BELIEF, CORRECTNESS AND NORMATIVITY

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1. *Normativity and the standard of correctness for belief*
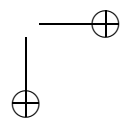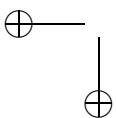
It has been recently argued that the concept of belief is not analyzable in merely descriptive terms — that it is essentially and constitutively normative.[1] The philosophers who defend the former claim agree that such normativity comes from a specific standard of correctness of belief. Seeing a belief as evaluable according to this standard is a rather intuitive matter: when a believed proposition is true, it is appropriate to say that such a belief is "right" or "correct". On the contrary, if one says that she believes that p and p turns out to be false, we say that that person is wrong, that his belief is incorrect. In this sense, it is often claimed that the standard of correctness for belief is truth, or, more formally:

(C) a belief is correct if and only if the believed proposition is true[2]

It has been argued that (C) is not just contingently true, but it plays a central role in the characterization of the very notion of belief. The standard is essential and constitutive for belief, and it is the feature distinguishing beliefs from other mental states, such as assumptions, hypotheses and thoughts: if you believe that p, you are "committed" to the standard, in the sense that your belief is evaluable as being correct or incorrect; otherwise, your mental state is not a belief.

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[1] See, for example, Boghossian (2003), Brandom (2001), Engel (2005) and (2008), Gibbard (2003) and (2005), Shah (2003), Wedgewood (2002).

[2] Notice that, in the case of (C), "correct" is not just a synonym for "true". «To say that a mental state is "correct" is to say that in having that mental state, one has got things "right"; one's mental state is "appropriate"» (Wedgwood, 2002, p. 267). On this see also Rosen (2001, p. 619) and Schroeder (2003, p. 5).

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Now, it is generally accepted that the concept of correctness is normative, and that standards of correctness entail norms.[3] For example, the performance of a song is committed to a standard of correctness: the song is played correctly only if the notes follow a certain sequence and rhythm. The standard puts an 'ought' on the performance of a song; it says how a song *ought* to be played according to a certain standard. The same seems to be the case for the standards of correct chess-play, correct assertion, correct behaviour, and so on. All those standards seem to imply some 'ought'-claim, they seem to indicate how someone ought to act or behave, or the way in which things ought to stay in order to be in a certain specific condition of correctness. Therefore, standards of correctness are normative, at least in the sense that they imply some 'ought'-claim.

If standards of correctness are normative, this should also be the case for the standard of belief. This is precisely the reason why so many authors individuated the source of the normative dimension of belief in its standard of correctness. According to normativists, from (C) it is possible to derive the statement of a norm, what a subject ought to do when entertains a belief; for (C) is precisely the norm of belief, at which every believer is committed, given that, as in the example of the standard of correctness for song-performances, also (C) implies and can be made explicit in some 'ought'-claim.

However, at this point, the agreement between those who accept that belief is a normative concept ends, and many discussions concerning the right formulation of (C) in an 'ought'-claim begin. Different interpretations have been suggested; below are the most popular formulations:

1) For any S, p: S ought to (believe that p) iff p

2) For any S, p: if S ought to (believe that p), then p

3) For any S, p: if S considers whether p, S ought to (believe that p) iff p

4) For any S, p: S ought to (believe that p iff p)

All these formulations are flawed in some way. In particular, in a very influential paper,[4] Bykvist and Hattiangadi gave a list of criticisms against all

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[3] For example, Gibbard wrote: «Correctness, now, seems normative. More precisely, as we should put it, the concept of correctness seems to be a normative concept» (2005, p. 338). And Boghossian: «Furthermore, it seems right to say [...] that correctness is a normative matter, a matter of whether one ought to do what one is doing» (2003, p. 35).

