s conception of rationality (in her 2008) comes quite close to the one employed by the RI<sup>7</sup>, but she still makes this presupposition about the essence of (ir)rationality, which allows us to align her with the rest of the critics. Her main point here is that the cases of indifference do not necessarily indicate cases of mental impairment (and, in addition, even the cases of impairment might not be what we would call cases of irrationality), and irrationality is identified with exactly just that. Therefore, she concludes that as “internalists have given us no reason for thinking that not doing what you think you ought to indicates a problem with the agent, so no reason for believing in motivational internalism” (Mason 2008: 153).

Nick Zangwill and Caj Strandberg also claim that cases of moral motivational indifference they have given do not seem to be cases of irrationality. Zangwill agrees that the listless or the depressed are obviously irrational, but not some others who are just “morally cold”, “bad” or otherwise “rationally indifferent”. The latter seem to be “perfectly content and well balanced”, “even ... quite happy”, “normal”, their “mental faculties ... seem to be in order” (Zangwill 2008: 113–4).

According to Strandberg, the “term “irrational” is used to categorize various failures of mental functioning”, but “the

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<sup>7</sup> Mason distinguishes between *theoretical, means-end* and *follow through* conceptions of rationality, where the latter is “a matter of believing what you believe that you have reason to believe, or doing what you believe you have reason to do—i.e., following through” (Mason 2008: 147). However, the very classification she introduces and formulation of the *follow through* principle is enough to indicate that she understands it in a different way than the RI presupposes.

examples I have discussed all provide evidence that it is not conceptually necessary for the person in those examples to be mentally malfunctioning in any relevant way” (Strandberg 2012: 11).

## Rationality as Coherence

But what about the conception of rationality that the RI implies, what does it amount to? I claim that rationality for the RI is and should be identified primarily with psychological coherence. All the requirements of rationality can finally be reduced to requirements of coherence. It is not a novel idea, but perhaps one that has not been taken seriously enough. Various authors, for a clear example, John Broome (2010), Donald Davidson (2004), Smith (1994, 1996, 2001, 2004, and elsewhere), when talking about (ir)rationality, talk about the inner (in)coherence or (in)consistency of mind. On this view, rationality is just taken to be a notion defining the relation among some person’s psychological states in terms of coherence. And so the different conditions for rationality can all be spelled out in terms of coherence of various kinds. If so, this would mean that there can be principles of rationality for connecting different kinds of states or sets of states of human psychology by the same type of relation (coherence). Then even practical and theoretical rationality would not be differing substantially, the difference in labels would only signal that coherence is required between different kinds of psychological states, or elements (say, beliefs of different kinds, and beliefs and desires, or so). With respect to which elements should cohere and how<sup>8</sup> for a person to be

recognized as rational, we could analytically discern different kinds of rationality requirements, or principles.

If rationality is understood this way, then the concept of *full* rationality in the practical context boils down to the pervasive requirement of coherence among all of the relevant psychological elements, involved in a certain practical decision. That way, the idea behind the RI is rather simple, and there is nothing mysterious in attributing irrationality to the addicts, others of the kind and even people without diagnoses: those, violating the requirements of rationality, are simply incoherent (and not necessarily mentally malfunctioning or abnormal).

The possibility of such a conception of rationality, however, should have its roots in our everyday language usage, as not only motivational internalists themselves, but also some of their critics turn to this court of appeal for the evaluation of plausibility of the RI claims. And I claim that such an analysis of rationality, as roughly sketched above, is available.

It seems first of all, though, that the word “rationality” is itself a philosopher’s term of art, not so much a word used by the folk. For example, in his work Gert claims: “Of course I do not mean to appeal to intuitions about the use of the very word ‘irrational’, much less to the phrase ‘subjectively irrational’. The first of these is rarely used by normal people, and the second is a technical term” and “That is, ‘subjectively irrational’ is meant to collect the spectrum of actions that range from ‘silly’ and ‘stupid’, through ‘boneheaded’

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<sup>8</sup> For example, interpersonal coherence (of beliefs or preferences), intrapersonal coherence (of preferences,

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etc.), intrapersonal synchronic or diachronic coherence etc.

and ‘a bad idea,’ all the way up to ‘crazy’, ‘insane’, and worse” (Gert 2004: 143). I can only agree with this, and, taking over Gert’s idea, rather look in the everyday language for the words either expressive of the same idea as “rational” or at least partly expressive of it. I shall look for the words which are expressive of success or failure to adhere to some kind of requirements of reason.

