5   Social Normativism

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DO WE NEED NORMS TO ACCOUNT FOR A HUMAN SOCIETY?

Normativity is one of the keywords of contemporary philosophical discussions. It is clear that philosophy has to do not only with facts, but also with norms (especially in ethics); but more and more current philosophers are busy arguing that, in addition, those parts of philosophy where norms are *prima facie* not in high focus, such as philosophy of language or philosophy of mind, have kinds of 'normative dimensions'.

However, not everybody subscribes to this enthusiasm for normativity. Within philosophy of language, there is, for example, an ongoing fierce discussion between 'normativists' and 'anti-normativists' about the normativity of meaning.[1] A similar, though I think both much broader and much deeper, discussion concerning normativity has been launched within the context of philosophical and scientific accounts for human societies. Should we, explaining how a society works, merely state the facts concerning the behavior of the members of the society in the way natural scientists describe the behavior of ants in an anthill, or how they describe the behavior of particles in an atom, or do we, over and above this, need to take a recourse to some 'normative facts'?

Stephen Turner, one of the leading figures of contemporary philosophy of social sciences, in his recent book (Turner 2010) nicely summarized the anti-normativist claims and arguments. His central claim is that to account for human societies we need not go beyond the ordinary social science revealing ordinary causal interconnections and ordinary facts. He denies that we would need any extra-scientific means of disclosing normative facts that would exist over and above the causal ones. Hence the whole normativist movement, according to him, is nothing more than a storm in a teacup. "Normative facts," Turner claims in his book, "constitute a rupture in the world of ordinary fact" (2010, 9). They do not fit into "the ordinary stream of explanation." In short, "normativity is a name for a non-natural, non-empirical stuff that is claimed to be necessarily, intrinsically there and to in some sense account for the actual" (2010, 5).

The worries that the recent preoccupation of philosophers with normativity might lead philosophical accounts for society into muddy waters, treating 'the normative' as an occult realm, are understandable. However, I do not think that everybody who stresses the importance of 'the normative' (i.e., rules or norms) for 'the social' is an occultist. Thus, though I wholeheartedly agree that when explaining social (or, for that matter, whatever) phenomena we should avoid any occult facts and that we should avoid ruptures within ordinary streams of explanations, and I also agree that some of the philosophers whose views Turner discusses in his book may be guilty of at least flirting with trafficking facts of a suspicious nature, I think that he underestimates the role normativity is capable of playing in accounting for human societies and humans as social animals.

In what follows I start from the discussion of Turner's criticism of normativism, to reach a positive account of what I call *social* normativism. I will claim that this stance not only does not clash with scientific accounts of human societies, but, ultimately, it is indispensable. To be able to reach this conclusion, I will start from approaching the views of the normativists that Turner presents as a single position in a more discriminative way; and I will try to show not all such views are guilty of the sins Turner accuses them of having.

NORMATIVISM DECONSTRUCTED?

Turner characterizes the ways in which normativity is claimed to enter the explanation of human and social phenomena and points out how this might conflict with the ordinary scientific explanation as follows[2]:

> The background to normative facts is ordinary, involving the kinds of facts that are parts of the ordinary stream of explanation. There is nothing binding, compelling or constraining about these facts. So these new normative facts constitute a rupture in the world of ordinary fact. The normative, however, arises out of ordinary facts: meanings, obligations, rationality and so forth, come into existence through actions, learning, and the like, but have the special added properties of norms: of binding, constraining and the rest. Once the norms are established, they have consequences for behavior. They do not directly cause behavior, but they regulate it normatively, by specifying what is the right way to say something, what obligations one has, what one owes to others as a result of one's meaningful actions, and what is justified for others to do in response to your actions.
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> (2010, 9)

In this way the 'normativists' (= those who claim the indispensability of normativity for explaining social phenomena) may readily get into conflict with the 'scientists' (= those who propose that ordinary science with its causal explanations is enough). Turner contends that social scientists are able to describe the variety of human societies and human affairs in its multiversity;

but he assumes that the normativists will claim that all of this still falls short of truly describing normative phenomena, because these are transcendent to any description of contingent affairs. However, Turner argues that the very concept of normativity (not to speak about the concepts such as truth, rationality, etc.) is itself largely a product of our particular society, and as such it is not reasonably seen as 'transcendent' to the social.

Various human communities, Turner claims, have their various ways of organizing their affairs, ways that often include directions concerning what should or should not be done, what is permitted or what is prohibited or what kind of consequences some doings can have; and this is a fact social science can account for very well. In particular, Turner claims, we can usually see alien communities as following some kinds of "Good Bad Theories"—"meaning that they are good theories for a particular, unspecified set of purposes in a particular setting, but bad theories if we are thinking of them as adequate explanations of anything, or proto-explanations that can be turned into genuine explanations with a little empirical vetting and some minor revision" (2010, 43). (Hence such a theory, though it is not true by our scientific standards and hence it is "bad," serves the purpose of organizing or coordinating the society, and hence it is useful—"good.") There is no need for any notion of normativity, Turner claims, over and above this; especially no need for any normativity that would transcend human communities and that would ground 'absolute' correctness.

