

# The “Ought” Involving Requirements of Rationality and the “Ought” Involving Reasons

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**Abstract:** *What we ought to do seems to be influenced by two different elements. One is our beliefs and intentions; the other is the requirement of rationality. There are, correspondingly, two approaches of explaining ‘ought’ statement, one goes the way that ‘ought’ associates an agent with something he has reasons to do, the other goes that ‘ought’ represents the rational requirement that demands agent’ actions to be consistent with her attitude towards propositions. In this paper, I try to analyze the grammatical basis and normative characteristics of the above approaches. I argue that the two approaches can be combined because our attitude to propositions requires us to produce reasons for action, and rationality ensures that we rationally get decisive reasons for our actions through a set of rational principles.*

**Keywords:** Normativity, Deliberation, Reasons, Rationality.

## 1. Introduction

Many ‘ought’ statements are used to express normative meaning in our daily language. For example, (1) ‘If I make a promise, I ought to keep it.’ (2) ‘If I believe I ought to play my phone less, I ought to play my phone less.’ (3) ‘If I want to eat. I ought to go to the canteen.’ (4) ‘I ought to do what I decide to do, taking all the known information and my sound reason into account.’ (5) ‘I ought to not do what seems impossible, and I ought to do what seems more possible.’ (6) ‘For moral reasons, I ought to respect my parents.’ Intuitively these sentences express different normative requirements, including the maintenance of coherent beliefs, the search for appropriate means to an end, the demands of the rational person, to do what is more reliable and to respond to the demands of morality. Although they are all normative requirements that we need to respond to, some of them exhibit incompatible characteristics. Roughly speaking, in some statements, agent's desires, beliefs, and actions that have been done will affect what she ought to do. e.g. (1), (2), (3). But there are other statements in which what the agent ought to do is not influenced by subjective factors and thus seems unassailable, especially those that express the principles of rationality and moral requirements. e.g. (4), (5), (6).

This classification reflects two understandings of the ‘ought’ statements [1]. The first is that “ought” links an agent with his action, namely  $S$  ought to  $\phi$ , which expresses the attitude or behavior that the agent must have under conditions. In statement (1), we naturally assume that I am convinced that my promise makes me ought to keep it, and that if no promise, then there is no need for me to keep it. Statement (2) and (3) is similar. I call this explanation the ‘behavioral perspective’ to indicate that the function of the ‘ought’ here is to guide an action type. The second is that ‘ought’ governs the whole proposition, namely Ought (p, q), which expresses the coherence of our attitudes. Our attitude towards one proposition necessarily produces another attitude towards other propositions. This necessity comes out through rationality. On the one hand, this explanation caters to those normative requirements that seems unassailable, so it can be used to explain the statement (4), (5) and (6). On the other hand, it shows the coherent relationship between our attitude towards propositions. For example, for the statement (3), it is

strange that I want to eat but don’t go to the canteen, and strange that I want to go to the canteen but don’t want to eat, so it shows the necessity of two attitudes relating to each other in the right way. I call this explanation the ‘propositional perspective’ to indicate that the function of the ‘ought’ here is to guide the proposition as an operator.

This paper seeks to explore the reasons that support these two very different perspectives and whether they can be combined. In the first part, I will explain the grammatical evidence that leads to the two perspectives. Since both explanations undermine grammar to some extent, it seems that we should give up looking for grammatical support; In part 2 and part 3 I will examine the normative characteristics emphasized by the two perspectives respectively, and in part 4 I will argue that how the two perspectives can be united.

## 2. The Unreliability of Grammar

Both perspectives attempt to find the basis for their own interpretations from the English grammar. On the surface, grammatically it seems that ‘ought’ connects an agent with an action because it is followed by an infinitival phrase. This supports the behavioral perspective. However, proponents of the propositional perspective are not satisfied with this interpretation because it cannot explain some ‘ought’ statements concerning nonhuman things, e.g. ‘The knife ought to be sharp’. More seriously, in practical reasoning, it would lead to unacceptable conclusions, they call it “the detaching problem” [2]. So, they rewrite the infinitival phrase after ‘ought’ as a subordinate clause. For example, ‘you ought to relax.’ is rewritten as ‘You ought that you relax.’; ‘If I want to eat. I ought to go to the canteen.’ is rewritten as ‘I ought (to go to the canteen, if I want to eat.)’. They admit that this is an ‘ugly’ strategy and search for different ways to rewrite it depending on the situation, for example, ‘You ought to see to it that you relax.’ and ‘It ought to be the case that you relax.’ Anyway, what they are trying to say is that we must treat the parts of the sentence other than ‘ought’ as an indivisible whole, because ‘ought’ expresses the relationship between them.