In everyday language “rational” may correspond to “prudent”, “wise”, “clever”, “sound”, “sensible”, “reasonable”, “sane”, and the like. In other words, we may categorize actions or agents with these attributes as “rational”. Of course, each of these words has wider meaning than “rational”, as well as differing connotations (functional, emotional or other kind of nuances). They might even have more than one meaning; however, roughly, we can think like this. It seems that “sensible” are those who judge or act in accordance with the situation as represented to one by one’s senses. “Clever” may be those who manage to find the relevant means to some end. “Prudent” are probably the ones who presently act so as not to compromise their future interests. And so on. From this it seems not too far-fetched to notice that they all share part of their meaning or, at least, have the family resemblance: they all signal an instance of coherence among some elements or sets of elements (decisions-senses, means-ends, present interests-future interests, etc.).

As for “irrational”, there are several words partly corresponding to it in everyday language, primarily, “silly”, “stupid”, “crazy”, “insane”, “nonsense”, etc. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, we can find such definitions or parts of

them: “exhibiting a lack of common sense or sound judgement”, “contrary to good sense”, and so on. These irrationalities are due to the discrepancies with respect to the standards or to those who hold to or embody those standards; actions fail to cohere with the standards (of reason). In other words, they are used to signal situations where one of the requirements of coherence is infringed, i.e., when there is some kind of incoherence in between some elements or sets of elements within a person’s mind. Once again, the meanings of these words are not equivalent to that of “irrational”, but wider. Also, we can notice that rationality of some action or agent can be judged against some intersubjective standards, not just against the knowledge of that particular person’s current goals (and this is to the contrary as to what the adherents to the narrow view – instrumental rationality – could agree with).

So “irrational” neither explains the error nor is used to evaluate the mental status or character of the person that it is attributed to. “Irrational” just records an error and categorizes it: the one of incoherence. Presumably, irrationality can explain why the necessary relation between the moral judgement and motivation does not hold, but irrationality itself must be explained – by naming its causes or otherwise.

Certainly, mental malfunctioning can be such an explanation, but it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for irrationality, as we know that addicted people can quit their addictions, or do some rational actions even under the influence of their addictions, as well as the depressed are not entirely irrational. Smith agrees with Stocker: “The point is not that agents suffering from such maladies are neces-



sarily irrational: they may or may not be” (Smith 1994: 155)<sup>9</sup>.

As far as I am concerned, various terms of mental conditions categorize a recurrent behavioural pattern. To call somebody “depressed” or “addicted” is to categorize a recurring psychological state on the basis of the character of their recurrent errors of incoherence (between that person’s own best practical judgment of some kind and motivation to act accordingly). The depressed lack the relevant desire or perhaps a desire of a significant strength for self-regarding actions<sup>10</sup>, and in the addicted the desire for a drug is prevailing. But these or other similar labels do not deem these people for complete irrationality.

*To call somebody “irrational” is primarily to record somebody’s singular action<sup>11</sup> as falling short of one of the requirements*

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<sup>9</sup> It is rather that “Desires are irrational to the extent that they are *wholly and solely* the product of psychological compulsions, physical addictions, emotional disturbances and the like; to the extent that they wouldn’t be had by someone in a non-depressed, non-addictive, non-emotionally disturbed state” (Smith 1994: 155). This means that it is only those desires that cannot possibly be shared by the well mentally functioning and the impaired, are necessarily irrational. The ones that can be shared can be rational or irrational – it depends on other things. In other words, irrational desires are those that are had by, e.g., the depressed *as* depressed, the ones on the basis of which they are characterized as depressed.

