

Truth, Rationality, and Humanity

When we interpret someone in terms of their beliefs and desires, we are doing something other than merely describing them, but it is far from clear what this something else is. As Dennett puts it, while there is a growing consensus about the "not-purely-descriptive nature of intentional attribution," there remains considerable disagreement over which norms govern the play of this "dramatic interpretation game."¹ This paper will discuss three candidates for specifying the content of these norms, truth, rationality and humanity. It will argue that while truth has frequently been taken to be the least plausible candidate, once the *regulative* rather than *constitutive* status of these norms are recognized, it turns out to be the best one. It will then close with a discussion of the 'indirect' role that rationality constraints can still be seen to play in a theory of belief.

There are currently two main candidates for the interpretation-governing norms, namely: some form of the Principle of Charity, "according to which one should attribute to a creature the propositional attitudes it 'ought to have' given its circumstances,"² and the Principle of Humanity, "according to which one should attribute to a creature the propositional attitudes one supposes one would have oneself in those circumstances."³ Charity is most frequently understood in terms of truth or rationality, so we can see truth, rationality and 'humanity' as the three primary candidates for the norms governing our interpretive practices. However, which of these three is best understood as giving the content of the norms governing the interpretational game will depend, to a large extent, on the status we take these norms to have. (Indeed, one distressing feature of the debate over these principles is that the participants seem to continually shift their position about what status their favored norms should have.)

¹ Dennett, "Mid-Term Examination," 342. For doubts about the extent of this 'consensus', see Fodor and LePore, *Holism*, 235.

² Dennett, "Mid-Term Examination," 342. It should be noted that while this accurately characterizes most accounts of Charity from Quine on, Wilson's original formulation of the principle has nothing like this form, and is, in many respects, superior to Quine's version (for a discussion of this, see my "Charity, Holism and Belief", MS York University).

³ Dennett, "Mid-Term Examination," 342. Goldman makes the connection between 'projective' accounts of interpretation and Grandy's principle quite explicit: "The account I favor may be introduced by reference to a proposal of Richard Grandy 1973. Grandy proposes to replace charity principles with what he calls the 'humanity principle'. This is the constraint imposed on translation that the imputed pattern or relations among beliefs, desires and the world be as similar to our own as possible." (Goldman: "Interpretation Psychologized" 168.)

1. Strongly constitutive principles

For instance, it has often been suggested that the norms in question should be *strongly constitutive* of the items in their domain. That is to say, a set of norms, *P*, are strongly constitutive for items in a domain, *D*, if, for any object, *x*, *x* counts as an object in *D* if and only if it is in accord with *P*. The entities in the constituted domain must, as Haugeland puts it, "live up to these standards, if they are to count as entities in this domain at all."⁴ Applied to beliefs, this would suggest something like the following principle:

(I) To be a believer at all, one must satisfy *P*.

As a result, if the rules governing the domain are understood as strongly constitutive, then understanding *P* in terms of Truth, Rationality, and Humanity will require that, to be a believer all one's beliefs must be true, rational, or 'like ours' respectively.

Truth seems like a fairly obvious non-starter as a strongly constitutive standard upon interpretations: a constitutive standard that ruled out the possibility of the interpretee having false beliefs would clearly be inadequate.

While truth may be an unrealistic candidate for a strongly constitutive standard, and has not found many defenders, rationality may seem to be a more promising candidate, and a number of philosophers have suggested that it plays such a role.⁵ Misperception, misinformation etc. can lead to false beliefs without any irrationality on the interpretee's part, so the standard of rationality may seem to be considerably weaker and thus more satisfiable than truth. Full-blooded rationality remains, however, far too strong to serve as a constitutive standard. While there is undoubtedly a close conceptual connection between belief and rationality, if the norms of rationality are taken to

⁴ "Dasein's Disclosedness", p.29.

