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THE VIEW FROM THE ARMCHAIR: A DEFENSE OF TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY

by

Anthony Alan Bryson

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Philosophy
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

December 2009

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Richard Fumerton

ABSTRACT

Traditional philosophy has been under attack from several quarters in recent years. The traditional philosopher views philosophy as an armchair discipline relying, for the most part, on reason and reflection. Some philosophers doubt the legitimacy of this type of inquiry. Their arguments usually occur along two dimensions. Some argue that the primary data source for the armchair philosopher—intuition—does not provide evidence for philosophical theories. Others argue that conceptual analysis, which is the preferred method of inquiry for armchair philosophers, can't yield the results the philosopher is looking for, since concepts like 'knowledge' or 'free will' vary from culture to culture or even between persons within a culture. Finally, some philosophers argue that we should abandon the armchair program because philosophy should be an empirical enterprise continuous with the sciences.

I argue that attempts to undermine intuition fail and that one can justify the evidential status of intuition in a non-question begging way. I then argue that attacks on the belief in shared concepts do not succeed because they often conflate the nature of scientific objects with those of interest to the philosopher. However, if concepts do vary from culture to culture, I show that the philosopher need not abandon the armchair. She can still do conceptual analysis but it will be only the entry point into the philosophical dialogue. I apply this approach to epistemology arguing that the central epistemic questions ought to be the existential and the normative. This approach helps to vindicate epistemic internalism.

Abstract Approved: ______________________________
Thesis Supervisor

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Title and Department

Date

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

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has been approved by the Examining Committee
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For Kacy, my *sine qua non*.
And for my parents, who taught me to love wisdom.

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INTRODUCTION
THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE GROWING PHILOSOPHICAL CRISIS

What you have before you is an exercise in metaphilosophy. Simply stated, metaphilosophy is the study of the nature of philosophy. The metaphilosopher asks a philosophical question of philosophy: what is philosophy? It is admittedly paradoxical that we will be looking into the nature of philosophy by doing philosophy. One can't help begging certain questions. But this result is consistent with one of this work's main points: we should privilege certain forms of evidence or methods of information gathering and the best candidate is the given—that with which we are directly acquainted. Moreover, as I will shortly argue, I am not as eager to discover what philosophy is as I am to defend a particular conception of philosophy.

I am skeptical that any attempt to analyze the structure of our concept "philosophy" can elicit precise conditions for its correct application. This is not unique to the discipline of philosophy. Alvin Plantinga (2007) remarks that the same is true of the physical sciences. The concept of philosophy most likely arose out of our need to group similar types of investigations, questions, and ideas under a general heading. Usually such concepts have only enough content to distinguish clear instances from those instances which clearly fall outside the concept. Membership in the set need not require the satisfaction of necessary and sufficient conditions. Perhaps there is only a family resemblance among the methods and questions that go by the name "philosophy." In other words, it is common for the boundary conditions of concepts like "philosophy" and "science" to be fluid and imprecise.[1]

Consequently, I think metaphilosophical discussions should be largely stipulative. The philosopher should begin by presenting his characterization of philosophy which should be sufficiently similar to our ordinary conception to warrant the appellation. He should then proceed to argue for the merit and legitimacy of the type of intellectual inquiry set out in the stipulated concept. The important question for the philosopher is not whether the type of investigation proposed is rightly called "philosophy" but whether it is a legitimate form of inquiry and satisfies the desires that spark a certain kind of investigation. As you will learn, this approach to metaphilosophy fits well with the conclusions drawn in this work.

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[1] According to Robert Audi, "It would be easy to exaggerate, however, the sharpness of the distinction between problems that are distinctively philosophical and those that are not. We make the distinction largely on the basis of the history of the problem and the ways it is encountered in day-to-day life" (1983, 87).

What I wish to discuss and defend is a certain kind of philosophy or philosophy conceived in a certain way. The context of my discussion will be matters epistemic. My interest in metaphilosophy arose out of my epistemological endeavors and my exposure to the internalist/externalist controversy. My philosophical approach attempts to recast the debate by offering a unique perspective on epistemic investigation. The results may not extend to all other philosophical topics, but I hold out hope that there are other issues in philosophy, like the debate over truth, which could benefit from my approach to epistemic questions.