<sup>10</sup> M. Cholbi in his paper (2011) claims that empirical evidence points to the conclusion that the depressed usually lack in self-regarding motivation rather than the moral one, and that is to the contrary of what is popularly presupposed in the internalism/externalism debate.

<sup>11</sup> I sometimes say that “(ir)rationality” can be attributed to actions or agents, where there is not much difference in between the agent and action: you are what you do. However, I advocate the view that one action is not enough to define an identity, therefore, “(ir)rational” first of all describes agent in face of one’s singular action, and does not give an overall evaluation of one’s character, unless in the context where the agent is evaluated in relation to one’s more recurrent actions or patterns of actions.

*of rationality (coherence requirement of some kind)*. So far, I have not discovered, therefore, that “(ab)normality of mental functioning” should be a necessary part of the meaning of the “(ir)rational”<sup>12</sup>.

We can go even further and look at our own everyday lives. How many times per day, being mentally well-functioning, we act irrationally? Perhaps when we procrastinate because of some fear or while trying to avoid some, even minor, inconvenience? Or maybe when we are lazy or just tired and so do not pick up the tasks that we acknowledge it would be best for us to do now? Or when in the morning the alarm clock goes on and you turn it off telling yourself that you will be up in five minutes, at the same time not believing this at all; perhaps even knowing that it will not happen, and knowing it is best for you to get up right now, but not doing it. When you knowingly succumb to the lure of advertising and buy something you do not need? Are you being irrational? I would say that in all of these and many other cases we are irrational, and even by our own lights, if we are sincere enough to acknowledge it.

Therefore, contrary to the position of the RI critics, I hold irrationality to be a pervasive phenomenon of everyone’s daily life, not just some abnormality that necessarily happens only to the psychologically impaired. I claim that the group of words (necessarily or not) referring to (or possible to categorize as) “irrational” is wider than that which would refer to the “abnormally mentally functioning”, and that the latter does not necessarily entail the former.

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<sup>12</sup> Even the aforementioned “insane”, “crazy”, “nonsense” and the like.

What matters to attribution of the “(ir)rational” is whether the coherence relation of some kind holds (or not), not whether the person is functioning normally. To put it otherwise, *it is not in virtue of the poor functioning of the brain that one is irrational, but in virtue of one’s psychological states being incoherent*. And the poor mental functioning is among those factors that sometimes can explain – not necessarily as causal explanations – the incoherence: “Rage, passion, depression, distraction, grief, physical or mental illness: all these things could cause us to act irrationally” (Korsgaard 1986: 13).

So at this point we are already able to answer the critics of the RI that their critique based on the presupposition that rationality necessarily implies normal mental functioning, fails. It is quite to the contrary of what they claim: the ordinary usage of the term “rational” and its cognates indicates that rationality, as well as irrationality, are attributes that pertain to those who function normally and are “even happy” equally well as to those who do not – depending on the characteristics of their singular actions or decisions. Irrationality is not a diagnosis; it is because of the diagnosis that it can be pardoned, in some sense justified, or at least understood.

### **Criticism towards the Claim (2)**

Similarly, but even more pressingly, goes Strandberg’s argument targeted at claim (2). He suggests to consider some cases in which a person has more than one normative reason for action. In one such case, a seriously ill person is presented with a certain available medical treatment and its side effect. Then, she has two incompat-

ible reasons: to  $\phi$  (the act being “to accept the medical treatment”, for the reason that it will save her life) and to  $\neg$  (“to decline the treatment”, reason being that because of the treatment she will not be able to drink coffee for one minute). According to the normative internalism claim, even if this person considers the reason for  $\phi$ -ing to be “absolutely the strongest reason”, and that one for  $\neg$ -ing an “*extremely* much weaker” reason, she has to be motivated to do both, “*in order to be entirely rational*; ... she must be *irrational* to a certain extent *unless* she is motivated to act in that way” (Strandberg 2012: 9). However, Strandberg thinks we can hold her *entirely rational* even if she is not motivated (even to some extent) to decline the treatment, or, on the other hand, that she may be so motivated, *even if* she is rational. So the consideration of the presented case shows that competent language users need not agree that someone not motivated to act on an extremely much weaker reason (that is not motivated even *to some extent*) is necessarily irrational. Therefore, the intuitive conception of (ir)rationality to which, according to Strandberg, rationalist internalists purportedly appeal cannot secure the conceptually necessary relation between all and every reason and motivation to act accordingly.