Let me just note in passing a problem concerning the concepts of "causal mechanism" and "ordinary stream of explanation" as used by Turner. It does not seem that what Turner can have in mind when using them can be explanations that are causal in a narrow sense of the word—*viz.* simple explanations in terms of the causal laws of natural science. In particular, even Turner's favorite example of "good" explanation in social sciences, explanation in terms of his "Good Bad Theories," does not seem to quite live up to this standard. For what is the causal connection between a theory held in a society and the behavior of its members?[3] And what, indeed, does it mean to say, in causal terms, that a society *has* a theory? (It seems that the only characterization of such a state of a society in purely *causal* terms would be in terms of the brain states of the members of the community; and obviously any nontrivial characterization of this kind is beyond our ken.)[4]

Turner then considers what he calls the "fundamentalism" of some of the normativists, which "involves the claim that all views other than our own are wrong, and justifies this claim on the basis of our own preferred grounds, such as reflective, self-validating analysis of our own views" (2010, 47). He dismisses it, claiming that it "relies on a set of devices, such as the ideas of eyes opening to the dictates of reason, that are basically fictional" and that it "fails to produce the results it promises, namely, objective normative conclusions" (2010, 59).

In general, Turner is convinced that current normativism in fact continues the legacy of sociologists postulating various kinds of collective objects

(collective will, group intention, objective mind, etc.), which he finds mythical. In contrast to this, Turner thinks that

> collective claims are not based . . . on a "group sense" in some sort of raw, preconceptual mode, but on a fully developed set of ideas about the group—a theory, if you wish, about the existence of nations, races, and so on. These ideas are Good Bad Theories.
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> (2010, 136)

It is, I think, not too controversial to say that an integrated social group has something as its 'own mind'; that there is a sense in which we can say that the community 'has' certain views, 'desires' certain things or cherishes certain 'norms'. It is also plausible to say that newbies born into such community (or being integrated into it from outside), to become its truly integral members, must come to be attuned to this 'group mind', must somehow adopt their individual minds to it. The term some philosophers have recently adopted from psychology is *social cognition*[5] (but in many contexts the good old term *culture* would do).

What is controversial is the status of such a social cognition and the question of how it relates to the cognitions of individual members of the society. On the one extreme, the view is that talking about 'social cognition', 'group sense', etc. can be nothing more than a *façon de parler,* reducible to talking about individual minds: that any movement on the social level is only an aggregate of movements on individual ones. On the other extreme, the idea is that 'social cognition' or 'culture' is something totally independent of the individual level: far from being determined by it, the social level determines the individual ones. (Between the two extremes, there is a land of intermediary views willing to grant the social level *some* kind of autonomy, thought not an utter independence; here we find landmarks such as 'supervenience', 'emergence', etc.)

It is the last extreme view that was, long ago, sharply criticized by Tooby and Cosmides (1992) and that has been target of similar kinds of criticism ever since; and it is also essentially this view that is the target of Turner's criticism. What these social scientists consider as essentially misguided is seeing ordinary reality (consisting of things, people, and their properties and relations) as overlain by a layer of some social, cultural, or collective reality, floating free of the bustle of the underlying layer, but wielding influence on it. It is understandable why such a picture is repulsive for a scientifically minded theoretician; and it is true that some philosophers treating of norms do not shun it.

However, what I would like to point out in this chapter is that stressing the role of normativity in human affairs may be not only a way of falling with this picture (which I agree we should resist), but also a means of elucidating the intricate relationship between the individual and social levels of social reality and cognition. I think, and I am going to argue, that it is

certain 'social' normativism that may help us get a grip on this relationship allowing us to explain it as a nontrivial, though a nonmysterious affair.

VARIETIES OF NORMATIVISM

Turner's most basic worry, we saw, is that normativity may smuggle some kind of occultism into science. This worry is understandable. However, the spectrum of those whom Turner sees as defending views of this kind and whom he calls *normativists* is much too wide: It includes Korsgaard, O'Neill, Kripke, David Lewis, Boghossian, Sellars, McDowell, Brandom, Haugeland, Rouse, etc.; and this inclusiveness necessarily drives him to see 'normativism' as a generic doctrine which far from coincides with the views of many of the scholars on his list. Indeed, as he himself claims, "the sheer variety of normativism mocks any attempt to defeat them or even make them consistent with one another" (2010, 67). But this, I think, only points to the fact that to summon all the thinkers under a common banner is problematic. The most straightforward target of Turner's criticism are those whom he calls "fundamentalists," that is, those who claim the existence of "absolute" normativity—*viz.* normativity that is independent of any contingent facts about human communities.