Another argument elaborated by Finlay is that since ‘ought’ is not a control verb, but a raising verb, ‘ought’ does not guide specific behavior but a subordinate clause. In short, although

it needs to say, 'ought to be the Max mingles with the crowd', in order to meet the requirements grammatically the sentence needs a subject, we say 'Max ought to mingle with the crowd [3].'

However, the above rewrite will result in difficulty to understand some sentences, not only grammatically, but also in terms of content. For example, this leads to such a situation, as Schroeder argues, that we don't understand the following sentence 'You ought that I go to the store [1].' Another problem comes that the ascription of actions in some sentences only to agents, now inappropriately to nonhuman things, e.g. 'It ought to be the case that (the deficit shrinks).' Some contextualists use traditional modal theory to improve the propositional perspective, so that 'You ought that I go to the store.' can be explained as how well you meet your responsibility for 'I go to the store' in a given world of modal context and value ranking. Also 'It ought to be the case that (the deficit shrinks)' can also be said to omit a prominent subject: the government. In a certain context. When we are asked 'What makes the government cut down expenditure?', our answer 'the deficit ought to shrink' can be considered reasonable.

Although the above defense seems to make the sentence understandable, it greatly expands the field of argument. It seems to tell us that, if there is an ad hoc context, we can understand a sentence no matter how messy it is grammatically. Unless it persuasively argues that the grammatical breakdown of these sentences is necessary for us to express the meaning of the sentences, and that the omission of certain parts of the sentences is necessary for us to express the meaning of the sentences. It's a huge job. In addition, such an explanation goes beyond the intuitive use of daily language. In any case, when I say, 'I ought to go to the store', I want to simply express an intentional action rather than agree with a proposition, and I don't consider what effect this action can have on the possible world. However, we cannot explain normative language entirely by intuition. As contextualism tells us, emphasis on different parts of a sentence can lead to multiple interpretations of the meaning of it. The sentence 'I ought to go to the store' can be interpreted as that 'I' am the one who should go to the store, or it can be interpreted as that I should go to the store as 'an obligation', or that What I should do is to 'go to the store'. Therefore, it seems that what the sentence is highlighting in a particular context is more important than what it expresses in its superficial grammar.

To sum up, it is persuasive that the explanation of normative language from both perspectives does not follow English grammar completely and goes against intuition in some special cases. Therefore, it is advisable that we should give up the requirement of grammar and language structure when we interpret ought statements and pay more attention to the normative characteristics we intend to express in the use of normative language.

### 3. Normative Characteristics of Behavioral Perspective

The behavioral perspective first wants to tell us that unless it is associated with a specific agent, it cannot effectively explain some things that ought to be done, that is, 'ought to

do' has the property of 'agent-relation'. Think of a typical example, "doing something evil could prevent at least two more people from doing it." It is still natural for us to accept that we ought not to do it. Schroeder argues that propositional perspectives fail to explain this intuition, because if 'ought' governs a proposition, then you ought not to do something evil for its inherent evil, and the same with others for the same reasons. However, as you have only one reason against doing something evil, but more than two reasons to do the evil, that is to prevent more people from doing evil things. Therefore, from the propositional perspective, in the weighting of reasons, you ought not to do this. But the behavioral perspective makes sense for this intuition, because the reasons why other people don't do evil are not as good as the reasons why you stop them from doing evil, and maybe the value of not doing evil yourself is far greater than the value of preventing others from doing evil. Similarly, the most critical point proposed from the behavioral perspective is to maintain the correlation between agent and action, in which agents' desires and beliefs can conveniently explain his normative action.

But it's not a good example, contextualism has ample resources to explain this example in support of the propositional perspective. Contextualists claim that specific contexts give specific parameters to measure the value of actions. For example, Frank, in his background, knows the value of not doing evil for himself and not doing evil for others, and knows which is better for him, to do evil to save more people or not to do evil for himself. Besides contextualism, propositional perspectives also have resources to explain such examples. After all, propositional perspectives do not only depend on the true value of propositions, nor does it necessarily to assume that the same propositions have the same value to different people. It's perfectly possible to argue that we have a different attitude to the proposition 'You ought to not do evil' and the proposition 'You ought to do evil to prevent more people from doing it', which gives the two propositions a ranking in terms of value. However, it is fair to say that no matter what the above propositional perspective defends, it only contains the relationship between action and agent in a hidden way. For example, suppose that for John in the same situation, the context also gives him the ranking of the value of his actions according to the propositional perspective. But we can ask, do Frank and John have the same attitude or the same degree of value ranking? Supporters of proposition perspective will answer that their two attitudes are not necessarily the same, because the context is limited by personal preference, and different agents have different sensitivity to the same proposition, resulting in different attitudes to the proposition. However, this is tantamount to admitting that the interpretation of the normative action still needs to be associated with the agent, which goes back to the characteristics captured by the behavioral perspective.

