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PROJECT

Making It Matter

Making It Matter proposes an alternative to dominant views of what it is to be a rational agent. Dominant views have in common the fundamental idea that rationality is a matter of recognizing reasons and values and then responding appropriately to them. In the mooted alternative, rationality centrally involves the normative power to create reasons and values through commitments that provide their grounds. Through commitments, we can quite literally – under suitable conditions – create reasons to do one thing rather than another, thereby making ourselves ultimately responsible for normative truths, such as “I have most reason to be a philosopher than a banker.” By making things matter, we write the story of our lives and create our distinctive rational identities. Setting out this view involves close examination of several major philosophical issues, such as the grounds of rational choice, the role of comparisons in practical justification, the structure of practical and theoretical normativity, different accounts of normative powers, the truth in existentialism and the truth in realism, and the determinants of agency. Instead of thinking that the world presents us with things that matter, we should allow that rational agency centrally involves making things matter.

Recommended Reading

Chang, Ruth (2016). “Hard Choices.” *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 3 (1): 1–21.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/apa.2017.7>.

— (2021). “What Is It to Be a Rational Agent?” In *The Routledge Handbook of Practical Reason*, edited by Ruth Chang and Kurt Sylvan, 95–110. London and New York: Routledge.

— (2023). “3 Dogmas of Normativity.” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 40 (2): 173–204.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12626>.

PUBLICATIONS FROM THE FELLOWS' LIBRARY

Chang, Ruth (Oxford,2022)

Three dogmas of normativity

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1853047902>

Chang, Ruth (London,2021)

What is it to be a rational agent?

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1853503193>

Chang, Ruth (Cambridge,2017)

Hard choices

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1853058866>

Chang, Ruth (Dordrecht [u.a.],2013)

Grounding practical normativity : going hybrid

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1853565601>