Fundamentalism, then, can be seen as advocating the existence of some non-causal, but causally effective forces. Characterized in this way, it may well look like a doctrine nobody would want to subscribe to, but as Turner documents in his book, this view is, as a matter of fact, implicit to the views of at least some philosophers. It is possible to agree with Turner that this is not a view we should embrace; my aim, however, is to indicate that there are versions of normativism that are not fundamentalist in this sense and that might be worth being taken seriously.

Hence the viable version of normativism we are going to defend concurs with Turner in rejecting that there would be any normative force transcendent to the social forces of human communities, and agrees that if we can talk about a normative force, normative facts, or normative explanations, then all of this must be grounded in the social facts, which are in turn grounded in the causal facts regarding the individuals forming the societies. However, the societies are such complicated entities, held together by such complex and feedback-driven interactions of their members, that we can expect that the very organizations of these entities will provide us with specific problems, not to be encountered elsewhere.

To begin with, consider the following two scenarios.

Scenario 1. A bunch of individuals kicks a ball around a playground. There are no rules.
Scenario 2. As before, but now the individuals are playing according to some rules; either the usual rules of football, or some kind of rules which

they have made up during some previous games. (The rules need not be written down and may be somewhat open-ended—there may be situations that they do not cover and that are to be negotiated when they occur.)

Taking part in the game from Scenario 1 does not appear very appealing; in contrast to this, taking part in the one from Scenario 2 is much more attractive. It is only in the latter case that you can score a goal, develop strategies to do so, win a game or, indeed, lose one. All of this makes this enterprise into something quite enjoyable for many of us. And all of this is made possible by the fact that in this case, unlike in the other one, the game is rule-governed—we can say that this enterprise, in contrast to that of Scenario 1, has a *normative dimension*.

Now the claim a normativist may urge is that most of what we humans do has this kind of normative dimension; indeed most of what is specific to our species somehow presuppose various normative dimensions of our lives. In particular, it is already meaningful talk and our distinctively human way of thinking (which is usually called *rational* or *conceptual*) that is constituted by certain normative frameworks—just like you can score a goal only within a framework of rules, you can assert that something is thus and so, or you can have a belief to this effect, only within a certain framework of rules.

Needless to say that normative frameworks laying the foundations of our talk or our rational thought cannot be explicit like the rules of football. Therefore the claim of the normativist involves the claim we can establish implicit normative frameworks—frameworks, that is, which are not a matter of explicitly agreed-upon and written-down rules, but rather rules that are implicit to our conduct. (Remember that the rules making the difference between Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 need not have been codified, and even need not be explicitly agreed upon—they may be based merely on the habitual concurrence of treating certain ways of playing as faulty and behaving in accordance with this.)

Nobody would probably want to deny that rules play some nontrivial roles in human affairs; hence this very fact is not likely to be a point of quarrel between a normativist and an anti-normativist. The anti-normativist may dispute especially two points:

1. that the normative dimension of human affairs is all-pervasive;
2. that its existence would compromise naturalism.

Let us consider (1) first. Here the anti-normativist's claim would be that the role of rules within human affairs is not really central. She might deny that belief and language are normative. Norms, from this viewpoint, are a relatively recent sprout of human social organization, they come into being in that members of a society agree upon them (explicitly or implicitly), and they are, hence, rather higher-level social constructs that do not have more

than a superficial importance from the viewpoint of the human communities and us humans as their members.

Why would the normativist insist that even assertion or belief require a normative framework and hence that a normative dimension does not concern only some superstructure of human social life, but rather its very foundations? An exhaustive answer to this question would be quite complex and it would go far beyond the limits of the current paper (a very detailed version is given by Brandom 1994; I have discussed the foundations of normativist semantics on a number of places—see esp. Peregrin 2012b, 2012c, 2014). However, in essence the answer is that the normativist sees no viable alternative way of accounting for the phenomena of meaning and content, which are essential both to human language and human thought—in particular she sees no alternative *naturalistic* answer.

The normativist is convinced that the traditional accounts of meaning and meaningfulness based on relations such as *standing for* or *representing* are bound to fail to give a satisfactory explanation of these fundamental relations (such that they would avoid "ruptures in the ordinary stream of explanation"). Instead of this, she proposes that the mechanism that makes the type of sound into a meaningful expression is of the same nature as that which makes a piece of wood into a piece of chess (a knight, say)—it is subordination to a certain bundle of rules that furnishes the piece of wood with a certain *role*; and similarly it is subordination to a certain bundle of rules that furnished the type of sound with a *role* that we have come to call its meaning. And in view of the fact that hardly anybody would want to challenge the existence of chess pieces as something non-naturalistic, and thus illusory, the analogous construal of meaningful expressions also seems to be unproblematic in this respect.