In so far as Strandberg’s position relies on the conception of rationality that is misconstrued, as I have already shown, we have answered his worry. However, there is more to this critique: it seems that we can hold the person from the case rational (i.e. coherent) as well. Should the insignificant incoherence (not responding with motivation to the weakest of reasons) in-



fluence our judgement of the person? This is a sensible question to ask.

Strandberg's own position is such that in the cases he considers we hold such a person *entirely* rational. I suppose that here Strandberg is criticizing Smith's conception of *full* rationality, and does it by appealing to our intuitive understanding of full rationality. So let us now turn to Smith.

### **Smith: Conceptions of Full and Practical Rationality**

Smith's "full rationality", though, is not and should not, as I will claim further on, be an intuitive notion, therefore, one cannot intuit whether somebody is fully rational or not. According to Smith, "the idea of someone's being fully rational is itself a *summary* notion. The role of this idea in the analysis is thus to capture, in summary style, a whole host of more specific platitudes about practical rationality" (Smith 1994: 155-6). The difference between full rationality and rationality of some other kind, say, practical rationality (in its narrow sense), must be highlighted.

Smith adopts a slightly reinterpreted version of the conception of *full* rationality given by Bernard Williams which is spelled out in three conditions:

- (i) the agent must have no false beliefs
- (ii) the agent must have all relevant true beliefs
- (iii) the agent must deliberate correctly (Smith 1994: 156).

Smith, though, explicates the third condition differently than Williams<sup>13</sup>. As

rational deliberation is taken to be a way of generating new and extinguishing old desires, it is to be such as to sanction only the desires of an appropriate kind. Smith believes that we deliberate, i.e., generate new and extinguish old desires "by trying to integrate the object of that desire into a more coherent and unified desiderative profile and evaluative outlook" (Smith 1994: 159). And this procedure is "straightforwardly analogous" to what Rawls says about beliefs. So Smith takes the third condition of correct deliberation to be the condition of attempt at systematic justification. In other words, he takes it to consist in a procedure very similar to the Rawlsian "reflective equilibrium": it is a process of systematic justification of our desires. That means that full rationality is defined by the idealized epistemic conditions (i) and (ii) and the requirement of coherence (condition (iii) explicated differently than by Williams).

First of all, these are conditions for reason and moral judgement formation, as for Smith the moral judgement consists in a belief that one would desire that one  $\varphi$  in circumstances  $C$  if one had a maximally informed and coherent and unified desire set. So the conditions define, first of all, an idealized deliberator, not the actual deliberator. However, for a person to actually *be* fully rational, one has to, other things being equal<sup>14</sup>, *have* the desire to  $\varphi$  in  $C$ , in the face of the aforementioned belief (that one would desire that one oneself  $\varphi$ s in  $C$  if one had a maximally informed and coherent and unified desire set), and that belief to be true.

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<sup>13</sup> I leave out of this paper explication and discussion of Williams' account of "correct deliberation" as irrelevant for our purposes.

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<sup>14</sup> Keeping presupposed that it is *because of* the belief, and not just accidentally, that the desire is had.

So even if a person is motivated to do something that one believes one has a reason to do, but that belief is not true, Smith would say that such person's "overall psychological state cannot be maximally coherent" (Smith 1997: 100, n. 18), that she is not fully rational, but we would grant her "practical rationality" narrowly conceived. Practical rationality requires us to have the desires that we believe we would have being fully rational (Smith 2007: 288). And this type of rationality is fully compatible with theoretical irrationality, "a failure in the way she forms her judgment as to what is desirable" (Pettit, Smith 1993: 59).