My approach to epistemic issues is a kind of armchair philosophy. The standard characterization of philosophy as an armchair discipline has been the subject of increasing attacks in recent years. Some argue that its discoveries are irrelevant to the concerns of everyday life, while others issue a more alarming critique: they argue that its methods are illegitimate and hopelessly flawed. Since my approach to epistemic matters is a species of armchair philosophy, part of my project is to defend it against a growing number of attacks.[2]

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[2] In writing this work, another contribution I hope to make to the metaphilosophical debate is to stitch together the most prevalent objections to armchair philosophy and conceptual analysis and their interrelations. In doing so, I attempt to offer a novel portrait of the current crisis in philosophy.

Philosophy: Some Initial Characterizations

All philosophers know the pain of being asked what they do for a living. The most difficult philosophy question looks easy when compared to the task of explaining the business of philosophy (especially to a layman). Most philosophers would rather be forced to explain Russell's theory of types or ferret out the meaning of Quine's more opaque prose. One can only imagine what goes through the inquisitor's mind upon hearing the answer "I am a philosopher." I suspect he imagines several pseudo intellectuals sitting in a coffee shop, uttering incomprehensible nonsense like "the nothing nothings" or asking the insipid question of how many angels can stand on the head of a pin.

Philosophers are not unique in their inability to give a clear and informative definition of their subject. I'm sure the artist and musician feel the same pain upon being asked what music or art is (although it is probably only philosophers who ask them this question). Pointing to paradigmatic examples is the best way to deflect such questions. The philosopher is concerned with questions of the following sort: what do we know and how do we know it? What is free will and do we ever act freely? What are moral rightness and goodness and are moral judgments truth functional? Are there universals? And so forth.

Although this may pacify the inquisitor for the moment, the philosopher cannot but feel a tinge of embarrassment if the best she can do in explaining philosophy is to point to examples. Philosophy is characterized by its irritating persistence in asking questions most people are happy to ignore, even fellow academics. The philosopher continues to dig into problems until a foundation is reached and clarity has been achieved. She strives to take as little as possible for granted. In other words, philosophers ask the most fundamental and basic questions we can logically think about. Thus, it is ironic that the philosophical disposition, which many outside philosophy find so vexing, is often not directed toward philosophy itself. Just as many scientists practice scientific investigation without questioning the methods and objects of science, philosophers do philosophy without looking into the methods and objects of their activity. If philosophers are dissatisfied with assuming answers to the most basic questions, one would think they would incessantly direct their attention toward issues in metaphilosophy. In the words of Timothy Williamson, "We are not supposed to be leading the unexamined life" (2007, ix).

Most likely the philosopher can't evoke the kind of rigorous and demanding analysis he is accustomed to from our concept of philosophy. There may not be a set of characteristics that all philosophical questions and methods share. This may explain why we often struggle to define what philosophers do. But this does not excuse the philosopher entirely, for she uses philosophical methods and searches into philosophical objects daily without testing their legitimacy. Moreover, metaphilosophy ought to concern every philosopher in this day of scientific and technological achievement. Defending the objects and methods of philosophy is one way to keep it from becoming increasingly marginalized. The best way to defend the importance and legitimacy of philosophy is to acquire a clear conception of what philosophers do.

In the remainder of this introduction, I will use fairly broad strokes to sketch a picture of the kind of philosophy which has come under attack in recent years. It is the legitimacy of this sort of philosophy that will occupy our attention in the later pages of this work.

The Priority of the "What is F?" Question

As I understand it, one goal of the philosopher is to discover the nature of certain kinds of objects.

> What philosophers throughout their history have sought are those characteristics of what they were examining, whether it be knowledge, truth, necessity, mind, recklessness, value, or time, in virtue of which it is what it is; those characteristics which are necessary to it and give its essence. (White 1974, 103)[3]

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[3] Bealer makes a similar remark: "Nearly all philosophers seek answers to such questions as the nature of substance, mind, intelligence, consciousness, sensation, perception, knowledge, wisdom, truth, identity, infinity, divinity, time, explanation, causation, freedom, purpose, goodness, duty, the virtues, love, life, happiness, and so forth" (1998, 203). To be more precise, "We seek an account of *the nature of X* in terms that tell us what all the X's have in common and what only the X's

In other words, philosophers ask questions like, "What is knowledge, free will, moral goodness, the mind, and truth?"[4] One finds this type of question—the "What is F?" question—emphasized early on in the history of philosophy and in particular, in Plato's dialogues. Plato, in the guise of Socrates, skillfully shows how certain questions should be asked and answered before moving onto others. If one asks the right questions first, one is more likely to achieve answers to other questions of interest. In other words, philosophers don't emphasize the priority of the "What is F?" question *simply* because they find the question intrinsically interesting. They tend to find it interesting because it is conducive to answering other questions.