WEAK SOCIAL NORMATIVISM

Let me call the version of normativism that assumes no other kind of normativity save that resulting from the society, and hence from the interactions of the individuals within the society, *social normativism*. Hence social normativism is not fundamentalist in Turner's sense; it does not assume any causally effective non-causal forces and no normative facts independent of the causal ones.

Let us now turn to the above point (2), that is, to the question of how far is social normativism reconcilable with naturalism. The anti-normativist would claim that the existence of norms, just like existence of any other higher-level social constructs, such as rituals, sport, music, or financial markets, is of course in no such conflict, for none of these phenomena is more than a product of intersections of various individual intentions, beliefs, and interests, whose analysis in a language of natural science may be difficult, but it simply cannot be impossible.

I do not think that the reducibility of the level of description on which we talk about rules to a level of a more directly scientific talk (perhaps language of physics?) can be taken for granted. Imagine that somebody wants you to explain what football is: You will probably start with spelling out (some of) the rules of football (continuing talking about the social role of the sport, players and their roles in the game, strategies to win a match, etc.). Can we replace the talk about the rules with a talk about some physical reality (perhaps about the neurophysiology and brains of the players and/or the brains of other relevant people)? Surely not, really. Consider the rule *that no player with the exception of the goalkeeper can touch the ball with a hand*.[6] What would it amount to in physicalistic terms? We might perhaps try: *Whoever touches the ball will get a penalty*. But this is (i) not true (the referee may fail to notice), and (ii) a far cry from the desired reduction (it contains the word *penalty,* which would have to be further reduced). The anti-normativist may admit that though it is hardly imaginable that we do really carry out the reduction, it is surely possible *in principle*.

The normativist's response here might be that this 'in principle' is suspicious and using it is dangerously close to a vicious circle. For how do we know that it is 'in principle' possible if we are in no way able to carry out the reduction? Well, an 'answer' may come to mind: how could it *not* be possible? But of course this 'answer' rests on the very same claim that we want to establish, namely on a non-empirical (metaphysical?) principle that everything that there is must be so describable.

But let us not dispute this 'in principle possibility' (though the normativist might want to take note, for the record, of the fact that although we do not deny it, that does not mean that it is established)—what I call *weak social normativism* urges merely the *de facto* irreducibility.[7] In particular, it is based on the claim that

a. rules and what we called the normative dimension are crucial for so many things we humans do that to analyze humans as social beings is not really possible without paying due attention to them;[8] and
b. though there may be no reason to reject the claim that any talk of rules and of what is correct is in principle reducible, no such reduction is realistic and hence rules must figure in many essential explanations of human social life.

Weak social normativism might well declare a truce with the (Turnerian) anti-normativism. The anti-normativist may keep claiming that all social phenomena are at bottom causal, whereas the weak social normativist would hasten to add that though this might be in some sense true, no reduction is practically feasible and hence we need an intermediary language with the (practically) irreducible concepts like that of rule. The elaboration of this truce might then call for such words as "emergence," "supervenience," etc.

Hence the weak social normativist claims that we humans have developed into tremendously complex mechanisms whose functioning is so multifaceted and inter-individually interlocked that it is no longer feasible to try to describe and understand us as mechanisms. (Compare trying to understand a chess program by contemplating the patterns of 1's and 0's in the memory of a computer on which the program runs. And note that even the phrases 'the program runs', or 'patterns of 1's and 0's' may be deemed non-naturalistic descriptions—after all, the only thing that happens is a swarming of electrical potentials . . .) This makes it, I think, necessary to investigate *some* aspects of the social reality in terms that are not useful for the description of other facets of our world.

STRONG SOCIAL NORMATIVISM

Aside from weak social normativism, however, we can also think of its stronger version, according to which normativism claims more substantial irreducibility than the merely *de facto,* practical one. The strong normativist insists that there is a sense in which some normative claims that we need to provide for adequate explanations of some social phenomena are irreducible to non-normative ones as a matter of principle. To elucidate this sense, let us consider the following example:

Imagine that while watching a football game, I notice that a forward, who could have run to the opponent's goal and perhaps scored, simply stops. I ask my co-spectator: "Why did he not go for the goal?" and he answers, "It would have been an offside!" This is, no doubt, a reasonable explanation of what happened. Now this explanation can be considered as normative, and not only in one sense.

