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Pro-attitudes and the wrong kind of reasons

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Pro-attitudes and the wrong kind of reasons

I examine the so-called ‘wrong kind of reasons’ scenarios (such as a threat of punishment being a reason to admire someone), using the idea that pro-attitudes are partially constituted by backward and forward inferential commitments. I intend to show that such scenarios posit attitudes that involve backward and forward inferential commitments that are incompatible with rational reflection on one’s own practical reasoning. They are fundamentally irrational—in a strict sense they are possible only through the subversion of one’s own practical rationality. I argue that a putative pro-attitude that is only possible in this way does not merit the status of pro-attitude and is best understood on analogy with a sheer urge; following upon that, that there cannot be reasons for such putative pro-attitudes; and, finally, that there is no wrong kind of reason such as posited by the examples encountered in the literature.