In Plato's dialogue the *Meno*, Meno begins the discussion by asking the following: "Can virtue be taught? Or is it not teachable but the result of practice, or is it neither of these, but men possess it by nature or in some other way." Socrates replies, "If I do not know what something is, how could I know what qualities it possesses? Or do you think that someone who does not know at all who Meno is could know whether he is good-looking or rich or well-born, or the opposite of these" (Plato 1997, 871-872).[5]

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have in common. That is, we are typically seeking the correct way to fill in the right side of an 'if and only if'" (Pust 2000, 3).

[4] It is curious that some metaphysical questions do not share the same concern. The disagreement over universals does not concern what they are but whether they exist. Even if there were disagreement over the nature of universals, a philosopher could stipulate a definition without violating any accepted rules of philosophical argument. The important question would then be whether there is anything in the world which corresponds to his definition. This is a type of philosophical investigation because, given certain features of the world, it follows necessarily that universals exist or don't. We might take as our starting point certain contingent truths such as the phenomenon of subject-predicate sentences or the fact that predicates can apply to more than one object, but the connections drawn from these facts are metaphysically necessary. Thus, the question is answered from the armchair by using thought and reflection; one does not verify the answer empirically.

[5] The comparison between Meno and virtue is an infelicitous one. The question of who Meno is is a different kind of question than the virtue question (although Plato may only be saying that the questions are analogous). In the latter case, the philosopher is looking for the essential properties of virtue. On the other hand, one need not know the essential properties of Meno to answer questions about him. Also, Plato places too much weight on the priority of the "What is F?" question. We can know whether a certain act is right before knowing what moral rightness is. But

In his reply, Socrates emphasizes the priority of the "What is F?" question. Asking the preliminary "What is F?" question is important to learning other facts about virtue. Non-philosophers often leap into a discussion of abortion's moral status, what we know, or what is true before asking what these things are. Philosophers note that if we first discover their nature, we usually occupy a better position for answering other questions about them: we know which considerations to attend to when trying to discover their presence or absence. In other words, learning what justification is tells us what to look for when assessing a belief's epistemic status. Should we look to see if there is adequate evidence, if the belief is the result of properly functioning mechanisms, or should we ask the psychologist whether the belief is the result of reliable belief-forming mechanisms? With regard to morality, we learn whether we should be looking to the consequences, to God, to the act itself, to our natures, etc. The same goes for theories of truth: should we be looking for correspondence, coherence, usefulness, or what?

Consequently, our justification for believing that abortion is morally permissible or that we know facts about the physical world increases.[6] If we discover what knowledge is, we are in a better position to answer the skeptical question, for we know how to detect the

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our justification for believing that an act is right increases when we know what moral rightness is. And philosophy is in part a discontentment with the weak justification we have for many of our beliefs. Furthermore, by answering the "What is F?" question, one is then able to answer questions that probably can't be answered beforehand. It is not self-evident, for instance, whether abortion is morally right or wrong, which is why most philosophers don't judge moral theories on whether they yield the right judgments about the abortion issue. But knowing what moral rightness is tells us which considerations are relevant to the abortion issue and thus helps us to investigate the matter rationally.

[6] G.E. Moore makes a similar comment about the increase in justification which accrues to our beliefs by first answering the "What is F?" question. What he has in mind is in inquiry into the nature of moral goodness: "Its definition is, therefore, the most essential point in the definition of Ethics; and moreover a mistake with regard to it entails a far larger number of erroneous ethical judgments than any other. Unless this first question be fully understood, and its true answer clearly recognized, the rest of Ethics is as good as useless from the point of view of systematic knowledge…it is extremely unlikely that the *most general* ethical judgments will be equally valid, in the absence of a true answer to this question" (1999, 57).

presence of knowledge. If we uncover the nature of truth, we know what to look for in assessing whether there are any truths and what is true. Moral philosophers have rightly argued that one's meta-ethical commitments should radically influence one's applied ethical judgments and the considerations one takes to be relevant when discussing applied issues.[7]

The propensity of non-philosophers to avoid these questions explains why their arguments tend to give off more heat than light. They don't realize they are working with different analyses of a concept or that individually they are using inconsistent analyses of the same concept. They are like ships passing in the night. Thus, the agreement they achieve is often happenstance. For example, people are often puzzled by their inability to make headway over the capital punishment issue because they don't realize that some are giving a utilitarian analysis of just punishment while others are committed to retributivism. Philosophers rightly tell them to step back and do the preliminary work on what constitutes a just punishment before addressing the more difficult applied issue of capital punishment.

