Normative attitudes

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Abstract. Brandomian inferentialism (similarly to the philosophical doctrines of a few earlier philosophers, especially Wittgenstein and Sellars) hinges upon the role played by norms in human practices and consequently in human lives. Brandom tells us how normative phenomena underlie our language in particular, and our very nature in general. In recent decades, however, interest in normativity has markedly increased not only in philosophy, but also within empirical science (both natural and social sciences). This provokes the question: are Brandomian, or more generally inferentialistic, accounts of language and society in accordance with what we know about these phenomena from empirical research? In this paper I argue that there may indeed be a significant resonance; namely that research into both human ontogeny and phylogeny is beginning to suggest that a crucial component of human development is the adoption of something like Brandomian normative attitudes to one another’s behavior. This indicates that there is a sense in which norms do not just belong to the toolbox of some philosophers, but are indeed "tangible" (and measurable) parts of our lives. Hence there is also potential for some "naturalization" of normativity, and especially of inferentialism.

Brandom on implicit norms and normative attitudes

Brandom (1994) gives us a thorough discussion of the nature of rules and normativity. He cites many philosophers in this context, but one of the most crucial morals is drawn from his considerations of Wittgenstein (pp. 22-3):

Two commitments have now been attributed to Wittgenstein. The first is a normative thesis about the pragmatics of intentionality. The second is a pragmatic thesis about the normativeness of intentionality. In the first case, pragmatics is distinguished from semantics, as the theory of the significance of contentful states and performances from the theory of their contents. In the second case, pragmatic theories of norms are distinguished from platonist theories, in treating as fundamental norms implicit in practices rather than norms explicit in principles. The first point enforces attention to the significance of intentional states for what it is correct to do. The second point is that proprieties of practice must be conceivable antecedently to their being expressly formulated into propositionally explicit governing rules or principles. For performances can be rule-governed only insofar as they are governed as well by practices of applying rules.

To oversimplify a little, we can say that the moral is that explicit rules presuppose rules implicit in practices; hence the most basic mode of existence of a rule is the implicit one. And indeed Wittgenstein (1953)’s well-known remarks clearly point in this direction: there are rules, the following of which is a matter not of any interpreting, but rather of practical
"mastering a technique" (§199), there must be rules which I follow "blindly" (§219), the following of which is a "custom (use, institution)" (§199). In the words of Sellars (1949), p. 299 (whose views Brandom also considers), "the mode of existence of a rule is as a generalization written in flesh and blood, or nerve and sinew, rather than in pen and ink".

However, what does it take for a rule to be implicit in practices? Brandom rejects the idea that a behavior can be said to be governed by implicit rules whenever it is regular. Hence there must be some ingredient of a rule-governed behavior that makes it more than merely a regular one, and this ingredient cannot be an explicit rule. And Brandom’s verdict is that this ingredient comprises the *normative attitudes* of the participants of the practices. At an intermediary point of his considerations, Brandom draws the following picture (inspired by Haugeland (1982)):

The approach being considered distinguishes us as norm-governed creatures from merely regular natural creatures by the normative attitudes we evince - attitudes that express our grasp or practical conception of our behavior as governed by norms. These normative attitudes are understood in turn as assessments, assignments to performances of normative significance or status as correct or incorrect according to some norm. The assessing attitudes are then understood as dispositions to sanction, positively or negatively. Finally, sanctioning is understood in terms of reinforcement, which is a matter of the actual effect of the sanctioning or reinforcing responses on the responsive dispositions of the one whose performances are being reinforced, that is sanctioned, that is assessed.

According to this picture, there is an implicit rule when there are concurrent normative attitudes; indeed with a certain amount of oversimplification we can say that "social norms are clusters of normative attitudes" (Brennan et al., 2013).