[4] Bykvist & Hattiangadi (2007). See also Engel (2008) for a further discussion.

the available formulations. They remarked that (1) violates the commonly admitted rule according to which "ought" implies "can"; that (2) seems not to be normatively interesting, because it is unable to place any requirement on believers. They raise similar objections to (3) and (4), and to other suggested improvements of them.[5] The issues in formulating (C) in 'ought'-terms pushed the authors to argue that no 'ought'-claims can capture the meaning of the standard (C), and that this general failure could be considered a sort of clue that belief is not at all a normative concept, at least not in the way suggested by normativists.

Even admitting that the above criticisms are correct, I consider the conclusions of the two authors too hasty; they do not follow from the fact that (1)–(4) are the wrong formulations of (C), first of all because the fact that (C) cannot be expressed in terms of 'ought'-sentences does not imply that the standard of correctness of belief is not normative in any interesting sense; on the contrary, some philosopher argued that the normativity implicit in standards of correctness is of a different kind, not expressible in terms of 'oughts'.[6] Secondly, even if the standard of correctness of belief were not normative, this would not be a clue of the fact that belief is not a normative concept at all: in fact, doxastic normativity could depend on some other feature of belief. Furthermore, even if the criticisms of Bykvist and Hattiangadi are right and all the available formulations wrong, this does not mean that it is impossible to formulate (C) in 'ought'-terms; it could simply mean that the right formulation is yet to come.

The latter is exactly my opinion. My aim in this article is to achieve a new formulation of (C) in 'ought'-terms by using a new methodological approach. Until now the research of the correct formulation of (C) in 'ought'-terms has been a bit random, tentative, without the necessary generality and methodology it requires. I will not consider, as it has been done, what the standard (C) seems intuitively to require to a subject. Rather, I will generalize the problem to every standard of correctness. (C) is just one of a broad range of standards. If we find a way in which standards can be translated in

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[5] (3) has been suggested as a restriction of (2) able to escape some difficulties (see, for example, Wedgwood (2002)). In Bykvist & Hattiangadi (2007), the authors argue against the effectiveness of the restriction in solving the problems in (2). The reason because (4) resulted problematic is that it takes wide-scope over the conditional "believe that p iff p", and from wide-scope deontic conditionals it is impossible to detach that the consequent of the conditional ought to be the case. The counterintuitive consequences are that, from (4), even if one believes that p, it is not possible to detach that the truth is what she ought to believe. Nor does (4) capture the intuition that a false belief is defective: from the falsity of p and (4) it does not follow that one ought not to believe that p. Furthermore, (4) seems to be subject to the same objections raised against (1).

[6] See, for example, Rosen (2001, p. 621) and Boghossian (2003, p. 37).

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or reduced to 'ought'-claims, then we have just to apply this general result to the specific case (C), and we will obtain a principly justified 'ought'-formulation of (C).

Such an approach requires preliminary clarifications of what 'oughts' and 'standards of correctness' are and, more importantly, to individuate some shared relevant features that justify the step from the latter to the former. This will be the topic of the next section. The result of such analysis is a general schema of translation from standards of correctness to 'ought'-claims. I will introduce such a schema in section 3. Finally, in the fourth and last section of the article, I will apply the general schema to the particular case of the standard of correctness of belief, obtaining in this way a principled formulation of (C) in 'ought'-terms. I will conclude with some considerations concerning the specific kind of normativity involved in the suggested formulation.

2. *Oughts and Standards of correctness*

'Oughts'.[7] Many different accounts of the meaning of 'ought' have been suggested. According to the most popular view — the one I will endorse here — widely accepted in semantics[8] and shared by many contemporary philosophical accounts of the term, like those of Ralf Wedgwood and John Broome,[9] 'oughts' work as propositional operators. Grammatically, 'ought' in English is a modal auxiliary verb, like, for example, "can", "might", and "must". According to such a view, when an occurrence of a modal auxiliary verb modifies the main verb of a sentence, it can be taken as an operator applying to the proposition that would be expressed by the unmodified form of that sentence.[10] For example, the following sentence, "Mary ought to go to the party tonight", could be rephrased as follows: "it ought to be that [Mary

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[7] Here obviously it is impossible to give a complete survey of all the available accounts of 'ought'. In this section I shall introduce a specific account of the term; however, my aim in this paper is not to defend any particular view, but to show relevant similarities between 'oughts' and standards of correctness able to justify a reduction of the latter term into the former one. So, my analysis is not meant to be limited to the specific view that I will suggest; what matters for my present purposes is that the features which I identify both in 'oughts' and in standards of correctness needed for the reduction could be identified in other accounts and play the same role in the two analyzed notions.