⁵ The view is most commonly associated with Davidson, Dennett, and Haugeland. See, for instance, "Different schemes or realms entail different standards or criteria of adequacy to which descriptions of the phenomena must 'live up'. . . . entities themselves must live up to these standards, if they are to count as entities in this domain at all. Thus being rationally related to other mental states and events is a standard that any proposed candidate must meet if it is to join the mental club; being interrelated with others according to strict causal laws is the analogous entry condition for physical phenomena." (Haugeland, "Dasein's Disclosedness", p.29. See also Dennett, "Intentional Systems", 9-10, 20, Davidson, "Mental Events")

be *constitutive* of beliefs, then it may seem as if there could not be sets of beliefs that were not in accord with the norms of rationality. Since we frequently have inconsistent beliefs, fail to draw the appropriate consequences from our beliefs and behave in ways justly characterized as “irrational”, this claim that rationality is a constitutive norm in interpretation seems subject to evident counterexamples.⁶

A natural response to this problem is to find a strongly constitutive principle that is less susceptible to counterexamples. Indeed, the move from truth to rationality itself was the first step in such a direction, and Grandy’s suggestion that we replace truth and rationality driven conceptions of Charity with something like his “principle of humanity” (which requires merely that the relations between the interpretee’s beliefs, desires, and the world “be as similar to our own as possible”)⁷ is the most popular second step. However, it seems unlikely that even humanity could serve as a strongly constitutive principle. Just because we, or even most people, do not make inferences of a certain sort, there is no reason to think that the interpretee could not.⁸ The interpretee might be particularly bad (or good) at making inferences, remembering things, seeing clearly, hearing well etc., and while they cannot be interpreted as being ‘like us’ in such cases, they remain believers nevertheless.⁹ Many people are, in fact, like us, so humanity will often serve as a heuristically useful principle, but there is no reason to think of it as *constitutive* of belief.

As a strongly constitutive principle, then, the claim that the interpretee’s beliefs should be true, rational, or even ‘like ours’ is unacceptable. There manifestly are people who do not think the way we do, people who have inconsistent beliefs, and people who are mistaken with distressing frequency. Because of this, any principle of interpretation that requires that the interpretee be otherwise seems far too strong.

⁶ Haugeland, however, sounds, at times, as if he is willing to bite the bullet in these cases, claiming that for intentional attributions, “we *insist upon* rationality: in confronting apparent breaches of the standard, we first attempt to rectify them (e.g. explain them away in terms sanctioned by the standard itself); and, failing that, we give it up” (Haugeland, “Pattern and Being”, 66).

⁷ Grandy, “Reference, Meaning and Belief” 443.

⁸ This becomes very apparent, of course, when encountering others from a radically different culture.

⁹ Or, the interpretee might be unusually *good* at doing these things (interpreting Sherlock Holmes correctly would involve attributing inferences to him most people would not make). For an extensive discussion of individual differences in the ability to make inferences, see Cherniak, *Minimal Rationality* ch. 2.

2. Constitutive ideals

However, while truth, rationality, and even humanity cannot serve as strongly constitutive constraints upon interpretation, it might seem as if they could be understood as ‘ideally’ constitutive.¹⁰ That is to say, the form of whatever constraint we put on interpretation should be something like the following:

(II) One is a believer to the extent that one satisfies *P*.

On such an account, *P* is still constitutive of the domain but it can be satisfied by degrees. Like (I), (II) could be understood in terms of truth, rationality or humanity.

If truth is understood as an ‘ideal’ of this sort, then, to the extent that he wants to treat the interpretee as a *believer*, the interpreter should try to make the him come out with as many true beliefs as possible. Quine's original formulation of the principle had something like this form, and Davidson also takes it to be incumbent upon any interpreter to treat the interpretee as having as many true beliefs as possible. In much the same way, rationality is more plausible as an ‘ideal’ that the interpreter should shoot for than as a *strongly* constitutive principle. On such accounts, the closer the interpretee comes to being perfectly rational, the more fully he can be understood as a believer.¹¹ Finally, one might take humanity to be the ideal; the more the interpreter can be interpreted as being like us, the more he can be understood as a believer.

However, even if ideally constitutive accounts of the norms in question are not obviously false in the way that their strongly constitutive counterparts are, there is little reason to think that they must be true. Ideal theories all ultimately face the same problem; the fact that someone has a few false beliefs, makes a few invalid inferences, or thinks a bit differently than we do does not seem to license our treating them as less of a believer. It is only when someone violates any of these

¹⁰ Of course, constitutive ideals are often contrasted with regulative ones, and the regulative ideals will be discussed in sections five and six.

¹¹ This ‘graded’ notion might be seen in Davidson’s claim that “we weaken the intelligibility of attributions of thoughts of any kind to the extent that we fail to uncover a consistent pattern of beliefs, and finally of actions” (Davidson, “Thought and Talk” 159), or Dennett’s “as we uncover apparent irrationality under an intentional interpretation of an entity, our grounds for ascribing any beliefs at all wane.” (Dennett, “Conditions of personhood” 285.)

principles to an *extreme* that we begin to wonder whether beliefs can be attributed to them at all. Because of this, any principle that says an interpretation should be preferred to the extent that it finds the interpretee "consistent, a believer of truths, and a lover of the good"¹² seems far too strong.