Here, a crucial disambiguation is necessary: the term "rule" (as also "norm", which we use interchangeably with "rule" here) is often automatically associated with a linguistic (or more generally, symbolic) object taking the form of an imperative sentence, or a n indicative one containing "should" or "ought to". However, it is clear that insofar as we talk about "implicit rules", this is not the sense we are entertaining. Svoboda (2018) proposes using the term *L-rule* for a rule in the sense of a linguistic object, and *S-rule* for the sense of a social configuration.

An S-rule can exist without a corresponding L-rule; and it can be made explicit by an L-rule. Also, an S-rule can be brought into being by means of the corresponding L-rule (if put forward by somebody with the required authority). As there can be an S-rule without a corresponding L-rule, while an L-rule without a corresponding S-rule appears to be a rule in merely a potential sense, we will be using the term "rule" primarily in the sense of "S-rule".

It is important to stress, too, that the term "normative attitude", as understood here, does not refer to any covert item inside a mind; it is rather a kind of behavioral syndrome. It is an overt complex of pro- and con- acts (not necessarily actions, for it is normative attitudes that solicit
actions, not vice versa) targeting some other acts (and derivatively perhaps items other than acts).

Another important point is that as normative attitudes lay the foundations of rules, they themselves cannot presuppose rules or meanings. Of course, we do not assume a normative attitude because we comprehend a rule – hence the normativity of the attitudes is “primitive” in the sense of Ginsborg (2011). More precisely: a normative attitude, insofar as it is just an act of either discouragement or support adopted towards what somebody else is doing, is not yet normative at all, the normativity only emerges through the effects of the communal concurrence of the attitudes and their further intertwining with the social reality. Or so I shall argue.

Returning to Brandom, we must say that in the end the picture of rules as "clusters of normative attitudes" will not be what he himself would find satisfactory. The reason why he introduced normative attitudes was that he did not want to reduce rule-governedness to mere regularity; and yet it seems that (though at the end of the day, rather than at the outstart) we do arrive at such a reduction, only at a higher level: we reduce rule-governedness to regularities – however not of “first-level” behavior, but at a “second-level”, namely the assessment of the “first-level” behavior.

**Norms all the way down?**

The problem with the reduction of rule-governedness to regularity, according to Brandom, is twofold. The first issue is the underdetermination of rules by regularities (as pointed out by Wittgenstein (1953) and as spectacularly recalled by Kripke (1982)). Any finite set of regularities is compatible with an infinite number of different rules. The second issue is that the normative attitudes themselves, according to Brandom, can be assessed for correctness. Let me deal with these two issues in reverse order.

Clearly, some normative attitudes can be taken themselves to be either correct or incorrect. For example, we can ask if it is correct to scorn a person wanting to stop immigration by warning against its perils, and we can ask if it is correct to deride someone fighting against genetically modified plants cost what it may. The question, however, is, whether without exception all possible kinds of normative attitude can be considered correct or incorrect.

More generally, there may be rules for evaluating rules. For example, we have theories of democratic social order, according to which some rules holding in such societies are correct, while others may be incorrect. Of course that there may be also rules for evaluating the rules that are themselves used to evaluate rules. The question, however, is whether this can continue to infinity.

The situation is somewhat reminiscent of the well-known quest for a foundation in epistemology, which is sometimes called the "Münchhausen trilemma" or "Agrippa's trilemma". When you ask for a reason for a claim, and then for a reason for that reason etc.,

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1 See, e.g., Williams (2001).
there are three possibilities: (i) you continue finding new reasons \textit{ad infinitum} (an infinite regress); (ii) you end up with some "axiomatic" knowledge, which does not itself require reasons (foundationalism); or (iii) you come to engage a reason that was already found wanting of a reason (circularity). Applied to our case, the possibilities are:

(i) you continue finding new norms to evaluate norms \textit{ad infinitum};

(ii) you end up with some norms that are no longer evaluable by other norms;

(iii) you come to engage a norm that was already found wanting of a norm to evaluate it.