[8] See, for example, Kratzer (1977).

[9] Wedgwood (2006) and Broome (2009).

[10] Wedgwood (2006, p. 132).

goes to the party tonight]". Here 'ought' works as an operator taking the proposition "Mary goes to the party tonight", and modifying its modal status.[11] Hereafter I shall call what ought to be the case — what the proposition under the scope of 'ought' expresses — the *content* of the 'ought'.[12]

If, as I assumed here, 'ought' is a modal auxiliary verb, what is the specificity of 'ought' with respect to other modal auxiliary verbs? According to a spread interpretation of them, which I endorse, 'oughts' function as modal propositional operators expressing evaluations of some element involved in the content of the propositions under their scope.[13] What distinguishes 'oughts' from other modals is this peculiar evaluative element.[14] The term "evaluation" here must be understood in a very wide and neutral sense: prescriptions, rules, laws, values, preferences, are all different types of evaluation. In this sense, an evaluation is the attribution to a specific set of objects of a positive mark, a privileged position over all the other objects of the same kind. Kinds of evaluable objects can be, for instance, actions, behaviours, events or states of affairs. For example, the evaluation expressed by a code of laws is the set of legal actions included in the code; those actions are "evaluable" with respect to all the others, they are the prescribed

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[11] There is a second minoritary but influential view suggesting that there are two sorts of 'ought': besides the propositional 'ought', that we could call "situational ought", there is a second sort of 'ought', an "agential ought", working as a predicate taking subjects, times and actions. The main advantage of this latter view is that there are cases where 'ought' seems not to merely express a special modal status of a proposition, but in addition it is able to express the special agentive role of the subject of 'ought'. According to those philosophers, the predicative reading seems to account for the prescriptive relation linking the agent and the action. For this view, see, for example, Geach (1982), and more recently Schroeder (2007). Defenders of the canonical view answer that the propositional reading of 'ought' has the advantages of being able to give a general account of all the uses of 'ought' and to capture its syntactical behaviour, similar in all respect to all the other auxiliary verbs. Furthermore, they suggest that the possible agential role of subjects of 'ought' can be easily supplied by a further propositional operator under the scope of 'ought' specifying that a subject ought to bring about to realize the content expressed by the proposition under its scope (the so called 'stit' operator). See, for example, Horty (2001).

[12] I borrowed this terminology from von Wright (1999, p. 5).

[13] Here I don't consider some uses of 'ought', commonly labelled as "predictive" or "epistemic", which seem not to be normative. For example, there is a reading of the sentence "tomorrow it ought to rain" according to which "ought" is equivalent to "it is probable". In this circumstance, 'ought' seems to have only an epistemic meaning, not an evaluative one.

[14] Evaluations do not fully express the meaning of ought-sentences; often ought-sentences involve prescriptive force over subjects, feelings of ownership, and many other features, often implied by the contexts of utterance. However, evaluations, in the wide sense used here, are broadly recognized as a necessary condition for the normative interpretation of 'ought'.

or permitted ones by the law. Other possible examples of sets of objects under an evaluation are the sets of "good" circumstances, "polite" behaviours, "correct" functionings, etc.