Unlike matters philosophic, when confronted with practical issues, people tend to behave in the right way. They wouldn't dare set out on a safari in search of bush babies unless they knew something about them—what they look like, where they tend to live, their habits, etc. But why then do we set out on a philosophical journey in search of truth, knowledge, free will, or moral rightness without first discovering what they are? If we know what makes a belief justified, we know what to look for in assessing a belief for justification. If we know what makes an act morally right or even if there is such a thing as moral rightness, we know what considerations are relevant to applied moral issues. Instead of a discursive process, we know how to detect the presence of philosophically important objects.

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[7] Richard Miller makes a similar point: "These analyses were viewed by old-style Analytic philosophers as a necessary preliminary to the more interesting business of determining which, if any, of our beliefs are known and how they are justified, or of determining the morality of various institutions and practices of society, like abortion, about which there is controversy. Analysis was believed to be an indispensable preliminary to argument" (2000, 232).

One example of how the "What is F?" question takes precedence over other kinds of questions can be found in the epistemology of Alvin Goldman. Goldman (1986) emphasizes the priority of metaepistemological questions—the discovery of those criteria a correct rule of justification must satisfy—before asking which of our beliefs are justified. His reliability analysis of justification not only specifies which beliefs count as justified, I think it eliminates the possibility that philosophers qua philosophers can competently practice applied epistemology. Reliabilism hands over applied epistemology to the cognitive scientist who must empirically discover which of our belief-forming processes are reliable (given a certain conception of reliability).

Richard Fumerton makes the same point when discussing externalist theories of justification, non-inferential justification, and the skeptical predicament:

> On classic externalist views, the facts which determine whether one is noninferentially justified in believing a proposition are complex nomological facts. Given paradigm externalism, it is not clear that a philosopher *qua philosopher* is even in a position to speculate intelligently on the question of whether or not we have noninferentially justified belief in any of the propositions under skeptical attack. Because the externalist has reduced the question of what is noninferentially justified to questions about the nature of causal interaction between stimuli and response, and particularly to the processes of the brain that operate on the stimuli so as to produce the response, the search for noninferential justification would seem to be as much in the purview of the neuro-physiologist as the philosopher. In the last two hundred years, the vast majority of philosophers simply have not had the training to do a decent job of investigating the hardware and software of the brain. But without that training, it hardly seems reasonable for philosophers to be speculating as to what is or is not a reliable belief-independent process. (1995, 162-163)

If our metaepistemological theories can move some epistemic questions from the province of philosophy, then surely metaepistemological questions should concern us. They play an important role in achieving philosophically rational beliefs. We would not attempt to answer applied epistemic questions with the wrong resources, we would look in the right place for our answers and know which considerations we should attend to, and most importantly, we would know whether the philosopher is even qualified to answer such questions.

The same could be said about moral philosophy. Some theories of the nature of moral rightness imply that the philosopher qua philosopher is not very qualified to address applied ethical issues. If utilitarianism is true, there is no reason to think the philosopher is better equipped to assess the consequences of an action. Philosophers tend to live sedentary lives.[8]

The Subject Matter and Methods of Traditional Philosophy

Given that philosophers inquire into the nature of certain kinds of objects, we need a criterion that delimits the proper objects of philosophical analysis. In what follows, we will identify characteristics common to several kinds of philosophical questions. We may tentatively claim that these characteristics taken collectively are *for the most part* unique to philosophy. Our claim then is a modest one except in our characterization of philosophy as an armchair discipline.[9] Here again, my main concern is with the kind of philosophy I will be defending and augmenting later.

