

The normativity of belief and the need for a theory of epistemic motivation

Veli Mitova

Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas, UNAM

Abstract

The idea that the concept of belief is constitutively normative is swiftly becoming the order of the day. So much so, that Boghossian urges it as a pretty irresistible premise in his latest argument for the normativity of mental content (2003, 2005). His argument turns on two theses:

- (1) Belief is constitutively normative.
- (2) Belief is conceptually primary.

I argue that the first thesis undermines the second, unless Boghossian has in place a particular account of epistemic motivation. An account, that is, of how belief is motivated by the correctness-norm which supposedly constitutes it. But my talk has a more ambitious aim than to solicit allegiance to a particular account. Based on thoughts about Boghossian, I argue that we must, in the first instance, *acknowledge* the need for a theory of epistemic motivation. Until we do so, we shan't have a hope of getting a handle on the widely championed, but still fairly abstruse, idea that belief is normative.