As I said above, according to the view I endorse here, 'oughts' express evaluations. In particular, the proposition under the scope of 'ought' expresses what is the case in an evaluable situation, i.e., in a situation in which all the objects of an evaluable set are the case: evaluable actions are done, evaluable events happen, and so on. Let me provide an example. Take the sentence "according to the law, people ought to drive on the right side of the street". Here, the proposition under the scope of 'ought', "people drive on the right side of the street", expresses the specific evaluable situation in which people perform the evaluable action: to drive on the right side. This semantic interpretation of 'ought', based on the intuition that ought-claims express some sort of evaluation of the content of the proposition under the scope of 'ought', is rather familiar to some popular accounts of the notion in semantics and in modal logics. In particular, according to the standard possible-worlds semantics of Deontic Logic, "it ought to be that p" means that p is true in all the possible worlds (or situations) in which all what is required or evaluable is the case.

As seen before, there are very different kinds of evaluation. Each kind of evaluation corresponds to a different "standard", or "sense" in which we use 'ought'.[15] When we say that people ought to be polite, we use 'ought' in a very different sense than when we say that a chess-player ought to move in conformity to the rules of this game, or that there ought not to be earthquakes or floods, and so on. There are many different senses of 'ought': moral, legal, epistemic, practical, evaluative in the narrow sense of "conform to a certain value", and so on. In many cases we ought to do something in one sense but not in another. For example it is morally or legally irrelevant that, when I play chess, I move in conformity to the rules, or that there are no floods and earthquakes on the earth; and it is not excluded that some senses are even in conflict between them.

A further important remark concerning senses of 'ought' is that there are not only general senses like the moral or legal one, but also more specific ones; for example, a chess move ought to be the case according to the specific rules of the game of chess, a certain behaviour ought to be the case according to some particular rule of etiquette, or a certain functioning ought to be the case according to the specific function of an instrument. Notice also that commonly, in ordinary language, senses of 'ought' are not made

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[15] Even if in the present case I consider the word "standard" more appropriate, hereafter I will use "sense" for escaping any possible confusion with what here I call "standards of correctness". Notice also that "sense" here has a different meaning from that commonly used in the philosophical literature.

explicit; they are often implicit and can be understood only by reference to the context of utterance of the ought-claims. For example, when we say that "people ought to drive on the right side", we implicitly suppose "according to the law", and specifically according to the rules of the road in continental Europe.

A final point about 'ought': very often 'oughts' are relative to some specific condition. For example, when we say that a person injecting drugs in vein ought to use clean syringes, we are not saying that this person ought to assume drugs, but that, given the conditional situation of a person taking drugs into his veins, he ought to use clean needles. Intuitively, the condition restricts the possible alternatives taken in account for the evaluation to a limited set of circumstances. What is said about senses is valid for conditions as well: in many cases, as in the example, these conditions are implicit and must be found in the context of utterance.

Summarizing, according to the suggested account of 'ought', it is possible to distinguish the content of 'ought' — what ought to be the case — and a sense of 'ought' — the specific standard of evaluation according to which something ought to be the case. Furthermore, very often 'oughts' are relative to specific conditions. As I will argue in the next section, those three elements are the ones allowing a reduction of standards of correctness to 'ought'-claims.

Standards of correctness. A standard of correctness, as the term is used here, is a conditional (or a biconditional) statement expressing a "relevant" necessary (or necessary and sufficient) condition required by a situation, or a behaviour, or an act, or an attitude, for being in a specific state of correctness. A necessary condition is relevant for a standard only if its necessity is not only conceptual or causal, but evaluative, in the sense that it is a (or the) specific condition responsible of making correct a given state by adding a distinctive evaluation to it. In short, a relevant condition is a condition that a state must manifest in order for that state to count as correct. Examples of standards of correctness are, for example, the standard of correct chess-move and the standard of correct song-performance:

C-Chess) A chess-player is correct if and only if she moves the pieces in conformity to the rules of chess

C-Song) A song is played correctly only if the notes are played in a certain sequence

(C), the standard of belief, is another example.