It is not the job of the philosopher to discover the nature of water; it is the job of the chemist. But why? What is the difference between water and standard philosophical objects like knowledge and truth? For one thing, philosophical objects—those objects of interest to the philosopher—are ubiquitous, or, to be more precise, are accessible anywhere. No matter one's place in time or space, one can look into the nature of certain philosophical objects.[10]

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[8] Again, quoting Fumerton: "If a consequentialist analysis of right and wrong action is correct, for example, questions about what kinds of actions, or particular actions, we ought to perform are very complicated causal questions…the question of which action would maximize that which is intrinsically good and minimize that which is intrinsically bad is the kind of question that philosophers are not particularly competent to address. The kind of person who is good at figuring out the consequences of actions is the kind of person who has extensive 'worldly' experience" (1995, 172).

[9] Certain branches of mathematics are done from the armchair. Traditional armchair philosophy, just like much of mathematics, attempts to discover necessary truths other than those of the a posteriori variety (assuming there are a posteriori necessary truths). This explains, at least in part, why both can be done from the armchair. This similarity between philosophy and mathematics has been assumed by many philosophers throughout history. Present day methodological naturalists who model philosophy on the sciences would deny there are significant similarities between them, unless, of course, they can naturalize mathematics as well.

This implies that the most basic philosophical questions are general; they don't usually pertain to a particular time or place. The historian often investigates a particular past event, the scientist often focuses on certain physical events where the constituents may only be investigated from certain places in the world, or the sociologist asks questions about the characteristics of a particular society. The philosopher, on the other hand, directs her mind toward the most general features of the world—like minds, truth, knowledge, free will, causation, universals, moral properties, and so forth. One could argue that the scientist is concerned with general questions like "What is water?" or "What is an electron?" But unlike philosophy, the scientist can answer that question only by examining actual cases of the specimen in question. And to do that, she must occupy a certain position in space to gain access to the object. The same does not hold for the philosopher.[11]

Even when the philosopher turns her mind toward particular cases of knowing or moral rightness, the investigation could proceed just as well by considering hypothetical cases. Actual cases, in the words of Bealer, "can be 'modalized away.' That is, such examples can, at least in principle, be dropped and in their place one can use rational intuitions affirming corresponding (not to say identical) possibilities that have equivalent philosophical force" (1998a, 206).[12]

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[10] As we shall see later, the view that philosophy is conceptual analysis would explain why one can analyze philosophical objects no matter one's place in time or space.

[11] Thus, to reiterate, we should not think of the above characteristics as individually unique to philosophy. Rather, taken collectively they are unique to philosophy for the most part.

[12] Aron Edidin makes a similar point: "The role of sense perception in philosophical intuition is not the same as its role in scientific observation. In the case of scientific observation, it is essential that the recognizable states of affairs in question actually occur and be perceived. You cannot observe that a state of affairs is of a certain kind without perceiving it. But in the case of

Consequently, and perhaps most significant, philosophers investigate the nature of things not knowing at first whether such things exist.[13] The skeptic, for example, should have some idea what knowledge is before she offers her skepticism. Without any insight into the nature of knowledge, her skepticism looks like conjecture. The same could be said about those who deny the existence of truth, free will, or moral rightness. They have a burden to discharge when they deny the existence of these things: they should be able to give some characterization of the thing they deny exists.[14]

So, philosophical objects are ubiquitous (accessible anywhere) and the questions philosophers ask are usually general questions (at least at first, if we recognize the priority of the "What is F?" question). Philosophical questions are general because they need not refer to any particular time or place (and could still be asked even in the absence of instances), and their objects ubiquitous—one can think about and investigate them no matter one's time or place.[15]

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philosophical intuition, it is not essential that we actually see or hear the descriptions which we judge. We can acquire the same data merely by thinking about the descriptions" (1985, 544).

[13] I think this may be true with such objects as free-will or universals, but as you will come to discover, I am not as sanguine about the possibility of analyzing knowledge, truth, or moral rightness in the absence of any instances in the world. Presently, I am only giving a sketch of a traditional kind of philosophy done from the armchair. I will make my modifications later.

[14] This may be unique to philosophy for someone need not be able to offer a sufficient characterization of say, a chair, to know there isn't one before them (assuming there is nothing before them except the ground). They could say, "I don't know what a chair is, but if it is a physical object of sufficient size and is not the ground, then I know there isn't one before me." They can give that simple negative characterization and still achieve a justified belief that a chair is absent. But this is unlikely for a philosophical object like truth. One can't justifiably say, "I don't know what truth is, but I know there aren't any." There is no simple negative characterization one could give that would justify one in denying the existence of truth.