3. 'Minimalist' theories

This might suggest a more 'minimal' reading of the constitutive principles, that is:

(III) Anything that satisfies P to some (minimal) extent is a believer.

Truth, Rationality and Humanity might all be understandable in this minimal sense. Indeed, Quine's original remarks to the effect that "assertions startlingly false on the face of them are likely to turn on hidden differences of language"¹³ could be understood as suggesting only a 'minimal' conception of truth, as can Davidson's claim that error only makes sense against a background of correctness.

Rationality, however, has been the most frequent candidate for giving the content of this 'minimal' notion of *P*.¹⁴ While we do allow people to have inconsistent beliefs, it is possible that we might not be willing to ascribe beliefs to someone whose beliefs bore *no* rational relation to each other. There may be a minimal amount of rationality that a thinker must have.¹⁵ It does seem that if an agent could not be interpreted as satisfying even the most minimal rationality requirements, there would be no reason to treat him as a believer at all. It is, however, less than clear why this is so. Cherniak claims that "The most basic law of psychology is a rationality

¹² Davidson, "Mental Events" 222.

¹³ Quine, *Word and Object*, 59.

¹⁴ See for instance, Cherniak, *Minimal Rationality*. A similar line is taken in Loar's *Mind and Meaning*, where he argues that a fairly minimal set of constraints can capture all that is required by the Principle of Charity.

¹⁵ Cherniak suggests that sufficiently 'minimal' conception of rationality is reflected in the following two conditions:

Minimal general rationality condition: If an agent has a particular belief-desire set, he would attempt some, but not necessarily all, of those actions which are apparently appropriate.

Minimal inference conditions: If an agent has a particular belief-desire set, he would make some, but not necessarily all, of the sound inferences from the belief set which are apparently appropriate. (Cherniak, *Minimal Rationality*, 9-10.)

constraint on an agent's beliefs, desires and actions: No rationality, no agent,"¹⁶ but it is hard to see why even *minimal* rationality is needed within his framework. His official reason is that "a cognitive theory with no rationality restrictions is without predictive content; using it, we can have virtually no expectations regarding a believer's behavior."¹⁷ But such a 'cognitive' theory would have predictive power as long as it had *some* inferences that the speaker would be inclined to make, so a theory which had an agent always trying to satisfy his third strongest desire, or always affirming the consequent would have predictive power even though it failed to satisfy the minimal general rationality condition and the minimal inference condition. As a result, not even *minimal* rationality can be derived solely from the need to have belief play some part in a predictive theory. In much the same way, minimal humanity may seem to have some plausibility. If someone was not like us at all, we might have no reason to treat them as a believer. However, it isn't entirely clear why this shouldn't be seen as just an epistemic failing on our part. Most minimal theories have a similar motivation problem: they get most of their plausibility from the fact that we cannot *imagine* what it would be like for a believer to violate the minimal requirements, and conceivability is notoriously a bad test for possibility.

4 Heuristic Conceptions

Attempts to treat the governing norms as strongly, ideally, or even 'minimally' constitutive all seem unsuccessful and/or unmotivated. As a result, it has been suggested that *P* should not serve as anything other than a *heuristic* constraint on interpretation.¹⁸ That is to say, following such a principle will usually lead to ascriptions that are true, since cases of irrationality, etc. are not *too* widespread. This would lead to something like the following principle:

(IV) Believers tend to satisfy *P*.

¹⁶ Cherniak, *Minimal Rationality*, 3.

¹⁷ Cherniak, *Minimal Rationality*, 6.

¹⁸ Grandy, for instance, characterized Humanity not as a constitutive norm, but as a "pragmatic constraint" (443). And Hacking downgrades Charity and Humanity from being constitutive principles of interpretation to being mere "commonsense rules of thumb." (*Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?* 149-50.)

As with (I)-(III), (IV) can be understood in terms of truth, rationality and humanity, but whatever content one gives to *P*, it has clearly ceased to *govern* the domain in question.¹⁹ The beliefs that the agent has are completely independent of *P*.²⁰ While (IV) may be true for all three of the candidates for *P*, this would just be a statistical generalization and would have no *constitutive* function. As a result, just advocating a version of (IV) is, in some sense, to give up on the original project.