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Despite the fact that there is general agreement on the determinant that
correctness is normative, it is not clear in what sense it is so.[16] According to
a certain view, correctness is included in the family of "deontic" normative
concepts, like duty, permission and obligation. The main feature of this
family is that those concepts hold some action-guiding, prescriptive force
over agents. On the opposite view, correctness is an axiological[17] concept,
like good, bad, excellent, and awful. The specific feature of axiological
concepts is that of expressing approval or disapproval of some object, action,
situation or state of affairs.[18]

In favour of the former view there is the fact that correctness does not come
in degrees, as axiological properties do: one can be more or less good, but
one cannot be more or less correct. In contrast, non-gradability is a feature
shared by all the deontic properties; actions are not more or less permitted,
or more or less obligatory. A second reason for thinking that correctness is a
deontic term is that sometimes "correct" is used as synonymous of "conform
to norms or laws", "legal" or "permitted". For example, sometimes we label
a legal action, a correct one; and the legal field is typically governed by
prescriptions, permissions and deontic concepts in general.

Other features of correctness seem to be in favour of the axiological read-
ing. In particular, deontic terms, unlike axiological ones, are essentially
action-guiding. Their domain of application is made of actions and they
are always addressed to agents; but correctness is not always addressed to
agents. For example, sometimes we define as correct a state of affairs or
event. Take the case of functional correctness. The correct functioning of
the heart is to pump blood, but this does not mean that the heart is "pre-
scribed" to pump. Correct functioning of the earth cannot be interpreted
metaphorically, as if there was some obligation for the heart to pump; nei-
ther this claim can be considered as a prescription directed to the holder of
the heart.

Given these difficulties in including correctness on one or the other side of
the normative fields, some philosophers consider correctness as a notion *sui
generis*, not included in either of the two families of deontic and axiological

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[16] For a discussion of this issue, see, for example, Rosen (2001, pp. 619–621), Hattiangadi
(2007, pp. 52–61), Ogien & Tappolet (2008, Ch. 2).

[17] More often this class of concepts is named "evaluative". Here I prefer to use "axiologi-
cal" for escaping every possible confusion with the wide sense of the term "evaluation" used
here.

[18] On the distinction between deontic and axiological concepts see in particular Ogien &
Tappolet (2008).

concepts.[19] I believe that this is not a proper conclusion. In my view, some notions like those of correctness and rightness are borderline: sometimes they can involve some action-guiding, prescriptive force over agents, for example when "correct" is synonymous of "legal". However, there are other situations in which correctness is not relative to an agent. For example, to say that a knife works correctly seems to be more an expression of a kind of approval than a prescription over the knife or the cutter. In those cases where correctness does not concern an action that an agent is supposed to fulfil but a specific type of evaluation of a state of affairs, it can be considered an axiological notion, even if of a special kind.[20]

Now, let me return to standards of correctness. These standards, as said above, are specifications of conditions for being in a state of correctness. Regardless of the fact that correctness is a deontic or an axiological notion, it seems clear that it is normative at least in the weak sense that it involves an evaluation, in the sense of "evaluation" introduced above. In fact, it is possible to distinguish a set of correct objects (actions, behaviours, attitudes,...) and attribute to them a certain positive characterization over all other objects of the same kind. Therefore, standards of correctness are evaluative standards, i.e., specifications of the conditions for being in an evaluable situation.

What about the structure of standards of correctness? Gideon Rosen (2001) gave a short analysis of such standards. He argued that often standards of correctness share a common structure:
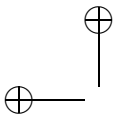
> "To play a Mozart's C mayor sonata just is to engage in performance that is correct only if certain notes are played in a certain order. To be dancing the mambo just is in part for certain steps to count as correct. In cases of this sort we may distinguish correctness itself from the *correct-making feature*: the property the performance must manifest in order to count as correct" (2001, p. 619).

In this sketched analysis, Rosen individuates and distinguishes correctness in itself from what makes something correct, the specific condition for being in the state of correctness, that he calls *correct-making feature*.[21] We could exemplify the basic structure of standards of correctness as follows:

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[19] See, for example, Rosen (2001, p. 621).