[15] For a similar characterization, see George Bealer (1998a, 203-204). Bealer also notes that some non-central philosophical questions may fail to exemplify some of our proposed characteristics for philosophical questions. Thus he suggests we model the difference between central and non-central philosophical questions on the difference between pure mathematics and applied mathematics. Just like the latter case, non-central philosophical questions are consequences of central questions along with some auxiliary propositions.

Later, when we examine the nature of philosophical objects further, we consider two important hypotheses. According to one, philosophical objects are mental entities, while the other claims they are extra-mental (either ante-rem concepts or universals, which perhaps, may exist uninstantiated). Both views would explain the ubiquity of philosophical objects and the generality of philosophical questions. But for philosophers like Hilary Kornblith, who prefer to use causal theories of reference to answer philosophical questions, the above may not apply to them. Objects of philosophical analysis could not exist in the absence of any instances for they would fail to exist if the object, picked out in the appropriate way using a causal theory of reference, fails to form a natural kind. Knowledge may be nothing at all. So, one could not discover the nature of philosophical objects in the absence of their instances. Nor could one do philosophy no matter one's place in space. One needs empirical access to the potential natural kind and although one can potentially get access, one is not always in a position to address the "What is F?" question.[16]

All of the above leads naturally to the belief that philosophical questions can be answered, for the most part, using mere reason and reflection. This is because philosophers attempt to discover a certain kind of necessary truth (in other words, not a posteriori necessities) or logically necessary connections which may have as their relata contingent propositions. The philosopher cares more about how the world must be than about how the world is. Even when he begins with contingent truths (as in the case of the cosmological argument or the relativity of perception), he sets his sights on the necessary connections between them and other propositions where these connections are not nomological. The traditional philosopher tends to occupy his attention with logical or metaphysically necessary truths and logical or metaphysically necessary connections. Thus Aron Edidin writes:

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[16] There are some potential problems with the above characterization which parallel some attempts to connect the a priori and the necessary. One does not want to argue that all necessary truths are a priori knowable for it raises a difficult question: for whom? The same question could be raised with my use of the term "access": accessible to whom? For the sufficiently obtuse, philosophical objects are not accessible in some senses of the term. But there is still an intuitive difference between taking philosophical objects to be ubiquitous and philosophical questions as general and the natural kinds approach to philosophy. So I beg my reader's patience if we don't achieve sufficient precision right now since I believe the above characterization is enough to bring out the intuitive difference between armchair philosophy and the natural kinds approach.

> Another part of the traditional view of philosophy is that it seeks to discover not merely what is but what must be…the fact that intuitions about false descriptions are as relevant to philosophical hypotheses as intuitions about true descriptions shows that the hypotheses are intended to apply to all possible cases. (1985, 544)

All of the above characterizations are best captured by the following succinct formulation: traditional philosophy is done from the armchair. The kind of philosophy I am interested to defend is one where "no empirical evidence beyond that which everyone already possesses is relevant" (Fumerton 1999, 22). From the armchair, one has everything he needs to answer the most basic questions of philosophy; no special empirical knowledge is needed. But we must be careful to distinguish armchair philosophy from the artificial characterization of philosophy as a priori. The data of the given in experience, plus introspection and memory, play a role in the development of philosophical theories. Although much of philosophy is a priori in some sense of the term, there is much that is relevant to some areas of philosophy that is not known a priori. Nevertheless, that data is accessible from the armchair. In other words,

> The armchair philosopher seeks an answer to philosophical questions employing a priori methods of investigation and relying only on the kind of empirical data one can't help getting by simply living one's life. The armchair philosopher claims that one doesn't need to engage in highly specialized investigations into the structure of the brain, the causal origin of language, the fundamental laws governing the physical universe, or complex sociological/psychological facts about people in order to get an answer to the questions that preoccupy them. (Fumerton 1999, 23)

The philosopher does not exclusively focus on those sentences which have the monadic property of necessity but attends to the necessary connections that hold between contingent propositions. Thus it is incorrect to say that traditional philosophy is exclusively a priori. It is more accurate to say that it is mostly a priori. The armchair philosopher directs his attention toward necessary truths and the necessary connections holding between them or between some contingent propositions; and these necessary truths and necessary connections are known a priori.

