

WHAT DOES INTENTIONAL NORMATIVISM REQUIRE?

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Abstract

Most people who have discussed the question whether attributions of intentional attitudes or contents are normative have assumed that this question boils down to the question whether such judgements have normative force "by themselves", or as it is often put, to the question whether they are "intrinsically" or "non-hypothetically" normative. I take issue with this and argue that a judgement can be normative, in the sense of essentially involving a normative concept, even if its normative force is "extrinsic", and even if it lacks normative force altogether. The result is that most attempts to show that attributions of attitudes or contents lack normative force, even if successful, could not count as refutations of intentional normativism.

Keywords

Intentionality, normativity, attitude, content, normative force, normative content

1 Introduction

Following the works of Kripke and Davidson, there has been much controversy around the claim that intentional/semantic facts/judgements are "intrinsically" or "constitutively" normative. People have wanted to determine, not merely whether it is true or false, but also (and perhaps mainly) whether it is compatible with the program of naturalizing intentionality. It is fair to say that, on the whole, and unsurprisingly, naturalists have tended to reject this claim¹, and their opponents, to endorse it. Given that there is much disagreement, in the field of metaethics, on whether the normativity of moral properties is or isn't an obstacle to moral naturalism, it seems however premature to take any definite stance on whether intentional normativism is or isn't compatible with intentional naturalism before the exact content of the former has been clarified². It is to this preliminary task of clarification that I hope to contribute in this paper.

Given that it is generally admitted that there is a distinction to be made between linguistic and non-linguistic intentionality (as well as between "mood" and content), it

¹ There are exceptions. For example, Boghossian (2005) argues that naturalists should actually welcome the normativity thesis.

² This is not to say that intentional naturalism doesn't stand in need of any further clarification. But there seems to be less disagreement about what natural facts are than about what normative facts are. In any case, the focus here will be on normativity.

should first be observed that the debate about intentional normativism actually covers four different questions: (i) whether illocutionary acts are normative, (ii) whether linguistic meaning (i.e., meaning, as it attaches to words and sentences) is normative, (iii) whether intentional (non-linguistic) attitudes are normative, and (iv) whether intentional content (i.e., content, as it attaches to intentional, non-linguistic, attitudes) is normative. Until recently (Boghossian 2003, 2005, Bykvist and Hattiangadi 2007), discussion of these issues has mainly focused on linguistic intentionality (and even more narrowly, on linguistic meaning) but I will here be concentrating on non-linguistic intentionality.

There are two reasons to put non-linguistic intentionality at the forefront. One is that I'm assuming that language depends on thought in a sufficiently strong sense for it to be reasonable to expect that non-linguistic intentional attitudes/contents could not turn out to be normative without illocutionary acts and linguistic meanings also turning out to be normative. The other stems from the fact that, in my opinion, it is a mistake to think that Kripke's sceptical problem about rule-following is exclusively, or even primarily, concerned with the question: what does the fact that certain words mean certain things in some *public* language consist in? Kripke is indeed quite explicit that, to suggest that someone's meaning addition by '+' consists in her/his having the intention, when using this symbol, to apply the addition function would immediately raise the objection that it has not yet been said what it is for an intention to be an intention to apply the addition function rather than the quaddition function. Thus, what is supposed to be normative, in his discussion, is not the fact that the symbol '+' represents the addition function in the language of some community, but the fact that it represents it *for the speaker*. It would seem to follow that the (often made) observation that the fact that a word means a certain thing in the language of some community can have normative force only for those who are already motivated to communicate in this language, though quite right (and perhaps sufficient to show that linguistic meaning facts aren't "intrinsically" normative³), is also quite besides the point.

Intentional normativism has been interpreted in a variety of ways, which I am not going to rehearse, but one thing which can be taken for granted is that, since the

³ Actually, I argue below that it can be sufficient only on the assumption that attributions of motivations themselves are normative.

normative/non-normative⁴ distinction is primarily a distinction between sorts of judgements (propositions) or states-of-affairs, and secondarily a distinction between sorts of concepts or properties, to say that intentional attitudes/contents are normative can only be a relaxed way of saying that intentional judgements (that is, attributions of intentional attitudes and/or of intentional contents), or the corresponding states-of-affairs, are normative, and/or that the concepts of intentional attitudes (such as the concepts of belief, of desire and of intention) and of intentional content, or the corresponding properties⁵, are normative. Obviously, it would not make much sense to suggest that intentional attitudes themselves are normative, unless they are taken to be properties (which is in accordance with the previous remark), while to hold that intentional contents themselves are normative would be tantamount to claiming that all propositions are normative, and would thus abolish the contrast between the normative and the non-normative.