[20] For the view that notions like correct and right sometimes are deontic and sometimes axiological, see, for example, Ogien & Tappolet (2008, pp. 58–60).

[21] Rosen (2001, pp. 619–620).

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S) Q is correct only if (if and only if) X

X is the *correct-making feature*. Q specifies the kind of object evaluated by
the standard. To say that Q is correct is to evaluate Q according to a specific
type of evaluation: specifically, Q-correctness. Let me call the type of cor-
rectness specified by the standard, the *correctness-specification* of the stan-
dard. In the two above examples of standard, to move in conformity to the
rules of chess and to play notes in a certain sequence are correct-making fea-
tures, they are conditions for being correct respectively in playing chess and
playing a song; the correctness-specifications of those standards are chess-
correctness and song-performance-correctness. Correctness-specification is
the element individuating standards. For this reason, standards are named on
the base of their respective specificiations.

Notice that commonly the applications of standards are relative to specific
conditions. For example, both the standards exemplified above should be
applied only in certain specific conditions; only if one plays chess her moves
can be correct or incorrect according to the standard.

The resulting conditional structure of standards of correctness is as fol-
lows:
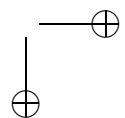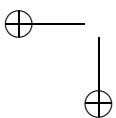
S-cond) Q is correct only if (iff), on condition C, X

The same standard of belief, (C), holds these three elements, namely:

1) A specification of the type of correctness involved in the standard. The
type of correctness involved in (C) is relative to beliefs or believers. We can
label this specific standard of "doxastic correctness".

2) A necessary and sufficient condition for being in the correct situation,
the correct-making feature, namely, that the believed proposition is true.

3) A condition of application of the standard (the condition for the stan-
dard being in force): that one believes a proposition. If no proposition is
believed, there are no states of correctness or incorrectness according to this
specific standard.

I have not specified whether correctness in the exemplified standards is of
a deontic kind, and thus it involves some prescriptive dimension and is ad-
dressed to some agent, or it is of an axiological kind, expressing approval or
disapproval of a given circumstance. This seems to depend on the kind of
correctness involved in the standard. In the specific case of the standard of

belief it is not clear whether doxastic correctness is of a deontic or an axiological kind. According to many philosophers,[22] the standard of correctness of belief constitutes a sort of prescription over the holder of the belief, and insofar it is of a deontic kind. My personal view is that correctness involved in the standard of belief is not prescriptive; rather it is a specific kind of correctness involving an axiological evaluation of a given state of affairs. This is because in (C) correctness seems not to be ascribed to a believer, or the "act" of believing, but to belief as a mental state, and a mental state is not the kind of object a prescription could be addressed to. Furthermore, (C) seems to lack the agent-relativity required by deontic norms; in fact the standard of correctness states that, given the fact that a certain proposition is believed, the belief is correct only if the proposition is true. So, what matters for being in the state of doxastic correctness seems just to be that a certain state of affairs — the one expressed by the believed proposition — is the case, and not that some agent performs some action required by some sort of prescription. Due to restrictions in space, I cannot further defend this view here. However, notice that my analysis does not depend on this assumption and, furthermore, the main point argued in this paper — the correct formulation of (C) in 'ought'-terms — does not depend in any way on the specific kind of normativity of doxastic correctness.

3. *From Standards to Oughts*

From the former analyses of the two notions it should now be clear what elements 'ought'-claims and standards of correctness share. In particular, the three elements of 'oughts' stated above — the sense, content and condition of 'ought' — can play the role of, respectively, the specification of the standard of correctness, the correct-making feature and the conditions under which something is evaluated as correct or incorrect. Let me examine these shared elements in more detail.

Evaluation. In both standards and 'oughts' an evaluation, in the wide sense of the term explained above, is in place: being in a state of correctness is being in an evaluable situation, and 'oughts' are expressions of evaluable situations, situations which ought to be the case. Therefore, in a translation from standards of correctness to 'ought'-claims, the 'ought'-claim would express the specific evaluation of correctness involved in standards.