What are the senses? First, 'offside' is a purely normative matter, in the sense that it does not exist other than within the rules of football. It is a status conferred on a player in a certain position by the rules. Hence it is not like the player being fat, or quick, or running. Second, it explains the player's behavior by citing his *reason* for doing what he did (instead of pointing out the cause of his behavior). Third, it might be the case that what my colleague said not only invokes rules and the player's reason, but also reminds me that we are in the 'world of football': hence that the rules are in force for us and we must take them for granted—that what the player did was not only intelligible, but *correct.*

For example, Brandom, whom I take to be a social normativist in my sense, insists that the normative idiom is not reducible to the declarative one. To say that *killing is not correct* (or that *one ought not to kill people*) cannot be translated as *in our community we have a rule that prohibits killing people,* or *if you kill somebody, you will be punished,* or anything of this kind. Hence insofar as we need to use this idiom in our explanations, this renders them irreducibly normative in the sense mentioned above. Do we need to use it?

Take the first case first. Do we, in referring to an offside, need to use some normative claim? Not obviously. But what if somebody asks what an offside *is*? We would probably describe the situation to which the term 'offside' refers (a player of a team receives a pass from his teammate, while in the moment the pass was sent he was closer to the opponent's goal line than the ball and also the second-to-last defender . . .). Is this not a purely 'naturalistic' description of a situation? Notice that our explanation must be framed by the assumption that all of this happens within a *football game,* that is, that the rules of football are in force. And to say (or presuppose) this is to say (or presuppose) that many things are *correct* or *incorrect,* hence they *should* or *should not* be done (i.e. that, for instance, the field players *should not* touch the ball with their hands, etc.). Notice that if the very same situation, perhaps even on the very same field and with the very same persons occurs without this framework (say, after the match is already over, but the players are still on the field and one of them kicks the ball aimlessly away), it is *not* an offside.

Hence does this description of what an offside is, then, involve the normative idiom *essentially*? The anti-normativist might object that though in this case it might be necessary or at least reasonable to mention rules and the proprieties governed by them, we can do this in purely non-normative terms. It is enough to *refer to the fact* that a community follows such or another rules. Hence if we disregard the problem of specifying, in causal terms, what exactly it means to say that a community follows specific rules, or that the rules are in force for its members, it seems that we merely state a fact.

What about the second normative dimension of the above explanation, namely the fact that we give a *reason*? The concept of reason is normative in that it cites a fact or a belief that *should* be compelling for a *rational* being. Here everything hangs on the possibility of explaining away this *should* (perhaps as an instrumental one that could be reduced to an *if not, then an undesired outcome is probable*). And again the anti-normativist might want to insist that saying that somebody does something for a reason might be seen as a shortcut for some much longer causal explanation.

This leaves us with the third of the normative dimensions of the explanation listed above as the crucial point; and indeed I think it is crucial because, in a sense, the relevance of the previous two dimensions boils down to their implicitly involving what is explicit in the third—an element of endorsement that goes beyond mere statement. (If we can make do with merely stating that members of a society follow [what they call] rules, that some parts of what they perceive as reality is instituted by their holding to their rules, that they decide what to do on the basis of [what they call] reasons—all of this staying wholly neutral with respect to the validity of any kind of rules of the society, then perhaps the anti-normativism can be vindicated.)

Now what I call strong social normativism, is characterized, in addition to (a) and (b) above, also by

c.   talk about what is correct or what should be done is not reducible—not even 'in principle'—to non-normative talk.

THE NORMATIVE IDIOM

Typically, an explanation consists of declaratives stating some facts. Why was the magician able to pull the rabbit out of his hat? Because the rabbit was hidden in his habit and he moved it into the hat while he distracted the attention of the audience with his magic wand. Hence if an explanation were to be irreducibly normative, that is, consist, aside of ordinary declaratives, also of some 'normatives' irreducible to declaratives, we would seem to be driven back into the assumption that there must be some 'normative facts' irreducible to causal facts. This, I think, is in one sense true; however, in another sense it is not. To see why, we must look more closely at the normatives.

There is one imaginable explanation of the failure of reducibility of the normative idiom to the declarative one, which may render the irreducibility almost trivial. Perhaps the normative pronouncements constitute a different kind of speech act than declaratives, and hence their intranslatability into a declarative idiom is straightforward—after all, who would wonder that interrogatives and imperatives are not translatable into declaratives?

And indeed what I think is that sentences claiming that something *ought to be done* or that something *should be done* can be used in a mode different from the purely declarative one, that they can be used to carry out a kind of speech act different from (though somewhat similar to) assertion. Issuing such a 'normative', for example, saying that killing is wrong, may not (only) mean to state a fact, but it involves also voicing a (dis)approval and perhaps making a kind of a proposal. This, in my view, explains why such normatives are similar to ordinary declaratives, they are as it were, 'would be' declaratives: They spell out what there is *on the condition that others support it*. If I say *killing is wrong,* then I propose to establish that killing is wrong and if others concur with their normative attitudes, then killing is, indeed, wrong. If I, as a football player, claim that a player should not touch the ball with their hands, then if the attitudes of other football players resonate with mine, then touching the ball becomes, indeed, wrong.