So I am keen to defend traditional armchair philosophy and the priority of the "What is F?" question which is traditionally addressed from the armchair. My primary focus though is the defense of armchair philosophy in the context of epistemology. Much of my defense will focus on metaphilosophical issues in the context of epistemological discovery. Recent developments in philosophy have made a defense of traditional armchair philosophy necessary. There is a growing contingent who believe that armchair philosophy is doomed. Although others continue to conduct the business of philosophy with the apparatus of conceptual analysis (which is done from the armchair), there is an urgent need to address these attacks while delineating what armchair philosophy should look like. The question is not, as most assume, whether philosophy should be exclusively a priori, for philosophy has not been exclusively a priori for some time. The important question is whether philosophy can be done from the armchair. Does the philosopher have everything she needs from the armchair to address many traditional philosophical questions?[17] Are the methods of armchair philosophy legitimate? And do the objects of armchair philosophy have the structure and status which make them open to armchair reflection? There is a growing number of philosophers who answer at least one of these questions with a resounding "No!"

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[17] We must distinguish the availability of methods and concepts in the broad sense of the term from a more narrow rendering of "available." Although the resources for philosophical investigation are there for many to use, there is a sense in which they are mostly available to the philosopher alone. Usually it is only the trained philosopher who can use the methods and gain access to philosophical objects with any facility. This will be important when we address Stephen Stich's attack on intuition use in philosophy. So presently, I suggest we restrict ourselves to claims about what is available to the philosopher from the armchair. For if someone is sufficiently obtuse, it is unclear in what sense philosophical objects and methods are available to him from the armchair. Later on, it will become clear why I wish to restrict the discussion to the philosopher.

The Growing Philosophical Crisis

"Analytic philosophy is over…most American philosophers agree conceptual analysis is finished" (Miller 2000, 231). Thus begins Richard Miller's paper proposing a new approach to philosophy. This ominous declaration is echoed throughout the literature on metaphilosophy. William Ramsey speaks for many philosophers when he says, "The failure of analytic philosophy to produce an uncontroversial, completely satisfactory analysis of the vast majority of abstract concepts should by itself suggest that something is amiss" (Ramsey 1998, 174).[18] Stephen Stich characterizes the discontent some philosophers feel from the lectern:

> On the few occasions when I have taught the "analysis of knowledge" literature to undergraduates, it has been painfully clear that most of my students have a hard time taking the project seriously…they could not, for the life of them, see why anybody would want to do this. It was a source of ill-concealed amazement to these students that grown men and woman would indulge in this exercise and think it important…This sort of discontent was all the more disquieting because deep down I agreed with my students. Surely something had gone very wrong somewhere when clever philosophers…devoted their time to constructing baroque counterexamples about the weird ways in which a man might fail to own a Ford. (1991, 3)

And Ruth Millikan boldly declares, "'Conceptual Analysis,' taken as a search for necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of terms, or as a search for criteria for application by reference to which a term has the *meaning* it has, is a confused program, a philosophical chimera, a squaring of the circle, the misconceived child of a mistaken view of the nature of language and thought" (1989, 290).

One reason for the present discontent is the disagreement persisting among philosophers and the consequent lack of progress. When juxtaposed with the physical sciences, the track record of philosophy looks rather abysmal. Philosophy is marked more by disagreement than concord, by failure than success (depending, of course, on one's criteria of success). One can't help but long for the same kind of success and influence characteristic of the sciences. To that end, some philosophers have tried to institute reforms that would help philosophers achieve the same progress. These reforms attempt to transform philosophy into a science or make it depend in part on scientific research. Some questions that fell within the province of philosophy have been consigned to the sciences while other questions, though not completely removed from philosophy, are said to depend on current scientific research. In light of this new conception of philosophy, some philosophers have tried feverishly to catch up on the latest scientific research, especially in psychology. It is unclear whether these philosophers are nothing more than dilettantes when discussing philosophical matters with the machinery of science, but it is clear that qua philosopher, they have been poorly trained to handle these quasi-philosophical issues.

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[18] Nicholas Rescher voices a similar concern: "The ranks of philosophy are in serious disarray. Theory confronts theory, school rivals school in implacable opposition. Disagreement and controversy prevail to such an extent in this discipline that one can safely endorse the quip: 'If two people agree, one of them isn't a philosopher'" (1985, 3).

We will examine this alternative to armchair philosophy in chapter 3. For now, I would like to assuage some of the concerns which stem from the absence of philosophical consensus.