If we accept that the most basic norms that are in question here consist in consensual normative attitudes, the three possibilities amount to

(i) you continue assuming new normative attitudes to evaluate attitudes \textit{ad infinitum};

(ii) you end up with some normative attitudes that are no longer the target of normative attitudes;

(iii) you come to assess normative attitudes using attitudes that were already found wanting of an evaluation.

I am convinced that the viable option is (ii). However, this is what Brandom rejects; so let me consider the other two options. In the case of normative attitudes, (i) and (iii) are not clearly distinct: there are no clear criteria for individuating the attitudes, so both (i) and (iii) seem to be claiming that for every set of normative attitudes there are normative attitudes that render it correct or incorrect. (If we have such a set $A$, a set $B$ targeting $A$, a set $C$ targeting $B$, etc., can we ever close a circle by reinvoking \textit{the same} set as one that was invoked already before? – The problem with answering this is that it is not clear what would qualify as "the same".)

If a rule, and hence the normative attitudes that constitute it, were to be extant prior to that which it targets, then this would lead to a straightforward infinite regress. If a rule were to precede its target, and if for every rule there were to be a (meta)rule which targets it, then no rule could exist before the corresponding (meta)rule, and if rules are produced by us (via our normative attitudes), no rule could come to exist at all.

But perhaps we need not accept the assumption that a metarule must exist before the rule it targets - if rules are constituted by normative attitudes, then it would be enough to assume that every rule evokes a set of normative attitudes targeting it. In this case, no infinite regress is necessarily forthcoming. However, there is still an air of puzzle: am I really able to readily assume normative attitudes to something I have never before encountered?

The only plausible answer I can see is that I can acquire a general sense of correctness/incorrectness which gives rise to my normative attitudes to \textit{any} normative attitudes with which I am confronted (plus, of course, many items other than normative attitudes). Thus, it is possible to imagine that once people gained their ability to assume normative attitudes, they became able to assume normative attitudes to everything, including any new normative attitudes.
Here the infinite regress would be tamed by the assumption that normative attitudes do not presuppose further actual normative attitudes targeting them. It is possible to assume that we do not necessarily adopt the normative attitudes towards any other normative attitudes, but only that we are ready to forge them when it comes to it. To every normative attitude there potentially exists a normative attitude targeting it.

If I understand Brandom correctly, the "normative world", which we humans have come to occupy, is self-encapsulated in this way. This "normative world" cannot be seen as a sophisticated reconfiguration of the natural world. And, in addition, anything, especially a bundle of normative attitudes, can be a source normative force only if it is also its target. But this is where I come to disagree: I am convinced that there are normative attitudes that are the "bedrock" source of normative force without being their own target. In this way, the anchoring of the normative world within the natural one becomes explicitly scrutable.

**Norms as irreducible**

It is important to stress where exactly I disagree with Brandom; for I do agree with him that there is a sense in which “the normative” is not reducible to “the natural”. This irreducibility is most clearly manifested by the fact that there is no way of translating many normative claims to non-normative (declarative) ones.

True, to consider this possibility we must move forward in the process of instituting norms, from implicit norms carried by merely practical normative attitudes to explicit norms articulated in language. Let me call such sentences as “One should recycle”, “It is not correct to steal” or “Children ought to respect their parents” normatives. I agree that the normatives are not translatable into standard declaratives, at least not without a remainder. In this sense, I think, Brandom is right to see the “normative world” as something new and unprecedented that we enter on our way to becoming human.

Elsewhere (Peregrin, 2016a; Peregrin, 2016b), I have tried to explain this situation by showing that systems of norms can constitute, metaphorically speaking, something as an "inner space", which we humans can enter. From "outside" of the space we can describe what it takes to "play the normative game", but only from its "inside" can we become a "player" of the game. To unpack the metaphor, being "inside" the space means being able to relate to the world in ways that are unprecedented and not reducible to those available "outside"; and this concerns not only normative linguistic utterances, but also the pre-linguistic attitudes which the linguistic ones make explicit (while presupposing certain normative attitudes, namely those which establish the rules of our language games and thus make such utterances possible in the first place).