Specification/sense. A *correctness-specification* is a specification of a kind of evaluation, and *senses* of 'oughts' are defined and distinguished on the base of different kinds of evaluation. Therefore, correctness-specifications

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[22] See, for example, Shah (2003).

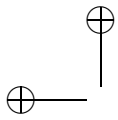determine the senses of 'oughts' in a translation of standards in 'ought'-claims.

Correct-making feature/content. On the one side, the *content* of 'oughts', what ought to be the case, is what is the case in all the evaluable situations of a certain type. But, as said above, a situation of correctness is an evaluable situation of a specific type. Therefore, what ought to be the case according to a standard of correctness is what is the case in all the situations of correctness (of the relevant type). On the other side, the *correct-making feature* of a standard of correctness is a relevant necessary condition for being in a situation of correctness, and necessary conditions for being in a situation of a certain type are always the case in all the situations of that type. Therefore, the correct-making feature of a standard of correctness are the case in all the situations of correctness (of the relevant type). But then the correct-making feature of a standard of correctness is precisely what ought to be the case according to the given standard. Correct-making features of standards of correctness can be identified in the given translation with the contents of 'oughts'.[23]

Something more should be said concerning correct-making features which are not only necessary, but also sufficient conditions for being in a correct situation: if a condition is also sufficient, then not only it is the case in all the possible evaluable situations, but also it is the only condition that distinguishes evaluable and non evaluable situations, and therefore that makes evaluable a situation. In 'ought'-terms, not only this condition ought to be the case, but it is the only thing that ought to be the case.

Conditions of the standard/conditions of 'ought'. Both standards and 'oughts' sometimes are in place only under specific *conditions*. In the translation the conditions of a standard of correctness turn into conditions of the 'ought'. This because in both cases they are conditions for the specific evaluation being in place.

Summarizing the results of the analysis, correctness claims holding the general form:

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[23] Notice that the correct-making feature and the content of 'ought' cannot be completely identified. The correct making feature often is not only what should be the case if there were a situation of correctness, but also what makes that situation evaluable: the situation is evaluable *because* of this feature. 'Ought'-claims are unable to express this specific explanatory role of standards, and then such element of correct-making features cannot be translated into 'oughts'. A consequence is that something in the translation from standards to 'oughts' is lost, and the translation is not complete. For this reason sometimes I defined the step from standards to 'oughts' a reduction rather than a translation. However, this asymmetry doesn't flaw the main target of my analysis, which is to give the correct formulation in 'ought'-terms of the standard of correctness of belief.

S-cond) Q is correct only if (iff), on condition C, X

can be reduced to 'ought'-claims of the form:

S-O) According to standard of Q-correctness, given C, it ought to be that X

Let me check the rightness of such schema of translation with a specific case:

C-Chess) A chess-player is correct if and only if she moves the pieces in conformity to the rules of chess

The specific standard of correctness in (C-chess) is chess-move-correctness; the correct-making feature is that the player moves pieces in conformity to the rules of chess, and the condition at which the standard is applied (implied by the context) is that one plays chess. The application of the general schema to the specific case results in the following 'ought'-sentence:

O-Chess) For any S: according to the standard of chess-correctness, given that S plays chess, S ought to move pieces in conformity to the rules of chess.
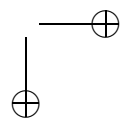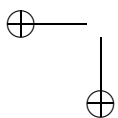
This translation seems to be intuitively correct. The standard for correct chess-play seems to imply that when one plays chess, according to the standard, it ought to be that she moves pieces in conformity to the rules. This seems exactly to be the 'ought'-claim implied by (C-Chess).[24]

4. *The case of belief*

Now, let me consider the case of the standard of correctness of belief:

C) A belief is correct if and only if the believed proposition is true

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[24] An analysis having many points of analogy with the one I presented here has been given in Deontic Logic: the so-called Kangerian reduction. Stig Kanger suggested that it is possible to reduce Standard Deontic Logic to alethic modality. Roughly speaking, his suggestion was that "it ought to be that p" is equivalent to "it is necessary that [if all relevant normative demands are met, then p is the case]". My schema of translation could be seen as the result of the restriction of the "relevant normative demands" to the demands proper of a specific standard of correctness. Even if Kanger's reasons for introducing his analysis (the reduction of deontic logic to alethic modal logic) were very different by mine, there are interesting points in common. See, for example, Kanger (1971).

