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“Safeguards of a Disunified Mind”

I will focus on pragmatic arguments for rationality constraints on a decision maker's beliefs and preferences. An argument of this kind typically purports to show that a violator of a given constraint can be confronted with a decision problem in which she can be exploited. Examples of such exploitation set-ups are synchronic Dutch Books, for the standard probability axioms, diachronic Dutch Books, for principles of reflection and conditionalization, and Money Pump, for the acyclicity requirement on preferences. I am going to suggest that these set-ups share a common feature. If the violator of a given constraint is logically and mathematically competent, she can be exploited only if she is disunified in her decision-making, i.e., makes decisions on various issues she faces separately rather than jointly. Unification is relatively unproblematic in synchronic contexts, but it may be costly and inconvenient diachronically. On this view, therefore, pragmatic arguments should be seen as delivering conditional recommendations: 'If you want to afford disunification, then you'd better satisfy these constraints'. They identify safeguards of a disunified mind.