Hence I do not question the assumption that the normative dimension of human life is - viewed from "inside" of the practices - something truly new and not reducible to what was here before. This is a matter of experiencing the world in a new way and unveiling the possibility of living a brand new kind of life.
What I concentrate on now is the view from "outside", i.e. the perspective of ordinary science. If norm-governed behavior is not simply a behavior that is regular, and if the surplus that makes it such is not something esoteric, it should be scrutable even from this perspective. Hence we are warranted in expecting an answer to the question that we asked earlier in this paper, namely what is it that distinguishes human normative practices – viewed from "outside" – from behavior that is merely regular. And my answer is that it is the presence of normative attitudes, which is revealed and characterized in normal scientific – *viz.* naturalistic – terms.

Thus, I disagree that something is a normative attitude only if it is norm-evaluable, for this would render "the normative" as a self-encapsulated realm not accessible from without, i.e. not open for any scrutiny by the natural sciences. (But note, if we agree that the normative realm is accessible for some scrutiny by the natural sciences, the actual *experience* of "the normative" from within, is still free to elude capture.)

**Norms as reducible**

Consider the picture I subscribe to: there may be rules for the evaluation of rules, but not every rule is so evaluable. There are some fundamental rules that are neither correct, nor incorrect (though they may be useful or useless). Consider argumentation and its rules as spelled out by logic. Consider, for example, the rule of disjunctive syllogism

\[
\text{DS} \quad A \text{ or } B \quad \neg A \quad B
\]

This rule is considered to be correct. Why? From the contemporary viewpoint, it is because it can be *shown* to be correct, it can be *proved*.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
[A] \quad \neg A \\
B
\end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c}
[B] \\
B
\end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c}
A \text{ or } B \\
B
\end{array}
\]

The proof uses the rules characterizing, in turn, negation and disjunction

\[
\text{NOT-E} \quad A \quad \neg A \\
B
\]

\[
\text{OR-E} \quad [A] \quad [B] \\
C \quad C \quad A \text{ or } B \\
C
\]

Are *these* rules correct? Insofar as this question is understood in its descriptive sense, it is empirical, for they target the English words *not* and *or*, and it is an empirical question whether
English speakers approve of these usage rules. Alternatively, we can construe the question in a normative sense: do the rules constitute negation and disjunction in a "right" way (and thus perhaps show how the English words should be used)?

The descriptive version of the question, obviously, is not pertinent for a logician or a philosopher – answering it is a matter of empirical linguistics. But what about the normative version? What can the "right" in it amount to? It is clear that (NOT-E) or (OR-E), in contrast to (DS), cannot be proved (in a nontrivial way), because they are used as "axioms" to characterize negation and disjunction. Can we say that they characterize negation or disjunction correctly (or, as the case may be, incorrectly)?

Prima facie it might seem that indeed they can. It may seem that it is obvious to characterize both the English or and disjunction in general in terms of (OR-E), rather than, say, modus ponens:

(MP) \[ A \quad A \text{ or } B \quad B \]

However, it is not difficult to see that this is really only a trivial sense: we feel that this is correct for this is what it takes to be disjunction, and because we are convinced that the English or is an instance of disjunction. Thus this does not amount to more than (OR-E) is correct because or is a disjunction and disjunction is, ex definitione, something that is governed by (OR-E). Hence (OR-E) is correct for disjunction in general because disjunction is what obeys (OR-E); and it is correct for or in particular since or has been found, empirically, to obey it (to be a disjunction).

An alternative view, the view I am defending here, is that (OR-E) is neither correct, nor incorrect. It is, nevertheless, eminently useful. It helps us produce disjunction, which is an eminently useful tool of our reasoning.