Thus, normatives used in this mode constitute specific speech acts designed to project and extend our human affairs into the future. But no single speaker is able to *establish* the course of such an extension; it is a *communal* matter. Therefore, a single normative represents a kind of proposal

that is submitted and is pending until it either resonates with acts of enough other members of the society to qualify it as accepted, or else fades away in the absence of such a resonance. (Why do we use normatives and this oblique way of accepting/rejecting proposals instead of doing all of it explicitly in terms of explicit proposals, evaluations, and acceptances/rejections? Explicit proposing, evaluating, and accepting already *presuppose* a framework of norms and thus cannot be generally used to establish it.)

Hence normatives are what I would call *cooperative performatives*. They are like Austinian performatives, in that they can become true by just being proclaimed, but unlike Austinian performatives, they can become true only when endorsed by a nontrivial number of members of a community. Purely theoretically, we could imagine that all the supporters first meet and agree on the support and nominate a representative who then does one (Austinian) proclamation for all of them; but as this is not feasible, the mechanism is such that the individual contributions are often put forward as the cooperative declaratives looking as stating a fact that, however, may still be merely *in spe*.

This results in the situation that we see even the normatives as close enough to declaratives to be true or false. This sets them apart from interrogatives or imperatives, and makes them more like some specific kind of declaratives, say subjunctive conditionals. While the truth value of a sentence such as *People in Prague are polite* may be seen as a straightforward matter of correspondence between the sentence and the world, the truth value of *If people in Prague were polite, there would be many more tourists there* is a more intricate matter. And the truth value of *People in Prague should be more polite* is a still less straightforward matter (so much less that we had better exempt sentences of this kind from our *declarative* box altogether); yet sentences of this kind are nevertheless still felt as 'truth-apt'. This is also the reason we are tempted, and may, in a sense, even be substantiated, in talking about *normative facts*.

I should add that besides the reading I have just been discussing, normatives also may have a reading that is *purely* descriptive. The two readings correspond to assuming the respective standpoints which we can call, using an apt metaphor, as 'inside' and 'outside' the rule involved with the normative. Being outside a rule means describing it as a fact, in a 'disengaged' manner; being inside means being engaged, accepting and upholding the rule.[9]

Now the anti-normativist may say that it is only describing rules from the outer perspective that should interest a theoretician of society, and anyway that it is only this perspective that is available to science. What complicates the situation is the fact that human thinking, speaking, and acting presupposes a framework of rules. This inevitably compromises the requirement of dealing with all rules merely from outside. One thing is that even if it were possible to move outside of *any* particular system of rules, it would be

hardly possible to move outside of *all* such systems at once (at least without regressing to a level of an inhuman being).[10] And it is even not clear that we can really move outside of every one of the systems of rules we, as a matter of fact, inhabit.

And we should add that even if it were unproblematic to move outside of all systems of rules, there would still be a reason for being interested in how they look 'from inside': we normally do live inside them, and hence to understand our human predicament, this 'inside' should not be beyond the scope of our interest.

NORMATIVISM RECONSTRUCTED

Willfrid Sellars, one of the ur-normativists (if not *the* ur-normativist), has famously declared that "in the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not" (1956, IX.41). Insofar as this goes, Sellars was a devoted 'scientist'. However, he believed that besides the "scientific image" of the world (*viz.* the image consisting of spatiotemporal, causally interacting objects) there is something that he called the "manifest image" and which is both irreducible to the scientific image and indispensable. The manifest image contains "normatively constituted" objects. Thus, whereas within the scientific image I exist as an organism behaving in a certain way, and interacting with the environment, it is only within the manifest image that I, moreover, exist as a person carrying out actions that are intentional and for which I am responsible. It is only this world that contains meanings, thoughts, reasons, etc.[11]

I urge that to be able to understand some parts of our human reality we must assume the 'internal viewpoint', but this must not be misunderstood. What I urge is *not* any kind of a collective 'first-person perspective' analogous to the first-person perspective urged by the exponents of introspective philosophy of mind (though I certainly do not want to deny that studying the psychology of rule-followers may be interesting!). Looking at rules from inside means, first and foremost, taking the correctness they institute at face value; and also taking the 'normative reality' instituted by systems of rules as a reality without a proviso.