As I said before about the structure of (C), the standard is of doxastic correctness, the condition for being under the standard is that someone believes a proposition, and the correct-making feature is that the believed proposition is true; according to the suggested schema of translation, the 'ought'-formulation of (C) is as follows:

5) For any S, p: According to the standard of doxastic correctness, given that S believes that p, it ought to be that p

(5) is what I think to be the correct 'ought'-claim following from (C). It says that, in order to be correct, a proposition that is believed ought to be true, and, in my view, this claim very intuitively follows from (C). In fact, (C) states precisely that correct belief requires the truthfulness of the believed proposition. The notion of belief has a role in (C) in the specification of the standard of correctness and in the condition at which the standard applies, but not in the content of the "ought." This content consists of the truthfulness of the believed proposition: truth is what ought to be for the belief being correct.

For the same reason, the 'ought'-formulations of (C) in (1)–(4) do not grasp the meaning of the standard of correctness of belief. In fact, they put belief under the scope of the 'ought', in the content. This is an error. As I said, according to (C), what ought to be is just the truthfulness of the believed proposition. However, even if (5) is, in my view, the correct formulation of (C), this does not mean that the former formulations are wrong or that they are completely independent of (C). For example, it seems to follow from (5) that, according to the standard of correctness, we ought to hold only true beliefs. A future analysis of the relationship between (5) and other 'ought'-statements could clarify entailments and dependences between them.

It seems clear that (5) does not express any prescription for a subject, but an ought-to-be for the realization of a given circumstance.[25] This for the same reasons I advanced in favour of an axiological reading of the kind of correctness involved in the standard: a condition for a given evaluation to be prescriptive is that the kinds of evaluated objects are agent-relative, like actions or behaviours; there are no prescriptions without addressees meant to bring about some kind of action. But, according to (5), the content of

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[25] Notice that to say that the standard of belief is not prescriptive in character is not to say that there are not prescriptive norms regulating beliefs or that standards of correctness do not play any role whatsoever in the characterization of some prescriptive norm. This means only that the prescriptive force of those norms is independent of the standard of correctness (C). There could be norms prescribing to be correct, considering the truth-standard the target that agents ought to bring about to realize, but this doesn't mean that the standard in itself is prescriptive in character.

'ought', what ought to be the case, is the truthfulness of a believed proposition. The most of propositions we believe do not concern actions or behaviours that some agent can do, but situations and states of affairs independent of any action that an agent can do. (5) lacks the agent-relativity required for the 'ought' to express a deontic kind of evaluation.[26]

5. *Conclusion*

My aim in this paper was to suggest a new formulation of (C) in 'ought'-terms more justified than the ones available in the literature. I argued that (5) is the correct formulation. My suggested formulation could cast some light on the debate presented at the beginning of the article concerning the nature of the normativity of belief. If my formulation is correct, standard (C) is normative at least in the sense that it implies an 'ought'-claim. Assuming that (C) is an essential feature of the concept of belief, that of belief is a normative concept. A different question is whether (C) implies some deontic kind of norm. I argued that this is not the case. If the concept of belief is normative in a deontic sense, this normativity seems not to come — at least not uniquely — from its essential standard of correctness.[27]

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[26] It is true that people can bring about to realize facts expressed by propositions, but what ought to be the case in (5) is that a proposition is true or false, not that a subject ought to bring about to realize the content of that proposition.

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