And I think that this holds about rules in general. There may be rules for assessment of rules, but sooner or later we reach rules that are not rule-evaluable, they are not correct or incorrect. We reach the Wittgensteinian "bedrock", where our "spade is turned" (Wittgenstein (1953), §199). They may be useful (and this is probably why we allow them to flourish, like the rules of logic which govern our argumentation and, as a matter of fact, make it possible at all). Thus, in contrast to Brandom, I think that there are some basic normative attitudes that are themselves neither correct nor incorrect.

Notice that this also alleviates the Kripkean worries (which, as mentioned earlier, Brandom cites as the other obstacle to the naturalization of normativity). If correctness rests – ultimately – on normative attitudes that are no longer themselves norm-evaluable, then all we need to consider is their de facto occurrence. We concur in assessing certain results of addition as correct - and hence they are correct. Why is it correct to use "+" as addition rather than "quaddition"? Well, because addition is what our normative attitudes – de facto – are found to converge upon.
But the Kripkean challenge might seem more stubborn than this: we can surely say that one who "quadds" instead of adds is not one of us, that they are weird, or out of step with us – but what warrants our claim that they are wrong? Where does the normativity come from? And here, I am convinced, we must bite the bullet and say that this is where the non-normative arises out of our evaluative attitudes. Here "what is right" is "what is accepted by us": it is right because our attitudes – as a matter of fact – are what they are. We tend to take additions as correct, and "quadditions" as incorrect.

Let me stress that this is not to generally embrace what Blackburn (1984) calls the "democratic harmony" theory of normativity, equating correctness with being in tune with the majority. Take correct assertability (which Sellars, I think rightly, considers as an explicatum for truth). It is quite clear that something may be correctly assertable (true) even when nobody (or almost nobody) concurs. Thus, "democratic harmony" is a non-starter.

However, this does not contradict the fact that there are some primitive ("bedrock") cases in which the equation underlying the "democratic harmony" theory holds, where it is impossible for correctness to be anything over and above endorsement by the majority. Take the correct way of greeting somebody – what could such a correctness consist in save the endorsement of the members of the relevant community? And similarly for the most elementary ways of using words - what could their correctness consist in save the endorsement of the members of the relevant linguistic community?

**Norms naturalized**

So, imagine that correctness ultimately consists in concurrent and consensual normative attitudes (implicit rules) that are themselves neither correct, nor incorrect. This, obviously, opens up the space for a straightforward naturalization of normativity. Normativity, from this viewpoint, originates from a complex behavioral pattern, which presupposes a specific kind of ("second-order") behavior targeting "first-order" behavior. It stems from the general tendency of living organisms to interact with their environment (including other organisms and their conspecifics) to make it as hospitable as possible.

Every organism that is able to modify its environment so that it becomes better suited to its needs is likely to do so. In the case of inanimate parts of the environment, there may be straightforward ways of bettering it (like removing hindrances). However, to influence those

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3 Elsewhere (Peregrin, 2010) I proposed to call the corresponding properties Protagorean.

4 Of course we can imagine a scenario where things are more complex: in a community there might be, for example, a consensus that correct greetings are those that accord with the tradition, where everybody might be mistaken with respect to the tradition (for example because of systematic errors in chronicles ...). But this possibility does not disrupt the fact that normally in such cases appropriateness reduces to what is taken to be appropriate.

5 This is what has come to be called "niche construction" – see, e.g., Odling-Smee et al. (2003).
components of the environment which consist of other organisms in a useful way may be much more difficult. There is, nevertheless, no reason to think that an organism capable of doing so would shun influencing even this part.

What is to be expected is that the organism would try to defend itself from endangering behaviors of other organisms. A next step may be to pro-actively discourage others from producing these kinds of behavior (and perhaps encourage them to produce beneficial ones). But this is still in line with fostering one’s own flourishing, albeit in a sophisticated form; there is still nothing normative in play.

The norms come into being at the point when the pro- and con- attitudes come to be applied to kinds of behavior, irrespectively of whether the behavior in question directly concerns the person who assumes the attitudes, and when these come to resonate across individuals. This is one of the cornerstones of the complex behavioral syndrome that produces what we call human normativity. It is the step from a purely egocentric "evaluation" in terms of harmful for me vs. helpful for me to the more abstract right vs. wrong, which applies to myself as well as to everybody else.