Normativity is a huge and notoriously complex subject, about which there is much controversy; and I am far from being in a position to say exactly what we are claiming, when we claim that something is normative. On the other hand, we need to have some more definite idea of what is at stake in the dispute about intentional normativism, if it is to be amenable to rational adjudication.

It is fairly common to acknowledge that there are two basic varieties of normative judgements/concepts, namely, the deontic and the evaluative (or axiological). The deontic judgements deal with such things as obligations/permissions, oughts/mays and duties/rights, while the evaluative judgements are concerned with the Good and the Bad (and values in general). Both the deontic and the evaluative can be deployed along multiple and various dimensions: there are not only moral obligations/permissions, but also legal, prudential and perhaps rational ones, and there are not only moral values, but also prudential, aesthetic, and perhaps rational ones. There is much dispute about how these two basic sorts of normativity relate to each other, but the only point I want to make in this connection is that, although it may be possible to construe some evaluative

⁴ I prefer to contrast the normative with the non-normative, and not with the descriptive, insofar as it would be odd to talk of "descriptive facts" which could be opposed to normative facts, not to mention the fact that I don't want to exclude the possibility that some evaluative judgements (which are a kind of normative judgements) count as descriptive.

⁵ For the sake of readability, I will henceforth drop all talk of properties and states-of-affairs, as nothing I will say depends on whether normativity is construed as pertaining primarily to judgements and concepts, or to states-of-affairs and properties.

judgements in such a way that they don't carry any deontic implication, discussions of intentional normativism have tended to focus exclusively on deontic normativity, and insofar as evaluative concepts have been appealed to, they have generally been construed as involving a deontic dimension (though not necessarily as being reducible to deontic concepts)⁶. I will conform to this practice in what follows, since I find it hard to think of anything that could be distinctive of evaluative judgements/concepts, once they are stripped of any deontic dimension (except perhaps that they are polar and scalar: they involve an opposition between a positive and a negative pole, and they concern quantities). Accordingly, from now on, I will use 'normative' to mean "having a deontic dimension".

2 Normative Force vs Normative Subject-Matter

Now, suppose you are given a list of judgements, and told that they are normative. You will naturally ask what is it that makes them normative, and probably feel less than satisfied if you are told that they are normative because they involve concepts from a certain list which is then handed to you. You will want to know what is it that makes these concepts normative, that is, whether they share any feature which gives them the "power" to make certain judgements count as normative, but is lacking in concepts which don't have this power. But it is hard to think of any such feature, besides their having this very power.

Now look at it from the opposite perspective. You are given a list of concepts, and told that they are normative. You ask what it is that makes them normative and you are given the answer that their normativity comes from the fact that some of the judgements in which they are involved (as constituents) have a certain special feature called 'normative force'. This is of course less than fully satisfactory, until we have been told what having this feature actually amounts to, which I am unfortunately unable to do. Yet I do submit that this kind of approach (which takes normativity to be, in the first instance, a feature of judgements/states-of-affairs) is more promising than the one contemplated in the previous paragraph and puts us on the right track.

The bottom line is that certain judgements just have (and strike us as having) normative force (what Millar 2004: 92-99 calls 'normative import'), in the sense that they

⁶ The concept of justification (or rational justification) may be a case in point here.

cannot be true unless some people have what (taking my inspiration from Brandom 1994) I will call a normative status; that is to say, unless some people are obliged/permitted to do/think (or not to do/think) certain things, or unless there are (normative) reasons for some people to do/think (or not to do/think) certain things. Moreover, and most importantly, their having such a force cannot be completely accounted for by the mere fact that they involve certain specific concepts. This is one of the lessons of the familiar Frege-Geach point: the conditional judgement that if you ought to make it the case that P then Q doesn't have any normative force, even though its antecedent, when used on its own, normally has such a force. Likewise, and even more obviously, the judgement that 'X says/believes that you ought to make it the case that P' lacks normative force, even though the embedded judgement normally has one⁷. It is worth pointing out that insofar as 'X says that you ought to make it the case that P' may sometimes be used interchangeably with 'X requires that you make it the case that P', not all uses of the latter have normative force, despite the fact that it doesn't overtly contain any embedded judgement which would have normative force when used on its own⁸. This clearly shows, not merely that some judgements may involve normative concepts without having normative force, but that no concept can be such that all judgements involving it have normative force. Following Millar (2004: 95), I will say that a judgement which involves some normative concept (without necessarily having normative force) has a normative subject-matter, or that it is normatively contentful.