Consider studying a ritual of an alien community, which involves something that we would tend to consider morally wrong (such as humiliating, or even torturing children). Of course that we *can* study it wholly suppressing our moral judgments, that is, take the behavior of the natives as being wholly beyond any correctness or incorrectness (similarly as we do when we study non-human animal species). But that just seems *wrong*: Unless we are ready to believe that the natives do not deserve to be seen as persons, that is, as somebody morally accountable for what they do (as we believe in case of elephants or lions), denying them the status seems to be degrading them,

viz. doing them harm. Hence it seems that assuming that their norms have no overlap with our moral norms is acceptable only when there is no way to interpret them otherwise.

Or consider some practices of the natives that would resemble our argumentation and reasoning. Again, we can completely disregard this similarity and study these practices as we study the regularities of ants running around their anthill. But it would be much more natural—at it would seem much more appropriate—to take it, at least tentatively, as the natives' version of reasoning, which hence may be considered in some respects correct and in others incorrect. And again, not to do this would seem to be a kind of ostracizing the natives—to deny them the status of persons, fully fledged human beings, which rightfully belongs to them.

This indicates that staying outside of some rules is *not* unproblematic. And what holds of individual rules, holds also for systems of rules and for the institutions they constitute—*viz.* about the 'normative reality' that forms the niche of us, normative beings. And this 'normative reality' is wholly constituted by rules in the sense that it exists only insofar as we endorse the rules that establish it. Thus, for example, as long as we do not accept the rules of chess, the wooden pieces the players use can be said merely to be held for (what they call) *pawns, rooks, bishops,* etc. by the players; it is only when we come to accept them that we can say that they *are* pawns, rooks, or bishops.[12]

Our human life is inextricably trapped within many systems of rules, and many things we tend to see as constituting the reality in which we live are normative in the sense that they are constituted by normatives rather than declaratives. This, in one sense, does not make these things not enough thingish— for example, I think that from certain perspectives numbers are almost prototypical things (in that we do not hesitate to ascribe them properties, speak about relationships between them, etc.). However, in another sense, they do have a deficit in their thingishness (measured by the thingishness of our middle-size dry goods): they stand or fall with our holding to our normatives, with our normative attitudes.

The objects and facts of this kind are *institutional* ones—they exist in terms of certain attitudes of people. It is not too controversial to say that a great deal of our social reality is of this kind. However, what, precisely, is the link between *institutional* and *normative*? As we humans are 'goal-directed' animals (i.e., we operate in terms of our complicated feedback loops that make it possible for us to *pursue goals* and constantly evaluate our means in terms of the ends to which they lead), we build the reality in which we live—insofar as this reality has an institutional character—so that it is in a sense always provisional and open to revision.[13]

Moreover, it is provisional in a different sense from that in which anything we build is—anything such is liable to being rebuilt, upgraded, or modified. However, the upgrading of our normative reality brings about a certain retroactivity: Changing the view on what is correct brings about

the view that it has always been correct. Though what we do looks, to an outside observer, as a kind of *building,* we ourselves cannot but see it as a kind of *discovery*. In this way, our social reality, insofar as it has a normative dimension, is of a peculiar character.

A realm where this is clearly illustrated is mathematics. *Groups,* for instance, as mathematical objects, were introduced into mathematics in the nineteenth century (by Galois and others). Hence in one sense we can say that this was when groups came into existence. However, a group is not a kind of entity that can 'come into existence'—its mode of existence is eternal, or better, atemporal. Therefore we have introduced groups together with the assumption that a group is not something that can have an origin—so from this viewpoint their introduction immediately starts to look more like a discovery. And my point is that this affects—more or less—any kind of normative reality: We do the introducing, but in such a way that we are obliged to see what is introduced as discoveries of certain forms of pre-existent correctness. And hence we can also apply these correctnesses retroactively: We can use them to measure also historical events prior to the introduction of these measures.

A lot of ink has been spilled about the "social construction of reality."[14] Some of the normativists can now be seen as anatomizing what such a construction is: how the kind of reality that can be called *institutional* (and that constitutes such an important part of what we perceive as reality today) comes into being, how it is sustained, and in what sense it is aligned with our tangible reality. It is clear that it is a matter of a 'social consensus', but how exactly does such a 'consensus' work? The answer that, I think, emerges out of the normativists' considerations is that the consensus is a matter of intersections among the members of the society holding each other responsible for what they do and answerable to the rules implicitly governing the society's functioning (and later perhaps made explicit in the form of written or spoken codes).

CONCLUSION

'Normativism' is a rather blurry notion: Philosophies holding norms to be crucial come in very different varieties. One variety suggests that the realm of the normative is an independent stratum of reality to be recognized in addition to that of the factual—this is the variety Turner and other philosophers of social sciences reject, and I think justly. But there is also another variety, which does not suggest anything like this, but holds norms as the key to understanding the tremendously complex social practices that lay the foundations to institutional reality and to the interplay between the social cognition and cognitions of individual people. I think that this variety is not only viable, but inevitable. It stems from the fact that when accounting for human societies, we cannot always approach all their norms 'from without':

we are embedded within some of them to such an extent that the demand to restrict ourselves to the 'view from without' would compromise our ability to account for our societies and for the place of us humans within them. It does not mean that norms constitute a layer of reality elusive of scientific understanding; it does mean, however, that scientific understanding needs to be complemented by an understanding of our societies' normative scaffolds as seen from within.