It is worth noting that the behavior perspective is based on two principles: one is the principle of reasons fundamentalism, that all normative concepts can be reduced to the fundamental normative concept of 'reasons'; the second is the principle of Hume, that any obligation or reasons can be the simplest explanation out of desires and beliefs. The combination of these two principles gives a great deal of confidence in the behavioral perspective to try to restore any 'ought' statements

to a statement about having reasons to do something, and then explain it in terms of beliefs and desires.

But we generally think of 'having reasons to do something' as merely subjective relation to the agent, it doesn't express 'ought to do something' in an objective sense. For example, for an apparently objective statement, 'If you want to be a good serial killer, you ought to kill as many people as you can.' whether or not you really want to be a serial killer, you can't deny that killing as many people as possible is necessary to be a good serial killer, so we say that the normative relationship between the premise and the conclusion is objective. The propositional perspective claim that the relation between premise and conclusion is the objective requirement of rational coherence. If you intend to be a good serial killer but don't want to kill as many people as possible, then something is clearly wrong. If you don't intend to be a good serial killer but want to kill as many people as possible, then clearly something is wrong with you, too. So, if the behavioral perspective intends to accommodate this example with 'subjective reasons', how does it explain the objectivity that appears in this proposition? According to Schroeder, for the above sentence, 'ought' can be replaced with a weaker normative term, the sentence will be rewritten as 'If you want to be a good serial killer, you have subjective reasons to kill as many people as possible.' Although it seems that this rewriting highlights a distinction between subjective 'ought' and objective 'ought'. Subjectively, you have reasons to choose the means to respond to your desires; objectively, killing as many people as possible is indeed a necessary means for anyone to become a serial killer. But Schroeder argues that in fact the objective normative relationship doesn't work in terms of the reasons for an agent to do something. Assuming that in fact killing as many people as possible is not a necessary condition for becoming a serial killer, the objective fact is that killing as secretly as possible is a better way to become a serial killer, but we don't know that. Nevertheless, you can still say that if you want to be a serial killer, you have subjective reasons to kill as many people as possible, because for you to believe that killing as many people as possible is necessary to be a good serial killer. So, whether objectively killing as many people as possible is necessary for you to become a serial killer doesn't actually affect how rationally you feel justified in doing something based on your beliefs. As a result, Schroeder seems to believe that the objective, rational requirement described by propositional arguments do not actually influence our choice of action [1]. In addition, other scholars have argued that the objective requirement is only a structure of reasons and our sensitivity to that structure [4]. This forces us to think further about the structure of reasons and our psychological processes in response to rational requirements.

Moreover, supporters of behavioral perspective also attack the objective requirement of rational coherence asserted by propositional perspective in three aspects. The first is that our casual use of daily language may make us use 'ought' statement less strictly. In any case, we should not kill as many people as possible. Maybe when we use this sentence, we are not trying to say strictly that we ought to do something, but we are just to say that we have some reasons to do it. Secondly, the premises and the conclusion are not that closely related. In the real situation, we do not make a decision, or we agree with

both the premises and the conclusions without linking them. Thirdly, the source of the requirement for rational coherence is difficult to explain. It seems to tell us that our beliefs and reasons are not helpful for us to judge whether our behavior is rational or not, and that rational cognition is only based on some eternal and mysterious requirements. This is obviously counterintuitive, and if so, we will not need to believe any deliberative evidence. The behavioral perspective, on the other hand, can be well explained by The Hume doctrine that it is beliefs and desires that influence what reasons we have to do something. If there is an objective normative requirement, it must affect our inner beliefs and desires in order for it to work on us. This seems to be one of the simplest and least preconceived explanations.

But we also admit some intuitions that are different from the above. For example, when we need to respond to some normative requirement, we find it mandatory so that we have to disregard our own preferences and beliefs. The most typical is the kind of requirement known as a moral requirement or categorical imperative, if we violate them, we are severely punished, both by conscience and by social pressure. The behavioral perspective cannot explain this normative power, because if we don't do something we have a decisive reason to do, we are only subjective wrong with the choice for some reasons. So, we only need to modify deliberation without being threatened by any strictly normative power. But how do we explain the strict normative power? The propositional perspective intends to take this part as its own advantage.