Of course, such rudimentary normative attitudes do not yet provide for fully-fledged rules. But supplementary steps are readily describable. The greatest of these supplements is the development of language, itself based on implicit rules, but also presenting us with the possibility of making our rules explicit, and this essentially upgrades the nature of the whole game.

But here we may face a terminological obstacle. The normative attitude of the "bedrock" case is not really normative - by itself it displays no normativity. Normativity is born out of the resonance of such attitudes. So calling it normative may be misleading. We might try to defend the adjective by pointing out that it is a potential component of the source of normativity; but it may be better to choose a more neutral adjective – perhaps evaluative.

What I find crucial is that recent decades have brought proofs that this increasingly normative character we give to our human communities, and increasingly normative character of us human individuals produced by the communities, is not just a philosophical speculation, but rather a reality. It has become clear that evaluative attitudes are something that can be detected as a crucial factor of human ontogeny.

**Evalutive attitudes in the real world**

The philosophers' considerations which we have been discussing in the foregoing sections are largely speculative. However, as indicated earlier in this paper, these speculative theories have recently been borne out by various pieces of empirical research. In this section I present a (rather haphazard) overview of some of the most relevant findings.

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The anthropologists Castro et al. (2010) write:

During ontogeny, the assessor communication between parents and offspring is extended by other evaluative interactions where the approval or disapproval of behavior is provided by other unrelated individuals. Throughout their lifespan, a person establishes a social reference group with individuals that interact closely during a particular stage of life (parents, partner, friends, and colleagues).

It appears to be an obvious fact that people assess the behavior of their conspecifics as right or wrong, and that this assessment plays a crucial role in human ontogeny. It is such assessments that guide human enculturation and that equip us with what some psychologists have come to call norm psychology (Sripada & Stich, 2007). We enter our societies by being continuously curtailed by our elders, and we inhabit social spaces the "walls" of which are then nothing but curtailments. We have learnt how to extricate our evaluations of actions from simply the egocentric perspective and to evaluate them independently of their relevance to the evaluator.

What is noteworthy is that this whole innovation appears to be peculiar to our species. Castro et al. (2010) write: "Chimpanzees may classify other individuals’ behavior as favorable or unfavorable with respect to themselves, and may act accordingly, but the ability to approve or disapprove of other individuals’ learned behavior seems completely absent in primates (…)" (pp. 352–353). This indicates that what distinguishes our human, fully-fledged kind of norms is the underlying "agent-neutral" assessment of human doings. This is stressed too by Rakoczy & Schmidt (2013): "A proper understanding of a social norm with its general, agent neutral structure reveals itself essentially in the capacity to enforce the same norm that one follows toward third parties, to criticize and sanction mistakes" (p. 18). The uniqueness of human "agent-neutral thinking" is also emphasized by Tomasello (2014).

What experimental evidence has shown us recently is that we humans have a specific sensitivity for rules, i.e. a capacity to recognize social rules as distinct from mere regularities. This concerns not only adult humans, but especially human toddlers. When an infant starts to explore the world she inevitably encounters boundaries to the "space" which she can inhabit - through discovering that some of her activities get regularly frustrated; they are, as it were, "bounced off" by the environment. We might perhaps conjecture that cognitively she starts by construing her world in terms of what is possible; but relatively soon, as her caregivers switch to more subtle ways of posing the normative boundaries, she recognizes the normative boundaries for what they are – something essentially different from natural ones (Kalish, 1998).