5. Chess and Regulative Ideals

Treating the norms governing beliefs as being constitutive of that domain has resulted in their being, at best, scaled down to the minimal notions discussed above, and, at worst, reduced to heuristic norms which do not govern the domain at all. There is, however, another way to understand these potentially domain governing norms that allows them to preserve more of their content. If they are taken to play a more *regulative* role for the domain in question, the existence of clear violations of the norm does not require us to scale back the norm's content.

For instance, the rules of chess may seem to govern the domain of chess play, and one can see chess-analogs of the four positions discussed above, namely:

- (i) To be a chess player at all, one must play in accordance with the rules of chess.
- (ii) One is a chess player to the extent that one plays in accordance with the rules of chess.
- (iii) Anything that plays in accordance with the rules of chess to some (minimal) extent is a chess player
- (iv) Chess players tend to play in accordance with the rules of chess.

None of these seems to satisfactorily capture the relation the rules of chess have to the game. While (iv) seems true, it cannot be the whole truth, since it seems to suggest that chess playing is,

¹⁹ Goldman, while advocating a humanity-based version of (IV) is quite explicit about this. (Goldman, "Interpretation Psychologized" 182.)

²⁰ As a result, no version of (IV) is going to serve Davidson's purposes of understanding what a belief is in terms of what it is to be correctly interpreted as a believer; Davidson can't treat the norms as heuristic, since that would imply that there were meanings out there to be found independent of the interpretation.

in some sense, independent of the rules of chess; which would leave it a purely contingent matter that chess players ever obey these rules.

The rules of chess should obviously be relevant for understanding chess players, but treating such rules as strongly constitutive (as in (i)) would force us to 'give up the game' of interpreting them as chess players if they ever 'violated' the rules of chess. If following the rules of chess is strongly constitutive of being a chess player, then players who, say, occasionally allow their pawns to capture opposing pieces vertically are not chess players, and the pieces they are so moving cannot even be understood as *pawns*. As a result, their moves cannot be understood as mistaken, since their behavior must now be understood in terms of, say, 'whess', which is just like chess with the exception that 'pawns' can capture vertically. Just as treating truth as strongly constitutive of belief make misrepresentation impossible, treating the rules of chess as strongly constitutive of the game makes it impossible to move a piece incorrectly.

(ii) and (iii) do not have this problem, but highlight another which is not quite so clear with beliefs. In particular, (ii) and (iii) would require that we understand as chess players people who were not even *trying* to play chess. For instance, consider a pair of people who found chess too slow, and so invented their own game, call it "whess", which was much like chess but allowed the pawns to capture vertically. Now according to (ii), they are still, to a large extent, playing chess, since the rules of whess are, for most pieces, like the rules of chess.²¹ According to (iii) they would also be playing chess, since whess players satisfy the rules of chess at least to some minimal extent. According to (ii) and (iii), the players are playing *both* chess and whess, (and, indeed, any number of distinct, but similar, games),²² while they seem best understood as just playing one game, whess.

²¹ Dennett, correctly I think, sees a connection between this sort of picture of chess and 'minimalist' accounts of rationality, claiming that "any attempt to *legitimize* human fallibility in a theory of belief by fixing a permissible level of error would be like adding one more rule to chess: an Official Tolerance Rule to the effect that any game of chess containing no more than *k* moves that are illegal relative to the other rules of the game is a legal game of chess." ("Intentional Systems" 21.) Unfortunately, he seems to see some version of (I) or (II) to be the only alternative to (III).

²² (ii) fares slightly better in this respect since it at least allows that they are playing whess in a 'fuller sense' than they are playing chess, while it seems unlikely that (iii) can even allow this much.

Now consider second pair who stray further from the rules of chess than the whess players; they not only allow pawns to capture vertically, but also allow the king to castle after it has been put in check. However, if any of these divergences from how we play chess are pointed out to them, they do their best to bring their play into line; they consult rule books, etc. While both (ii) and (iii) make the whess players coming out as more like chess players than this pair, there is a real sense in which this pair, unlike the whess players, is at least *trying* to play chess.²³ A proper characterization of their play will involve the rules of chess. The behavior of the second pair can be understood in terms of the rules of chess because they are playing according to their *conception* of the rules of chess.²⁴ Their conception is a conception of *chess* since they defer to the *actual* rules of chess. If they didn't defer, there is no reason to say that it was chess that they were playing.²⁵

While a 'chess stance' might be more successful at *predicting* the behavior of the whess players than it would the behavior of the slightly inept chess players. The rules of chess may help *predict* the behavior of the whess players but they do not help *explain* it.