In particular, what I call *normativism* is the view that norms are essential for human societies and that we cannot understand or explain the societies without scrutinizing the way that norms alter the way in which we humans inhabit our world. What I call *social normativism* is normativism based on the conviction that all sources of normativity are ultimately social, that is, there are no norms that would transcend human societies (though we cannot but *take* the most basic norms of our society as transcending the society). What I call *weak social normativism* is the conviction that social normativism is consistent with naturalism in the sense that the normative dimension of any society that can be—in principle, though not necessarily in fact—expressed in the descriptive mode. What I call *strong social normativism* is the conviction that to account for the normative dimension we sometimes need the normative mode irreducibly. And in this paper I have tried to marshal some evidence in favor of strong social normativism.[15]

NOTES

1 See, for example, Lance and O'Leary-Hawthorne (1997); Whitting (2008) or Peregrin (2012a) for the normativist side and Wikforss (2001); Hattiangadi (2006, 2007) or Glüer and Wikforss (2009) for the anti-normativist one.
2 For a more detailed discussion of Turner's book see my review—Peregrin (2011).
3 We may certainly say that such a theory supplies members of the society with *reasons,* which tend to lead the members to behave in the way they do. But even if we waive the fact that thus we still gloss over causally quite complex problems, we can hardly waive the fact that reasons are not yet obviously causes. For the ongoing discussion about the relationship between reasons and causes, see Davidson (1963); von Wright (1971); Risjord (2005); or Setiya (2011).
4 Something similar can be said about the naturalistic attitude of Henderson (this volume): For example, his basic characterization of participation in a social group involves "sets of similar and (nearly enough) coordinated understandings." But what, speaking naturalistically, is "understanding"?
5 See, for example, Fiske and Taylor (2008) or De Jaegher and Froese (2009).
6 Mind you: What I mean is *football,* not *American* football.
7 Henderson (this volume) urges the distinction between supervenience and what he calls "superdupervenience," where to "superdupervene" on some natural properties is to "supervene on those natural properties, and, for the supervenience relationship itself to be naturalistically explicable." It seems to me that here *one more* distinction is vital. To say that a "supervenience relationship is naturalistically explicable" may mean either that we are able to specify the relationship in naturalistic terms, or merely that there is no reason to think that this cannot be—"in principle"—done. In the latter case, the only thing that underlies the reducibility

claim is the bias towards naturalism, which makes us consider everything as naturalistically explicable until we have a proof of the contrary. (I do not mean to say that such preconception is unreasonable—I think it *is* reasonable in view of the fact how successful natural sciences are in describing and explaining our world. However, when what is at issue are *foundational* questions, then this preconception can easily lead us to take the absence of the proof to the contrary as the proof of naturalism.)

8   Okrent (this volume) stresses that what is distinctive of us, contemporary humans, is that we are not only sensitive to the "shoulds" of instrumental rationality (we are able to choose suitable means for our ends), but that we are also sensitive to the "oughts" of social norms. And what is urged by Rouse (this volume) is that the environment of norms such as these brings about new ends, thus completely altering the ways in which we live our lives.

9   The metaphor of an inside of a system of rules has been employed by Hart. Note that, as Hart stresses, we must not misunderstand the internal aspect of rules as a matter of mere subjective experience of the rules, that "feelings are neither necessary nor sufficient for the existence of 'binding' rules" and that "there should be a critical reflective attitude to certain patterns of behaviour as a common standard, and that this should display itself in criticism (including self-criticism), demands for conformity, and in acknowledgements that such criticism and demands are justified" (1961, 57).

10 The situation is reminiscent of the post-Tarskian view of the languages of logic: We can treat *any* such language as an object language, but only because we can always recruit another language as a *meta*language.

11 See Rosenberg (2007) for more details.

12 Zahle (this volume) argues, very persuasively, that it is not the case that "social scientists make indispensable use of a distinct method when studying norms by way of participant observation." I think this is correct. I think that any kind of *description*—independently of whether it is carried out from an "outside" or from an "inside"—has to rely of the same kind of well-known methods. What it takes to be "inside" of rules is not a matter of different methods of description, but rather of something beyond description, of an element of endorsement that is present when we consider a human being as a *person*.

13 This is our specifically human way of *niche construction*—see footnote 12.

14 From the classical Berger and Luckmann (1966), via Searle (1995) or Hacking (1999), up to contemporary discussions.

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