#### 4. Normative Characteristics of Propositional Perspective

The propositional perspective is a confusing perspective that seems to be understood on multiple levels. The first one emphasizes the 'implication' relationship between propositions that makes us commit the truth of one proposition when we agree to that of another. Take Broome's example 'you ought (to believe the world was made in less than a week, if you believe it was made in six days) [5].' In general, we have no normative requirements to believe the world was made in less than a week, but if you believe it was made in six days, it is necessary for you to believe the world was made in less than a week. Such a requirement of rational coherence depends on the relevance of the contents of two propositions, if the two propositions are identical in content or can be derived from one to the other, then it is obviously problematic or contrary to rationality that we are in favor of one and against the other. In such cases, the power of the normativity comes from the requirements of the logic. In order for us not to be logically contradictory, we need to obey the requirements of some principles, such as  $p=p$ , and if  $(p, p \rightarrow q)$ , then  $q$ . This makes us rationally obliged to admit the coherence of the two propositions. If we agree with both  $p$  and non- $p$ , we are clearly in wrong, and the problem here is a logical one. It's obviously different from the consideration that there's a reason to do something.

The second one emphasizes that our existing attitudes to propositions will rationally require us to produce other attitudes or actions. The obvious difference from the first point above is that the first point relies on the relevance of the contents of the two propositions, and the second emphasizes

that an attitude based on one proposition requires us to produce another attitude, whatever the other attitude may be. Simply put, your beliefs and intentions require you to guarantee certain things. Whether what is guaranteed is specific behavior or confirmed by rational weighing. For example, if you do intend to get a job, and agree with the proposition 'If you want a job, you need to fill out an application form.' Rationality will then require you to produce an action that is to fill out the application form. Another example, if you believe that 'you ought to go to the canteen', rationality requires that you guarantee an attitude of 'go to the canteen'. It is worth noting again that our attitude towards propositions does not necessarily produce concrete action, but rather a motive for action. This allows us to generate motivation for actions based solely on existing attitudes, regardless of other circumstances. For example, if you want to eat fresh fish, you have a motivation to go fishing. But if you get some information that there's a 70 percent chance of rain (which would discourage fishing) and only a 10 percent chance of catching a fish. Given these facts we may ask, are there any reasons for you to go fishing? Obviously, whether there is a reason to go fishing or not depends on all the facts, but what the propositional perspective emphasizes here is that the attitude of wanting to eat fresh fish makes you motivated to do something, independent of other information. Proponents argue that this is also strictly normative requirement, because no matter how particular our preferences and beliefs may be, as long as we explicitly have one attitude, it is inevitable to produce another attitude, without the need for a complex deliberative process. But I doubt the strength of this derivative attitude. For example, I believe I ought to donate money to poor children, but I haven't actually done that so far. So how do I know that my attitude of believing that I should donate money does produce a motive for an action? It is strange that I have a rational need to make sure that I donate money, but I never realize it in my life. Maybe one day I see a donation box when walking down the street, and I remember what I believe in and then I donate money. What motivates me at this point is my attitude toward the donation and the fact that I see the donation box. Perhaps we have to admit that facts play a role in generating motivation. Without the help of facts, our attitude towards a proposition can only generate latent motivation, which cannot produce specific action solely.

The third seems to emphasize a set of principles that are hard to understand intuitively. Although the above two points regard 'ought' as an operator guiding propositions, we can at least easily understand it as a symbol of rational requirements. The third point regards 'ought' as a modal operator, that is, 'ought' as a quantifier of possibility. In a proposition ought(p), the proposition in bracket expresses a constrained possible world, this constrained possible world has the resources to rank the value of facts or action in it, in which "ought" acts as the world's measurer. Ought (p) is true only when the relevant background decides the best world is World-p. It is hard to say what the meaning of 'ought' expresses in this interpretation, because when we use normative terms in daily language, we do not intend to use it to quantify the possible world, nor to treat it as a comparative concept such as 'more likely' or 'better'. On the face of it, it's just a sign with a normative meaning. So, what normative characteristics does such interpretation capture? First, it seems to express an improved

principle of 'ought to imply can', expressed as 'you ought to do what is more likely to be realized'. Further, according to Finlay's explanation of deliberating process, it seems to express that 'I ought to do things that all the given information, all the rational principles and agent's preference been taken into account.' But this explanation is too complicated to follow our intuition, it also faces its own problems. For example, Kratzer's semantic theory requires the analysis of a series of inferences produced from itself, meanwhile falls into trouble with the source of 'ordering source' [6]. Finlay has to discuss how to highlight an end in context and how that end works.