These problems with (ii) and (iii) in correctly characterizing the whess players and the inept chess players suggest a way of understanding the domain-governing norms which seems more acceptable. We want to say that the rules of chess can still have normative force for players who, say, let their pawns capture vertically (and that these vertically capturing pieces can be correctly described as *pawns*), but we don't want to have to say that anyone who can be understood as acting in accordance with some of the rules of chess is a chess player. The rules of chess can do this if they play a *regulative* role for the players in question. That is to say, if we endorse some version of:

(v) Chess players always attempt to follow the rules of chess.

²³ The claim that someone who isn't playing chess correctly or isn't really playing chess at all is comparable to the claim that someone who falsely applies a term in English isn't 'really' speaking English at all.

²⁴ It is tempting to think of chess rules as being constitutive rather than regulative in part because they are so easy to master, and the ideal is thus easily attainable. But if the analysis of constitutive standards is to apply to such comparatively unattainable ideals such as truth and rationality, then the regulative analysis seems more probable.

²⁵ Since a chess computer has no such conception, if it diverges at all from the rules of chess, it is simply 'playing' a different game.

This principle rules allows us to characterize the second pair as playing chess badly, making mistakes etc., and at the same time deny that the chess players are making any sort of mistake, because they are, after all, not playing chess at all.

6. Belief and Regulative Ideals

This suggests that the best way to understand the norms governing belief is the following:

(V) If one attempts to satisfy P , one is a believer.

While truth was an obviously disastrous candidate for P when it was understood as a strongly constitutive standard, no such problems occur if truth is taken as a regulative ideal. If P is understood in terms of truth, (V) does not require that a speaker's beliefs be true. Rather, it requires only that, if a speaker discovers that one of his beliefs is not true, he must give up that belief. This seems, of course, exactly right. If a speaker showed no concern about the truth of his 'beliefs' then we would 'give up the game' of treating them as beliefs at all.

Believers can be said to 'take true' the sentences they are said to believe in just the sense that chess players can be said to 'take chess' each particular move they make. Having the rules of chess play a *regulative* role is necessary for players to 'take chess' the moves they make, and truth itself must play a similarly regulative role for speakers to 'take true' the sentences they utter. A speaker no more counts as a believer simply because he can be understood as having mostly true beliefs than he counts as a chess player simply because most of his moves are in accordance with the rules of chess. Even if a speaker's utterances could be understood as mostly true, if he showed no concern with the truth or falsity of these utterances (he could, for instance, see no reason to withdraw a 'claim' even when it was shown to be false), then he could not be understood as 'holding true', and thus believing, the sentences in question. Truth plays no *regulative* role at all for this first speaker, and we can contrast him with a second speaker who may have many more false beliefs but drops any belief he discovers to be false. The first speaker would clearly seem to do better according to the more strongly *constitutive* conceptions of truth and rationality, and the

instrumental strategy of treating it as an 'intentional system' might be more successful for it than it would for the second. It is the second, however, which would be best described as a believer.

This is why attempts to preserve the status of truth, rationality or humanity as constitutive standards by requiring that they only be satisfied 'ideally', 'for the most part', or even 'minimally', are unacceptable. Something could satisfy these constraints 'for the most part' and see no reason to satisfy them any further, and something which felt no such pressure would not be a believer. Regulative conceptions of domain governing norms should not, thus, be assimilated to ideal or 'minimalist' ones. Both may allow that the full-blooded norms not be fully satisfied, but one can satisfy an ideal or minimalist standard without satisfying the regulative one.

In light of this, the 'intentional stance' should not be viewed as analogous to the physical one.²⁶ We can apply norms of truth and rationality to *people* not because they fit those standards (in the way objects fit the laws of physics) but because they *hold themselves* to those standards. While we don't always believe the truth, we always believe what we take to be true.

Finally, it should be noted that, when *P* is understood in terms of truth, the motivation for (V) is clearly internal to the notion of belief, and so the motivation problem is not there for (V) in the way that it is for the other candidates. On the other hand, it is not at all clear how rationality or humanity could be understood as well motivated or counterexample free candidates for *P* in (V).