Since the judgement that X believes that you ought to make it the case that P obviously attributes an intentional attitude, the foregoing also illustrates the fact that

⁷ However, the judgement 'X is a genuine authority and X says that you ought to make it the case that P' would seem to have normative force, probably because to say that X is a genuine authority is tantamount to saying that you ought to do/think whatever X says you ought to do/think, i.e., to saying that if X says that you ought to make it the case that P then you ought to make it the case that P. This makes the concept of "being a genuine authority" a normative concept, though not a normative force conferring one (see below). By the same token, it makes it plain that a conjunctive judgement (or a pair of judgements) can have normative force without any of its conjuncts (members) individually having normative force. Perhaps some will be tempted to suggest that 'X is a genuine authority' actually has normative force, and not merely normative subject-matter, on the ground that it entails that you ought to make it the case that (if X says that you ought to make it the case that P, then you ought to make it the case that P), or (more plausibly) that you ought to make it the case that (if X says that you ought to make it the case that P, then you make it the case that P). But it doesn't entail any such thing. If it did, then you could discharge your obligation just by preventing X from saying that you ought to make it the case that P!

⁸ As far as I can see, the judgement that 'X requires that you make it the case that P' will only have normative force when 'X' stands for something like 'The fact that Q'. John Broome sometimes, but not always, uses 'require' in just this way.

some intentional judgements unquestionably (and trivially) have normative subject-matter. But let's not jump to the conclusion that intentional normativism should therefore not be concerned with establishing that intentional judgements have normative subject-matter, but with establishing that they have normative force. As I will shortly be arguing, this conclusion must be resisted. It should instead simply be reminded that intentional judgements *attribute* attitudes (or contents): they are *about* them. The fact that the attitude (or content) attributed by some intentional judgement has normative subject-matter clearly is sufficient for the latter to also have normative subject-matter, but gives no support to the conclusion that the attitudinal concept involved (or the concept of content) is normative or contributes in any way to make this intentional judgement normatively contentful. That is to say, it gives no support to the conclusion that *all* intentional judgements which attribute the same "intentional mood" (or which attribute some intentional content or other) are normatively contentful, which is at least part of what intentional normativism requires. In a word, attributions of normatively contentful attitudes are irrelevant to this discussion and should simply be kept out of the way.

To say that no concept is such that it confers normative force to all judgements involving it is not, however, to deny that some concepts do contribute to make it the case that some of the judgements involving them have normative force. Clearly, the judgement that you ought to make it the case that P would lack normative force if it didn't contain the concept 'ought'. This provides one reasonably clear sense in which a concept may count as normative, namely in virtue of the fact that it confers normative force to *some* of the judgements involving it. But, interestingly, the Frege-Geach point also suggests that this may not be the only way for a concept to qualify as normative. For just as a judgement which normally has normative force may be embedded in a judgement lacking normative force (which thereby counts as normatively contentful), a concept which normally confers normative force to the judgements involving it may itself be embedded in a concept which doesn't confer normative force to any of the judgements involving it (but which thereby counts as normatively contentful). Clear (if contrived and artificial) examples of this are provided by 'being such that if you ought to make it the case that P then Q' and 'being told that you ought to make it the case that P'.

By extension, it seems reasonable to hold (i) that a judgement which either has what some like to call an "internal relation" to a judgement having normative force, or couldn't be explained except in terms of some such judgement, also counts as normative in the subject-matter sense, and (ii) that a concept which either has an internal relation to a normative force conferring concept, or couldn't be explained except in terms of some such concept, also counts as normative in the subject-matter sense.

The important thing to bear in mind, for our purpose, is that a judgement which lacks any normative force may nonetheless "essentially" involve a normative force conferring concept, and that a concept which is not itself normative force conferring may nonetheless "essentially" involve a normative force conferring concept. This means that an intentional judgement could be normative in the subject-matter sense without having normative force, and that an intentional concept could be normative in the subject-matter sense without ever contributing to confer normative force to the judgements involving it (or in other words, without any of the judgements involving it having normative force, except in virtue of their involving some other normative concept). It is thus somewhat disappointing to have to record that nearly all discussions of intentional normativism that I know of have focused on the question whether intentional judgements have normative force⁹. For, even if having normative force or being normative force conferring is clearly sufficient for a judgement or concept to be normative, it's by no means necessary¹⁰.

