FIRST-PERSONAL AUTHORITY AND THE NORMATIVITY OF RATIONALITY

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In "Vindicating the Normativity of Rationality," Nicholas Southwood proposes that rational requirements are best understood as demands of one's "first-personal standpoint." Southwood argues that this view can "explain the normativity or reason-giving force" of rationality by showing that they "are the kinds of thing that are, by their very nature, normative." We argue that the proposal fails on three counts: First, we explain why demands of one's first-personal standpoint cannot be both reason-giving and resemble requirements of rationality. Second, the proposal runs headlong into the now familiar "bootstrapping" objection that helped illuminate the need to vindicate the normativity of rationality in the first place. Lastly, even if Southwood is right—the demands of rationality just are the demands or our first-personal standpoints—the explanation as to why our standpoints generate reasons will entail that we sometimes have no reason at all to be rational.