The normative characters captured by propositional perspective are multi-level but not ambiguous. Three kinds of interpretation above are all about highlighting a rational requirement different from the requirement that arises from deliberation. Deliberation is the process of weighing reasons in which a reason is justified only if it can be sufficiently supported to override the other reasons and thus become the decisive one. Therefore, there is always a competitive relation between reasons. But the rational requirement does not depend on deliberative process, and we do not deliberate to obtain a rational requirement on us. However, once we have one attitude, we are necessarily required to have other attitudes. Broome argues that the difference between the two requirements can be seen in the wrongness when they are violated. If you get a wrong reason for going against deliberation, it's no big deal, because the reasons itself can easily be overturned by other reasons. All you need to do in the deliberative process is gather more information, think more deeply, and choose a more appropriate reason. For example, if you think the reason for you to drink something in a glass is that it's cocktail, but in fact you have a wrong reason, what in the glass is gasoline, then in order to avoid the mistake, you just need to add factual information to your consideration and tell yourself and there is no reason to drink. But if you incorrectly respond to the rational requirement, then you are in the wrong state, you need to correct inconsistent attitudes or sort out inconsistent beliefs and intentions. For example, if you are sure that 'If I want to eat, I ought to go to the canteen', and make sure that you want to eat, but you don't go to the canteen. The mistake here is not one that can be avoided by gathering more information and thinking more deeply, but one that requires you to correct your incoherent attitude, either that you don't actually want to eat, or that you don't believe 'If I want to eat. I ought to go to the canteen.', or that you go to the canteen.

## 5. A Possible Combination of the Two Perspectives

From the above discussion, the most obvious conclusion is that the two perspectives respectively respond to two different normative characteristics. Simply put, one is sensitive to the beliefs and desires of agents, while the other is sensitive to the requirements of rationality itself. It seems that the two characteristics are mutually exclusive. Next, I will argue an approach that is compatible with these two normative characteristics.

The initial idea of this approach comes from Parfit, he argues that if the truth of belief gives you apparent reasons to do



something, then rationality requires you to respond to those reasons [7]. But there are two problems with this connection. 1) The truth of a belief is not the same as our attitude towards it; rational requirements sometimes arise from the fact that we want to make a belief come true. 2) Rationality's response to reasons and reasons itself may be two completely different things, which makes them not closely connected. So, I improved the idea a little bit.

The connecting point is that our attitude towards a proposition will give us reasons to support or oppose an attitude or produce a specific action, and this whole process is one of the representations of requirements of rationality, it requires us to take into account the requirements of rationality when seeking suitable reasons for our actions.

For example, when you stand at a donation box and ask yourself if there is a reason to donate money to poor children, you believe that 'I ought to donate money to poor children' can be a good reason to give money away, which, without other facts, can be the decisive reason. Without other facts, if you believe that 'I ought to donate money to poor children' but see no reason why you ought to donate, then clearly something is rationally wrong. Therefore, we can express this example as: you ought (to have a reason to donate money, if you believe you ought to donate money to poor children). This is in line with one of our intuitions: when we ask ourselves why there is a reason to do something, we do not simply seek an explanation for our action but require to sincerely believe that there is sufficient evidence to support our action. That is, rationality requires us to think about what the real reasons is. This emphasizes the kind of rational requirement that we analyze in Part 3, and its normative power is strict without other facts. But if influenced by other facts, the power of rational requirement is weakened. In the case of the donation, although you believe in 'I ought to donate money to poor children', it occurs to you that your wife is severely sick and needs a large sum of money. Now, though rationality requires that you respect your beliefs, stronger reasons outweigh them, and deliberation tell you that it is more important to leave money to your wife than to donate it to poor children, even if that means going against your beliefs. Despite rational requirement giving rise to reasons for action, that reason is inevitably overwhelmed by other stronger reasons. This is consistent with the kind of characteristics we described in Part 2 and highlights the role of deliberation in choosing a reason for an action. If the above explanation is correct, we have found a way to accommodate the two characteristics of normativity.