Clearly, I'm swimming against the tide (see footnote 9) in allowing intentional normativism to be read as a claim that intentional judgements/concepts are normative merely in the subject-matter sense, and it will probably be complained that I'm being too liberal. The only ground I can see for such a complaint is a widespread tendency to see normativism as being primarily a weapon against naturalism, and to assume that it could threaten the latter only if it is read as a claim that intentional judgements have normative force¹¹. For my part, I take the question of normativism to be one which naturally arises

⁹A relevant sample would include Kripke (1982), Gibbard (1994), Hattiangadi (2006, 2007), Boghossian (2003, 2005), Glock (2005), Gluër (1999), Gluër and Pagin (1999), Horwich (1998, 2005), Whiting (2007) and Bykvist and Hattiangadi (2007).

¹⁰ I owe special thanks to XXX for having forced me to clarify this point.

¹¹ For example, Boghossian (2005: 217) writes that 'the philosopher with the most reason to believe [...] in the normativity of content is, ironically enough, the naturalist about content. But if this is the only way in which the normativity of content can turn out to be true, *it shows what an uninteresting thesis it is*'

when reflecting on the nature of intentionality and which is interesting in its own right, quite apart of the question of naturalism. But even from this point of view, it is hard to see why normativism couldn't be a threat (or at least, a challenge) to naturalism if it were understood as claiming that intentional judgements/concepts "merely" have normative subject-matter. How could anyone who thinks that the judgement that you ought to make it the case that P raises a problem for the naturalist also hold that the judgement that if you ought to make it the case that P, then Q (or its converse) raises no such problem? I would have thought that any full account of what it is for the latter judgement to be (non-trivially) true must involve an account of what the truth of the former consists in. In other words, it would seem that any full account of a normatively *contentful* judgement (or concept) is bound to rest in part on an account of the normatively *forceful* judgements (or normative force conferring concepts) that it involves and must ultimately involve.

3 Intrinsic and Categorical Normativity

There seems to be a consensus that the normativity thesis wouldn't have much interest if it said merely that intentional judgements are such that, with the help of appropriate auxiliary premises, they entail some overtly (or "basic") normative judgements. This, it is contended, would at most show that intentional judgements are "extrinsically" normative, while what has to be shown is that they are "intrinsically" (or "constitutively") normative, in the sense that they entail basic normative judgements "all by themselves".

Since most of the people involved in this debate have restricted their attention to the question whether intentional judgements have normative force, it could at first seem that this contrast (between intrinsic and extrinsic normativity) is meant to be between two different ways of having normative force. But as I have been using these notions, both normative force and normative subject-matter are "intrinsic" features of judgements. It may thus be somewhat unclear, at first sight, exactly how the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction, as applied to normative judgements, is supposed to relate to the force/subject-matter distinction. It seems, however, reasonable to expect that all and only judgements having normative subject-matter will count as being either intrinsically or extrinsically

(my emphasis). See also Whiting (2007: 135) who clearly suggests that what is "required" is to show that intentional judgements are normative 'in a way that might pose problems for naturalism'.

normative (and in particular, that a judgement could be extrinsically normative only if it is normatively contentful). But it seems that there is no way of drawing the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction which will ensure that this is the case.

Let's grant (with, I think, a majority of philosophers) that some judgements qualify from the start as manifestly having normative force, and thus count as "basic" normatively forceful judgements. Intuitively, these will be judgements which overtly report the fact that someone or other has a certain normative status, such as 'S ought/may make it the case that P', 'It is justified/unjustified for S to make it the case that P', 'There is reason for S to make it the case that P', or 'The fact that Q is a reason for S to make it the case that P'¹², etc., and they will automatically count as intrinsically normative. The general idea, then, might be that a judgement is intrinsically normative (i.e., intrinsically normatively forceful) if and only if it either is such a basic normatively forceful judgement or entails one *without the help of any auxiliary premise whatsoever*. Now, in my language, to say that some judgement entails another, but only with the help of some further premise, is tantamount to saying that it doesn't entail it (but the conjunction of this judgement and this further premise does), and to say that it entails it without the help of any further premise is tantamount to saying that it entails it. That being so, it is easy to see that (on this way of construing intrinsic normativity) a judgement will be intrinsically normative if and only if it has normative force.