So those who desire to do what they believe they have a reason to do, are *at least practically* rational, and if those beliefs are true (they would indeed desire precisely that, were they fully rational), then, other things being equal, they are even *fully* rational.

This analysis needs to be accompanied by a couple of cautions. "Fully rational" (as already noted about the "rational") does not characterize a person in general (as if one was immune to irrationalities at any point in time, or in all one's decisions, or rational "in general" or so), but only in relation to some action or decision. It means, one's certain action<sup>15</sup> is beyond rational criticism. Besides, "fully rational" here is first of all defined in relation to one

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<sup>15</sup> I take it that "action" here is described normatively, that is by citing one's normative reason, perhaps, together with the moral judgement, or so. Here I leave the motivational reasons discussion out. It may very well be that I should explicate requirements for full rationality even more, that is, add that the strength of the normative practical judgement should cohere with the strength of the corresponding motivation to act accordingly. I presuppose this, even if arguing for the need of it is to be left for another publication.

reason, or in a *pro tanto* sense<sup>16</sup>. Thus a weird sounding result in Standberg's cases: one can be "fully rational" with regard to one reason, and not "fully rational" with regard to another. However, I believe that it is a minor linguistic problem, a price one has to pay for choosing as one's basic unit the *pro tanto* reasons. The final or overall "full rationality" of the decision or action (*all things considered*) would depend on the full rationality of each and every minor decision anyway.

As already said, we can talk about different "rationalities", or requirements of coherence among different elements or sets of elements of psyche (or elements and sets of elements). Hence the differing meanings of "rationality" (and, accordingly, of "irrationality"). One person can judge someone as rational, and another can judge the same person irrational, but in different respects (for example, as the one in whom the means cohere with the goals set, and as the one in whom the goals set do not cohere with the goals to be set, etc.). However, the fully rational is the one who satisfies all of the relevant requirements of coherence and so is immune to any further rational critique (with regard to a specific action). We can talk about "rationality", of course, as about "full rationality", having the (pervasive) requirement of coherence in mind. But equally well we can, analytically, talk about rationalities, where "rational" signals that *some* of the coherence requirements has or have been met, "rational" being used as a narrow notion in-

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<sup>16</sup> "Action", therefore, is not a description of an actual action, but of the possible one – it is a normative description. We are discussing, for the moment, the normative aspect of it.

dicating coherence of *some* psychological states of an agent. If we think about rationality in the wide sense (as “full rationality”), then we can even talk about *degrees* of rationality.

### **Less than Full Rationality and Satisfied Intuitions**

If we can accept the analysis of full rationality and the accompanying considerations that I have presented so far, then it should be clear that any single linguistic intuition of the competent language users cannot reliably track “full rationality”, and that “rational” is usually used to denote only one or another instance of (not full) coherence. I claim that an adequate notion of “full rationality” is to comprise *all* those instances of coherence that are traced by competent language users in their usage of the corresponding “thick” notions. Rationality is defined positively by words expressive of coherence, and negatively – by words expressive of failures in coherence. However, none of the “thick” notions taken on their own can define and no separate intuitions can track *full rationality*. Therefore, criticism based on the presupposition that intuitively we hold people fully (or entirely) rational has no force.

Moreover, if the concept “rational” can be attributed to people exhibiting far less than perfect rationality, then the rationalist internalists can share Strandberg’s intuitions, and still deny his conclusion. It seems that, as full rationality consists in a whole set of requirements of coherence, irrationality can occur as infringement of any one of these. Smith uses such phrases as “full rationality” and “pure practical rationality”, “local” and “global” coherence, and

“even more global requirements of coherence”, setting even the “minimal standard of local coherence”<sup>17</sup>, which indicates the existence of quite a spectrum of rationality. This means, that referring to the examples in Strandberg’s paper, one could agree that we do find people rational if they are motivated to act in the way backed by the “absolutely strongest reason”. However, we may not hold such a person *entirely rational*, as being exempt from any rational criticism – if only because she is incoherent with respect to one’s weaker reason. Though in fact, to hold one *entirely* rational we should know much more (we have clarified the conditions for full rationality before). However, to be sure, for the RI to be true it is enough that the person is practically rational, it is not necessary that she is fully rational.