What turns out to be the case is that the infant is already prepared to meet the norms halfway. She is sensitive to their occurrence in her environment (which, of course, means that she is sensitive to the evaluative attitudes that are the vehicles of the norms), readily understanding that some regularities within the environment (especially those displayed by the caregivers and

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7 Phillips & Knobe (2018) argue that in the first stages of cognitive development children tend to represent norms on a par with natural boundaries, simply as something the violation of which is "impossible", and that even in the later stages of cognitive development a similar kind of representation stays prominent.
later by a growing range of "persons") are more than just regularities, that they manifest rules, viz. something that ought to be followed. The proclivity of children to pick out rules from the environment is documented especially by the fact that in this respect they often over-generate, expecting or seeing rules where there are mere regularities. Thus, Casler et al. (2009) document that children assume that artifacts come with a correct way of using them even in cases where such expectation is not substantiated. Rakoczy & Schmidt (2013) introduce the term "promiscuous normativity" to express the fact that children sometimes draw normative conclusions too quickly. Thus, empirical research indicates that children detect and take on rules in a surprisingly swift way.

Also, research concerning phylogeny appears to testify that, as a matter of fact, rules did play an important role within human evolution and that they are connected with the most significant and most idiosyncratic human adaptations (though, of course, here the empirical evidence is bound to be much more indirect than that concerning the role of rules within ontogeny). It seems that the normative dimension of human communities is inseparable from the establishment of the human system of cultural inheritance, which is mostly responsible for the unprecedented trajectory our evolution has come to take.

Clearly, norms must play some kind of non-trivial role within this process. This was emphasized by Boyd & Richerson (2005) and continues to be stressed by other theoreticians of cultural inheritance. Thus, Henrich (2015) argues that the role played for us by rules and norms over our evolutionary history has endowed us with a norm psychology, causing us to assume implicitly that our world is rule governed and prompting us to detect and activate the rules which govern it. The result, then, is that "it’s our automatic norm following – not our self-interest or our cool rational calculation of future consequences – that often makes us do the 'right thing' and allows our societies to work. This means that how well a society functions depends on its package of social norms." (p. 240)

However, there is also a more general link between norms and cultural inheritance. An important ingredient of cultural inheritance is teaching: like the young of other species, human toddlers can learn by imitating the ways of the adults, but in addition to this the human young are actively directed by the adults. Now if we understand rules as we suggest, namely not necessarily as symbolic articulations, but as coordinated evaluative attitudes, as the resonating propensities of classifying behavior into that which is "right" (and is to be done) and that which is "wrong" (and is to be avoided), we can see that this constitutes also the most elementary level of teaching. This is stressed by Castro & Toro (2004), p. 1023:

8 For other results regarding the role of norms within human ontogenesis see Kenward et al. (2011), Clément & Kaufmann (2011), or Schmidt et al. (2016).

9 Of course, this somewhat uncanny sensitivity to norms must be underlain by a cognitive (and consequently neurological) mechanism (it might be related to what some authors see as inherited cognitive specialization of "deontic reasoning" – see Cosmides & Tooby (2005)), but the mechanism is not as yet entirely clear.

10 See also Rossano (2012).
The key factor enabling [the transformation of primate social learning into a cumulative cultural system of inheritance in the strict sense] was the fact that some hominids developed the capacity to approve or disapprove of their offspring’s learned behavior. It was this capacity to approve or disapprove of offspring’s behavior that makes learning both less costly and more accurate and that transformed the hominid culture into a system of cumulative cultural inheritance similar to that of humans, although the system was still prelinguistic in nature.

Thus, rules can be seen as the engine on which cultural inheritance runs (Peregrin, 2014b). It seems that our enculturation proceeds in such a way that we are forced by our caregivers, teachers and eventually other persons, into certain behavioral patterns, first by "brute force", and then by ever subtler methods. However, what is crucial is that the norms thus brought to bear upon the infants, are recognized by the infants for what they are. Only then can the virtuous circle of cultural inheritance get going - only if the infants not just come to follow the rules, but also recognize these rules as what "ought to be" will they be automatically transformed into future teachers and propagators.