Now, there are two different ways of defining extrinsic normativity which are both compatible with the foregoing construal of intrinsic normativity, but only one of which is really appealing, and it turns out to be such as to ensure that a judgement will be extrinsically normative only if it has normative subject-matter without having normative force. The first option would be to say that a judgement is extrinsically normative if and only if (i) it doesn't entail ("by itself") any basic normatively forceful judgement (i.e., it is not intrinsically normative) and (ii) there are judgements such that, in conjunction with

¹² Clearly, the last two judgements are meant to be about normative reasons. It is beyond doubt that there is such a normative concept, and that it is normative force conferring, though there may be some uncertainty as to whether it belongs to the deontic or the evaluative. The fact that one's reasons for doing or not doing something may have more or less strength seems to bring the concept of a reason closer to the evaluative side; while the fact that what one ought to do could be defined as what one has most reason to do suggests that it has a deontic aspect.

them, it entails some basic normatively forceful judgement. Such judgements could then be said to have "extrinsic" normative force.

If extrinsic normativity is construed in this way, it is easy to understand why it has been thought that the claim that intentional judgements are extrinsically normative is uninteresting, since it is obvious that every judgement which is not intrinsically normative will then qualify as extrinsically normative. Consider the judgement that the sky is blue. It is not intrinsically normative, but in conjunction with the judgement that if the sky is blue, then Socrates ought to wash the dishes, it entails the intrinsically normative judgement that Socrates ought to wash the dishes. The trouble is that there obviously is no intuitive sense in which the judgement that the sky is blue could be said to be normative, while (I would have thought) the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction is meant to be a distinction between two sorts of normativity. On this reading, every judgement is normative, if not intrinsically, then extrinsically.

The second option would be to say that a judgement is extrinsically normative if and only if (i) it doesn't entail ("by itself") any basic normatively forceful judgement (i.e., it is not intrinsically normative) and (ii) there are judgements *which don't involve any normative concept*, such that, in conjunction with them, it entails some basic normatively forceful judgement. Clearly, on this construal, the judgement that the sky is blue no longer qualifies as extrinsically normative, since (as far as I can see) it is only in conjunction with judgements which have normative subject-matter that it could entail any normatively forceful judgement. On the other hand, the conditional judgement that if the sky is blue then Socrates ought to wash the dishes will still count as extrinsically normative, since it lacks normative force (i.e., it is not intrinsically normative), and in conjunction with the perfectly non-normative judgement that the sky is blue, it entails the normatively forceful judgement that Socrates ought to wash the dishes. This certainly is a more satisfying result. Since (as far as I can see) only a judgement with normative subject-matter could possibly entail a normatively forceful judgement with the help of judgements which don't have normative subject-matter, *only* such judgements will qualify as extrinsically normative. However, on this construal of extrinsic normativity, not all judgements with normative subject-matter (and no normative force) will count as

extrinsically normative¹³. For example, it is hard to see how the judgement that if Socrates ought to wash the dishes then he ought to beat his wife could be made to entail a normatively forceful judgement by the addition of premises lacking normative subject-matter.

Hence, this second construal of extrinsic normativity has the drawback that some judgements with normative subject-matter will be neither intrinsically nor extrinsically normative. Yet all extrinsically normative judgements will have normative-subject matter, and if what has been said above is correct, then this should mean that there is no more reason to refuse reading intentional normativism as a claim about extrinsic normativity than there is to refuse reading it as a claim about subject-matter normativity. In the end, then, the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic normativity proves to be useless, and I recommend to simply drop it.

Here, I must pause to consider a potentially powerful objection to the claim I have made, in the course of the foregoing argument, to the effect that only a judgement with normative subject-matter could possibly entail a normatively forceful judgement with the help of further judgements none of which is normatively contentful. On some ways of construing the notion of entailment, a necessary truth is entailed by any judgement. If the claim that X entails Y is construed in some such way, e.g., as meaning that it is necessary that if X then Y, then the judgement that the sky is blue, which lacks normative subject-matter, will trivially entail the judgement that if S ought to make it the case that P then S ought to make it the case that P, which *has* normative subject-matter.