So we have an appropriate answer to Strandberg’s claim that “even if the considerations I have offered do not defeat (2), they provide evidence against it, since they suggest that competent language users may reasonably doubt it” (Strandberg 2012: 12). The competent language users will attribute rationality to the person in question, recognizing one’s coherence in one respect, but they can equally well attribute this same person irrationality in another respect, or say, all in all, that such a person is rational, but apparently not entirely; maybe – irrational to some extent. The “fully rational” self is exempt from rational criticism; however, our less than fully rational selves can be vulnerable to

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<sup>17</sup> Necessary for somebody to count as an agent at all (Smith 2004: 107). Here he is entering into the sphere of motivational reasons as well, but it does not change my point.

rational criticism because of some or another infringement of coherence requirement, and still be rational as complying with some other coherence requirement(s). For example, people can be practically rational, that is, exhibit coherence of one's normative belief and desire to act accordingly, and "may still fall far short of full rationality: that is, their desires may not yet be maximally informed and coherent and unified" (Smith 1997: 100, n. 18).

What they really need not to adhere to, is that such a person is somehow *globally*, *totally* or *very* irrational. But this can be accepted by the RI as well. However, the competent language users do not need to *intuit* that any person is fully rational, for that, they would need to *reflect*.

## Conclusions

To recapitulate, I claim that the criticism to the extent that rationality is an insufficient condition to secure the necessary relation that the rationalist internalism is after, fails. At least the version of the RI that consists in an argument with the *pro tanto* reading of the "normative reason", and in so far as the conception of rational-

ity employed is that of psychological coherence of the agent, is on good grounds. Both the criticism targeted at claim (3) and the one targeted at claim (2) rely on the wrong supposition about rationality. The first line of criticism holds that irrationality necessarily implies mental malfunctioning of the agent. However, the analysis of the folk usage of the terms defining rationality speaks in favour of the element of mental coherence rather than that of normal mental functioning as their common denominator. The second line, along with the aforementioned flaw, in addition misinterprets the notion of *full* rationality, which is actually neither intuitive nor a necessary condition for the RI to hold. Therefore, the criticism based on the intuitions of the competent language users that the motivationally indifferent need not be fully irrational, leaves the RI untouched as well.

So based on what I've said, I believe we can see that an account of rationality is apt enough to secure the necessary relation between the moral judgements (as well as the normative reasons in the second premise) and the respective motivation, whereas the resulting account of irrationality – to account for all the cases of motivational indifference.

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## RACIONALUMAS: NORMALUS PSICHINIS FUNKCIONAVIMAS AR PSICHOLOGINIS KOHERENTIŠKUMAS?

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#### S a n t r a u k a

Racionalistinio internalizmo argumento versija, normatyvus pagrindo terminą vartojanti *pro tanto* reikšme, neretai kritikuojama nusitaikius į jos racionalumo sampratą. Teigiama, kad veikėjo racionalumo sąlyga nėra pakankama būtinam ryšiui tarp moralinio sprendinio arba normatyvus pagrindo bei atitinkamos motyvacijos veiksmui užtikrinti. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad tokia kritika remiasi klaidinga prielaida, jog racionalumas tapatintinas su normaliu psichiniu funkcionavimu. Parodoma, kad racionalistiniams internalistams racionalumas yra ir turėtų būti

tapatintinas veikiau su vidiniu veikėjo psichologijos koherentiškumu, o atitinkama iracionalumo samprata pajėgi apimti visus motyvaciniam internalizmui tariamai prieštaraujančius atvejus. Taip pat patikslinama, jog „visiškas racionalumas“ nėra nei intuityvi sąvoka, nei būtina sąlyga racionalistinio internalizmo teisingumui, todėl kritika, besiremianti šia sąvoka, nepasiekia tikslo.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** racionalistinis internalizmas, racionalumas, koherentiškumas, visiškas racionalumas, *pro tanto* normatyvus pagrindas.

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