**Naturalisation of inferentialism?**

The followers of Sellars are sometimes divided into left-wing and right-wing, according to whether they emphasize Sellars' "normativism" or his "scientism". The left-wing Sellarsians take the fundamental message of Sellars to be that "the normative" is not reducible to "the natural". The right-wing Sellarsians, on the other hand, think that as according to Sellars "science is the measure of all things", "the normative" cannot exist if it is not sanctioned – in some or other way – by science.

I do think that the left-wing Sellarsians – especially Brandom – have an important lesson to teach us. There is a sense in which "the normative" is not reducible to "the natural". This sense is that claims to the effect that something should – or ought to – be done, are not translatable into purely declarative claims. But likewise, I do think that the right-wing Sellarsians have a good point, too, namely that the reason why this is the case is perfectly explainable in non-normative terms – hence that in some sense the normative is reducible to the non-normative.

My view is that normatives are not (or not always) translatable into declaratives because the former typically constitute speech acts slightly different from assertion. (Thus, their irreducibility is no more mysterious than the irreducibility of imperatives or interrogatives.) The function of the normatives is to establish institutional frameworks for the development of

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11 Rakoczy & Schmidt (2013) write: "Even very young children learn and understand social activities as governed by conventional norms that (a) are arbitrary and shared by the community, (b) have normative force and apply to all participants, and (c) are valid in context-relative ways. Importantly, such understanding is revealed both in the fact that children themselves follow the norms, and in the fact that they actively enforce them toward third parties."
our human affairs, aimed at the future (Peregrin, 2016a). It does have much to do with cultural inheritance, as mentioned above, but in essence it is even more elementary.

When I say that something should be done, I am, in effect, either proposing the erection of virtual barriers to forge our future conduct, or giving support to such a proposal if already made by others. Such barriers delimit the spaces in which we humans live our lives. My view is that once we humans learned to assume normative attitudes, however they first emerged in the course of evolution, they quickly mutated into rules as the tool of this delimitation, and in this way they completely overhauled our human niche – so that almost everything we now do, we do with an eye on how this will be evaluated by others (and then, when this gets internalized, also by ourselves)¹².

In any case, I think that this process of building our normative niche is explainable in naturalistic terms. We are able to conjecture reasons for rules and rule-following entering our evolution; and we are able to describe the ways in which rules and rule-following enter the lives of our children. We are able to analyze the nature of the evaluative/normative attitudes which we humans assume to each other's behavior; and we are able to explore how the individual evaluative attitudes add up to the communal sense of rightness/wrongness which constitute implicit rules.

Moreover, we are able, as a matter of principle, to identify the inferential rules which make up our languages. There is nothing very special about them: they are species of the general kind discussed up to now, they consist of evaluative/normative attitudes and are sometimes made explicit by logic and perhaps by theoretical linguistics. In this sense, there is a naturalistic path to inferentialism and the fact that this path exists seems to me to be important.

True, all of this targets norms and inferentialism from without. It does not tell us, from within, how it is to live inside the normative frameworks we have come to inhabit. This, I think, is also a task to be taken up, within humanities and social sciences. This is the task of building theories of our world(s) taking some of our norms for granted, i.e. taking them as constituting a "normative reality" (Peregrin, 2016b).

**Conclusion**

Explicit rules, viz. imperatives and the like, must rest on implicit ones, and implicit rules exist in the form of consensual evaluative/normative attitudes adopted by members of the society in question. In contrast to Brandom I think that at least some of these implicit rules are no longer rule-evaluable – they are neither correct not incorrect, at most they can be either useful or useless. This provides for the anchoring of "the normative" within "the natural" - it lets us see how correctness and normativity could have entered our world and lets us look at norms from a naturalistic angle. And significantly, we can see that this theory of normative attitudes is not

¹² Thus adopting what Tomasello (2014) calls "normative self-governance".
merely a philosophers' just so story; it is underpinned by empirical findings concerning both human ontogeny and phylogeny.

References

Peregrin, J. (2016a): 'Should one be a left or right Sellarsian? (And is there really such a choice?)'. *Metaphilosophy* 47(2), 251–263.