At first sight, it looks as if it could simply be replied that the latter judgement still lacks normative force, and the claim is that no *normatively forceful* judgement can be inferred from a set of judgements none of which has normative subject-matter. But this will work only insofar as it can be maintained that no normatively forceful judgement is necessarily true. As far as I can see, this can however be maintained, without having to deny that there are necessary truths of the form "For all S, S ought to make it the case that P". For such a universal judgement can be a necessary truth only if the variable S is understood as a restricted variable ranging over rational or human agents. In which case,

¹³ Even if this is wrong, the point to be made in the next paragraph will stand, since the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction will then be equivalent to the distinction between being normatively forceful and being *merely* normatively contentful.

it really is a generalized conditional, which doesn't entail that there is someone who ought to make it the case that P, and thus strictly speaking lacks normative force.

Unfortunately, admitting that no normatively forceful judgement is necessary is not quite enough to answer the objection. For if it is necessary that for all S, if S is a rational/human agent then S ought to make it the case that P, and it is granted that the judgement that the sky is blue entails all necessary truths, then it will follow that, in conjunction with the premise that Socrates is a rational/human agent, it entails that Socrates ought to make it the case that P, which *is* normatively forceful. But the premise that the sky is blue will then be idle, since on these assumptions, the judgement that Socrates is a rational/human agent would already entail the judgement that he ought to make it the case that P, *without the help of any further premise* (while the judgement that the sky is blue would not). At this point, I think it will have to be agreed that the judgement that Socrates is a rational/human agent had been shown to have normative force (and *a fortiori*, normative subject-matter). For if this is denied, then it is hard to see how *any* judgement which is not overtly normative could nonetheless possibly be shown to be normative. Hence, the very idea of trying to show that intentional judgements are (or are not) normative by showing that they entail (or don't entail) overtly normative judgements presupposes a version of the "is doesn't entail ought" principle (or "IO principle"). Or in other words, it rests on the assumption (not only that no normatively forceful judgement is necessary, but also) that no (normatively contentful) judgement of the form 'for all S, if S satisfies such and such non-normative conditions, then S ought to make it the case that P' can be necessary¹⁴. If this assumption is untenable, then the whole dispute over intentional normativism is pointless¹⁵.

Seen from another angle, the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction may look like a distinction between unconditional and conditional (subject-matter) normative judgements, which in turn may evoke the classical distinction between categorical and hypothetical norms. So it may be worth having a closer look at these distinctions.

¹⁴ Actually, if there were necessary normatively forceful judgements, then there would have to be necessary judgements of this form; hence the ban on the former just follows from the ban on the latter.

¹⁵ This probably is a real possibility, and it wouldn't be the first time that a philosophical dispute turned out to rest on a mistaken assumption. Yet I'm not going to defend this assumption here, as this would obviously carry us too far. It may also be possible to evade the difficulty raised in the text by simply insisting that the notion of entailment should not be construed in such a way that a necessary truth is entailed by any judgement.

Actually, the categorical/hypothetical distinction is quite different from the conditional/unconditional distinction, but it doesn't correspond to the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction, any more than the latter does.

First, the conditional/unconditional distinction doesn't match the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction, if only because some unconditional judgements have normative subject-matter without having normative force (i.e., without being intrinsically normative), and (as just pointed out) some conditional judgements have normative subject-matter without being extrinsically normative. But neither does it match the categorical/hypothetical distinction, since (to the best of my knowledge) the latter is generally understood as pertaining specifically to the relation between normative force and motivation.

The distinction between categorical and hypothetical "norms" can, I think, be seen as a distinction between two kinds of normatively forceful judgements, insofar as a norm can be identified with a true normatively forceful judgement. It's a distinction between two ways of being normatively forceful. If this is right, then it couldn't possibly be a distinction between conditional and unconditional judgements, since no conditional judgement is normatively forceful, or correspond to the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic normativity, since all normatively forceful judgements are intrinsically normative.

To be sure, some conditional judgements must be involved in explaining this distinction, since a normatively forceful judgement will be categorically normative when its truth doesn't *depend* on any specific motivation that the relevant agents might contingently have, and hypothetical otherwise. Suppose that Socrates ought to wash the dishes but that it couldn't possibly be the case that he ought to do that if he didn't have some contingent motivation (such as wanting to do it, or wanting the dishes to be clean, etc.), by which I mean, if he didn't have some specific motivation over and above any motivation which might be thought to be "constitutive" of rational or human agents as such (if indeed there is any such thing). That is to say: Socrates ought to wash the dishes, and it is necessarily the case that Socrates ought to wash the dishes only if he has some appropriate motivation. The judgement that Socrates ought to wash the dishes will then have "hypothetical" normative force. Accordingly, it will have "categorical" normative force if it is not necessarily the case that Socrates ought to wash the dishes only if he has

some appropriate motivation (i.e., if the fact that Socrates ought to wash the dishes doesn't entail that he has any specific motivation)¹⁶.