However, our attitudes towards propositions does not always give us reason for action. For example, my belief that "this charger works on my computer" is not a reason for the action that 'I charge my computer' or the intention that 'I want to use this charger'. Because it is likely that my computer does not need to be charged or that the charger belongs to someone else. Our attitude to this proposition gives us no reason at all to do anything. On the contrary, in some cases, our attitudes towards certain propositions can itself produce sufficient reasons to act, such as my belief that 'it is unjust to kill innocent people' is sufficient to sustain a reason not to kill innocent people. We generally think that these two cases arise because the former is only descriptive propositions, while the

latter is moral or normative propositions. But in fact, both are misleading, the understanding of the former is too weak, the understanding of the latter is too strong. When I believe that 'this charger works on my computer', it gives me a reason to focus on this charger, after all, maybe it will work for me sometime. While this reason is a weak one that can be overwhelmed by other reasons at any time, it is stronger than 'This charger doesn't work on my computer,' because the latter gives us a reason not to pay attention to the charger. So, it's not that it doesn't give us a reason to do anything. When I believe that 'it is unjust to kill innocent people', it doesn't give us an absolute reason to avoid killing in any case, because we always consider other facts in the practice of deliberation, if you are also in favor of the proposition 'for the most people's happiness we must murder a small number of people', you have more reasons to oppose 'it is unjust to kill innocent people'. Thus, a complete consideration of what can be a reason for my action takes both the rational requirements based on believing that some propositions are true, and the strength of reason in the deliberating process into account.

A further argument comes from an example of Finlay, which describes how two normative characteristics work together to generate motivation for behavior. Consider the following example, Agent S needs to choose either envelope A or Envelope B, or envelope C. S knows that one of A and B is empty and the other one has 1,500\$; and C has 1,000\$. Suppose S's preference is to get the maximum economic benefit. In this case, S's belief that 'one of A and B is empty and the other has 1500\$'; 'C has 1000\$' and 'I want to get the most out of it.' really makes her want to make a choice, but it doesn't tell her what kind of choice she should make. Because in this example, in order to make a correct choice, we must also consider the comparison of effectiveness and realization. The effectiveness of taking an envelope from A or B is 50% of the probability of getting 750\$, while C is 100% of the probability of getting 1000\$. So taking all things into consideration, choosing Envelope C to ensure 1000\$ seems to be what S has a decisive reason to do. Thus, we can see that in the complex deliberating process, our own intentions and attitudes to propositions require us to take certain actions, and our weighting of reasons determines which actions we take.

But this argument is imperfect, although the characteristics of both perspectives need to work at the same time, they can still be different things. If S has sound reason and have a proper deliberative process but chooses to take A or B envelope, then we will doubt whether she has sound reason; If S has sound reason but chooses A or B envelope because of a calculation error of effectiveness and realization, then we assume that there is something wrong with her deliberative process and that her thinking needs to be corrected.

So, It's necessary to argue that sound reason has a rational requirement to ensure the correctness of deliberation, that is it requires us to reasonably choose actions that have decisive reasons in the light of existing beliefs and intentions.

I think this is a persuasive point, because the deliberating process itself requires the help of some rational principles. As noted above, if the deliberation's nature considers what constitutes the reason for an action, what determines those considerations? In a simple case, such as we need to choose

salad or noodles for lunch, which trumps the other and give us decisive reason to choose, without other facts, depends on such a principle of rationality ‘You have decisive reasons to do what you prefer, if they are both legitimate and attainable.’ The principle of rationality also expresses a rational requirement, obviously if you prefer noodles but choose salad without other factors, then you have an mistake in rationality, you should correct your belief to make it consistent. In complex examples, such as the envelope-selection example above, we can see that in deliberation, three principles determine what has the most reason to do: ‘Do what is most desirable’; ‘Do what you can to achieve maximum benefit’ and ‘Do what is the most possible’, these principles can also be seen as rational requirements, without other factors, if you know you can get the most rewarding thing but don't do it, or if you know that some things are easier to get than others, but do other things that are harder to get, then clearly you are acting irrationally. Rationality itself therefore requires us to ensure the correctness of deliberation and provides a series of principles to ensure that.

In conclusion, if my argument is correct, then the propositional and behavioral perspectives can be combined in such a way that reason requires us to choose, in deliberation, decisive reasons, based on existing beliefs and intentions, and a set of rational principles. In this paper, however, I only examined how the two seemingly mutually exclusive characteristics fit together. But the problem is much more than that, the problem of the normative statement needs to be discussed at different levels, such as in the domain of epistemology, the field of practical reasoning or the field of belief coherence. But these are not discussed in detail in this paper.

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