7. Rationality

Nevertheless, having truth play this regulative role for speakers should also explain the perceived connection between belief and rationality. A concern with the consistency of one's beliefs should go hand in hand with a concern for their truth, and, as a result, an agent who showed *no* concern for consistency could not plausibly be understood as holding sentences true, and thus be understood as a believer. Rationality plays the regulative role it does because of its connection to truth. It thus 'indirectly' constrains belief, even if it is not built directly into the content of *P*. As a result, inconsistencies in an agent's beliefs don't undermine his status as a

²⁶ As Davidson does in his "Mental Events" and Haugeland suggests in the passage quoted earlier ("Dasein's Disclosedness", p.29.).

believer if they are unperceived. If the inconsistency is unperceived, the agent sees no reason to think that one of his beliefs must be false, and so he is no less a believer for failing to revise his beliefs.

Since rationality has this 'indirect' connection to belief, it is possible for believers to ignore the constraints of rationality if they thought that, in the area in question, the relevant connection between truth and rationality had been weakened or severed, this would not be possible if rationality itself were a regulative ideal. We can see how the connection between truth and rationality can be weakened when we consider that while if a single belief is inconsistent, it must be false, so given up, if a large set of beliefs is mutually inconsistent, each member of the set may still have a very high likelihood of truth, so there is considerably less pressure to give any of the beliefs up.²⁷ On the other hand, the connection between the two can actually be severed in cases such as theological propositions, where the believers are expected to accept seemingly contradictory beliefs on 'faith'. Indeed, the contradictory nature of the beliefs in question can be taken as a virtue, since they test the faith of the believer in question. Tertullianistic theology would be an obvious example of this, and it should be noted that while Tertullian can claim that something should be believed because it is absurd, he could not claim that one should believe something because it is false. The contradictory and absurd beliefs are all taken to be true in spite of their contradictoriness.

One could take this attitude towards theological matters for at least two reasons. The first, and more radical position involves the belief that the logical laws such as the law of non-contradiction simply don't hold for theological matters and that logic does not really reflect how the world really is. While this radical position is held by some mystics, there is a more moderate position, which allows contradictions to be true because the concepts involved inadequately map on to an 'underlying reality' which is itself consistent. For instance, it may both be true that the communion wafer is a piece of unleavened bread and true that it is the body of Christ. This 'contradiction' may be resolved when we introduce a more 'fine grained' scholastic language of

²⁷ This is why the "Preface paradox" is a problem if rationality is directly constitutive of belief, but not really a problem at all if rationality plays a role mediated by the concern for truth.

substances and attributes, which will allow one to express the truths involved without any contradiction. Nevertheless, for those believers who have no access to such conceptual refinements, faith requires that they believe propositions that have a surface syntax of P and $-P$. Considerable theological effort is spent on trying to discover an underlying grammar for accepted theological propositions that seem mutually inconsistent according to their surface form. When faced with an apparent contradiction between two items of faith, the theologian need not take this as a sign that one of the two propositions is false. Rather, he can take it to indicate some inadequacy in the system of representations he is using.

It should not, however, be thought that this phenomenon of temporarily setting aside the constraints of rationality since one believes that they do not always track the truth is an attitude restricted to theology. It has been argued, for instance, that such an attitude is surprisingly common in epistemically respected enterprises such as mathematics and the physical sciences.²⁸ This is, one hopes, because scientists and mathematicians hold some version of the more moderate position discussed above. Apparent contradictions point not to an inability of logic to fit reality, but rather to an inadequacy of our present representational system to represent the world properly, an inadequacy manifesting in its representing two true propositions as contradictory.²⁹ (Indeed, philosophers frequently act this way, holding on to apparently inconsistent beliefs in hopes that they will eventually be able to make the distinctions required to make them consistent.)

7. Conclusion

By treating the normative constraints on belief attribution as regulative rather than constitutive, we are not only able to motivate the content of the constraints in terms of the 'internal' relation between belief and 'taking true' but we are also able to explain both the connection between belief and rationality and why this connection sometimes breaks down.

²⁸ See, for instance, Mark Wilson's "Can we trust logical form?" *J-Phil*, Oct. 1994.

²⁹ "One is free to reject, at least in principle, any purported logical imperative on the grounds that doing so might violate the more important boundaries appropriate to the language's underlying working basis. By this excuse, a subject can legitimately beg off an alleged logical imperative even if she has little sense how the specifics of a working semantics for her language might proceed." (Wilson, "Can we trust logical form?" p. 16.)