Now, on the assumption that intentional normativism must be construed as claiming that *all* intentional judgements have normative force, it will easily be seen that it could simply not be true unless intentional judgements turned out to be *categorically* normative (i.e., unless their normative force were independent of any particular agent's contingent motivations). Thus, it would be redundant to insist that intentional normativism should be dealing with "categorical" normativity, once it had been conceded that it is concerned with normative force and not with "mere" normative subject-matter. But this is not something we have to concede. Moreover, even if I'm wrong in thinking that this would be redundant, it is hard to see why anyone should want to insist that intentional normativism must be concerned with categorical normativity, since it is hard to see why a judgement's being "hypothetically" normative should make it any *less* normatively forceful than its being "categorically" normative.

I conclude that it is sufficient (and necessary), in order to vindicate intentional normativism, to establish that (all) intentional judgements have normative subject-matter, which is equivalent to establishing that intentional concepts are normative, in the sense that they (either are or) involve normative force conferring concepts¹⁷. For a judgement to satisfy this condition, it is sufficient (assuming the IO principle), but *not* necessary, that it entails, possibly in conjunction with auxiliary premises involving no normative concept, some "basic" normatively forceful judgement.

This is not to say, however, that I am conceding that *no* intentional judgement is normatively forceful. At this stage, it is still an open possibility that *at least* attributions of intentional attitudes have normative force (and that the concepts of intentional attitudes are normative force conferring). Should this prove to be the case, one could then argue

¹⁶ It is worth stressing that, although the contrast between hypothetical and categorical norms is usually discussed in relation to obligations and duties, it is here understood as pertaining to (deontic) normativity in general. Any normatively forceful judgement could be either categorically or hypothetically normative, including, for example, the judgements that there is reason for Socrates to wash the dishes, or that Socrates is justified in washing the dishes. From this point of view, it looks like a version of Williams' distinction between internal and external reasons.

¹⁷ I grant that it has not been made perfectly clear when a concept "involves" another. The idea is that concept A "involves" concept B when either (i) B is, at some level of embedding, a constituent of A, or (ii) no full explanation of A can dispense with B.

that, even though attributions of intentional *content* lack normative force, the very concept of content can't be explained except in terms of the attitudinal concepts, and should therefore be counted as normative¹⁸.

4 Concluding Remarks

Let me conclude by briefly examining a case which illustrates some of the prejudices I have been arguing to be mistaken. Boghossian (2005: 207) writes:

Of course, we can say that, if you mean addition by '+' and have a desire to tell the truth, then, if you are asked what the sum of [57 and 68] is, you should say '125'. But that is mere hypothetical normativity, and that is uninteresting: every fact is normative in this sense. (Compare: if it's raining, and you don't want to get wet, you should take your umbrella.)

If there is to be an interesting thesis of the normativity of meaning, we ought to be able to derive a should or an ought from the mere attribution of meaning to someone and without having to rely on any auxiliary desires that that person may or may not have.

It is fairly clear from this passage that Boghossian here uses 'hypothetical normativity' to refer to what I have called 'extrinsic normativity', and that he understands the latter in something very close to the first of the two senses I have distinguished above. But this is not the point I want to bring out (it has already been made). There is a further point to make here, which is that the argument which Boghossian is putting forward clearly backfires in its own terms, at least if it is meant¹⁹ to apply to the normativity thesis as it pertains not only to linguistic meaning, but also to attributions of intentional attitudes.

Replacing the rather dull example which Boghossian gives in his parenthetical remark with the (slightly) less boring one I have recently been using, his point seems to be that there is an obvious but uninteresting sense in which the judgement that the dishes are dirty could count as normative, since by adding the premise that Socrates wants them to be clean, we could (no doubt, only with many further assumptions) reach the

¹⁸ Basically, this would be an instance of the kind of strategy deployed by Brandom (1994), discussed in Boghossian (2005), and alluded to by Bilgrami (2004).

¹⁹ As I think it is, since the paper in question does discuss the normativity of intentional attitudes/contents.

(normatively forceful) conclusion that Socrates should, or ought to, wash the dishes. I don't think for a minute (and probably neither does Boghossian) that it is actually correct to reason in this way: the dishes are dirty, Socrates wants the dishes to be clean, therefore, Socrates ought to wash the dishes. But let's pretend that it is²⁰.

Then, if I'm right that a normatively forceful judgement couldn't follow from a set of judgments unless one of them has normative subject-matter, and given that the judgement that the dishes are dirty clearly has no normative subject-matter²¹, it would follow that the (intentional) judgement that Socrates wants the dishes to be clean must have normative subject-matter, which could apparently be the case only if the concept of wanting is normative. But if the concept of wanting is normative, according to what has been said above, it must be a (or "involve" some) normative force conferring concept. Hence, examples such as these could hardly be used to undermine the claim that intentional judgements are normative.

It is worth stressing that the reply to this can hardly be to *deny* that a normatively forceful judgement couldn't follow from a set of judgements unless one of them has normative subject-matter, for denying this would mean that the judgement that Socrates wants the dishes to be clean could fail to have normative subject-matter even if it entailed a normatively forceful judgement "all by itself". To insist that this judgement would nonetheless have normative force would then require denying (something I would have thought to be obvious) that only a judgement with normative subject-matter can have normative force. Since this is unacceptable, the only remaining option would be to maintain that a judgement cannot prove to be normative in virtue of its entailing a "basic" normatively forceful judgement, i.e., that all normatively forceful judgements are "basic". This would be a very dogmatic way of bringing this debate to an end, since it would amount to a *declaration* that intentional judgements are not normative²².

²⁰ Presumably, what Boghossian has in mind is something like: Socrates believes that the dishes are dirty, Socrates wants them to be clean, therefore, he has some reason to wash them. But it's not beyond question that such an inference is any good either, given how people like Broome and Dancy use the concept of a reason.

²¹ Well, perhaps the judgement that the dishes are *dirty* could be seen as a value judgement. If this puzzles you, then simply replace it with the judgement that the window is open, and assume Socrates wants it to be closed.

²² More precisely, it would amount to this on the assumption that the only way to show that a certain judgement is normatively contentful is by showing that it entails (possibly in conjunction with auxiliary premises involving no normative concept) some "basic" normatively forceful judgement.

As I said, I don't think the kind of inferences we have just been considering are strictly any good. So I'm not suggesting that they actually support intentional normativism. But this is not, as Boghossian contends, because mere "hypothetical" Normativity isn't interesting. They actually point towards another kind of difficulty, which arises when we contemplate the possibility that some intentional judgements (perhaps all) may entail normatively forceful ones only with the help of further *intentional* judgements.

Consider the following piece of reasoning, which many will take to be (approximately) correct: Socrates believes that the dishes are dirty, he wants them to be clean, therefore, there is some reason for Socrates to make it the case that the dishes are clean. In light of what has been said so far, the correctness of this reasoning could provide evidence either that the judgement that Socrates believes that the dishes are dirty is normative (if the judgement that he wants the dishes to be clean is assumed to lack normative subject-matter), or that the judgement that Socrates wants the dishes to be clean is normative (if the judgement that he believes that the dishes are dirty is assumed to lack normative subject-matter). But there seems to be no way in which it could support both conclusions! This suggests that, for the purpose of arguing that (all) intentional judgements have normative subject-matter, it would be either question-begging or self-defeating to show that they entail some normatively forceful judgements, but only with the help of further intentional judgements. If auxiliary premises are needed, they must not only lack normative subject-matter, they cannot be allowed to be intentional judgements. It would lessen this difficulty if an argument could be found, to the effect that no intentional judgement (or no intentional judgement of a certain kind) can have normative subject-matter unless they all have²³. But even on this assumption, one would still need to find at least *one* kind of intentional judgement which entails a normatively forceful one without assuming the truth of any other intentional judgement.

²³ Attributions of belief naturally come to mind here. Some people have indeed speculated that it suffices to show that attributions of belief are normative in order to be in a position to argue that all intentional judgements (and attributions of content in particular) are. See, e.g., Bilgrami (2004) and Boghossian (2003, 2005). Brandom (1994) could also probably be read as holding this sort of view. However, it would, *prima facie*, seem to be more likely that attributions of desire entail normatively forceful judgements without the help of any other intentional judgement, than that attributions of belief do.

I am not sure what the prospects actually are, for showing that intentional judgements are normative *by* showing that (either by themselves or with the help of non-normatively contentful and non-intentional auxiliary premises) they entail normatively forceful judgements. But if what I have been saying is correct, then, should this prove to be impossible, or too unlikely, there will still be other ways of arguing that they nonetheless are normatively contentful.

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