Some have wondered whether progress in philosophy should be measured by consensus when advancement and notoriety in the discipline depends to a large extent on one's ability to disagree and develop a novel approach to an old problem. Granted, one can always improve upon previous theories, but usually improvement takes the form of revision and revision parades as disagreement.

Secondly, I believe the amount of disagreement amongst philosophers is easily exaggerated, for when seen in a certain light, there is much the philosophical community agrees upon. Philosophical theories which were at one time live options have been shown to be dead ends (e.g. behaviorism and the JTB analysis of knowledge). Old formulations of a problem often give way to new formulations and better ways of casting the issue. Moreover, intuitive evidence—the most important kind of evidence for the armchair philosopher—

makes the rejection of a theory easier than proof. As Edidin writes, "The general fact that an intuitive judgment can be inconsistent with a system of hypotheses but cannot entail the truth of such a system itself suggests that it will be easier to obtain a consensus rejecting some specific philosophical view than it will be to generate consensual support for a specific view" (1985, 547).[19, 20]

Despite the impression of philosophical chaos imparted by some, the disagreements are well organized and occur along certain lines of thought. Philosophers tend to fall within a certain camp and although their may be disagreements among the supporters of a particular theory, there is much that unites them. Rarely, if ever, does one find a philosopher completely on her own, proffering a completely radical new solution to a philosophical problem So we must not allow disagreement to mask the amount of agreement among certain quarters of philosophy.

Moreover, when most philosophers venture out into other areas of academia, they are apt to find they have more difficulty dialoguing with non-philosophers about important issues (especially those of philosophical interest).[21] I doubt my preference for conversing

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[19] For some philosophical issues like causation, different theories come close to being extensionally equivalent which makes the disconfirmation of a theory by appeal to particular cases quite difficult. This point is often overlooked by those attacking armchair philosophy. Like science, philosophy appeals to particular cases to confirm or refute theories. But philosophical theories often yield the same judgments about particular cases. One way of attacking an opposing theory then is to appeal to a unique and previously unknown case. These cases tend to be highly implausible, unusual, and artificial. Given the nature of these cases, it is not surprising that philosophers can't agree.

[20] Edidin makes some other important observations. He notes that philosophers are strongly disinclined to change their philosophical beliefs except in the face of a decisive refutation. This disposition helps to perpetuate disagreement, which suggests philosophy itself is not entirely to blame. What is more interesting is that Edidin believes disagreement in philosophy is to be desired. Because philosophical theories cannot be proven with certainty, and because the nature of proof often involves canvassing intuitions, it is desirable that "there be committed philosophers developing views at odds with those of most of their fellows" (1985., 548). This increases the probability that we will canvass more of the relevant intuitions and thus be exposed to more of the relevant evidence. It's doubtful that the philosopher, on her own, can satisfy the total evidence requirement for the justification of theories. And a group of philosophers who agree are less likely to do so as well.

[21] Many philosophers, for instance, don't have any patience with postmodernism.

with philosophers I disagree with than non-philosophers I agree with is idiosyncratic. The philosopher understands what sorts of considerations are relevant to an issue, is more likely to move from the more basic to the less basic questions, will incessantly expose assumptions and subject them to scrutiny, and understands the sort of reasoning process which ought to be used in arriving at a conclusion. Speaking with others in academia is at times, for the philosopher, like speaking to someone with a foreign language. But the same is not true when speaking to other philosophers. This is important to keep in mind when assessing how much conflict there is in philosophy. When one compares philosophers with the rest of academia, there is a conspicuous concord among the philosophical community.

Most importantly, philosophers agree for the most part in their basic intuitions (although these intuitions are not always shared by the layman). Their disagreements often occur at higher levels of theory construction. Since most philosophical debate occurs when one is further along in the equilibrium process, disagreement becomes the most prevalent feature of the philosophical landscape. Yet, we must not let that dissemble the profound agreement over the most basic intuitions.[22] Indeed, philosophers would be unable to reach the higher levels of theory construction if there were not a shared base of intuitions. Philosophical debate would stall from the outset.

One more point before moving on: there has hardly been a time in the history of philosophy where philosophers agreed on their methods and objects of study. Thus the history of philosophy and the continued disagreements among philosophers does not provide much evidence against the legitimacy of armchair philosophy (or, more popularly, analytic philosophy). Philosophers must be using the same methods and examining the same objects to assess how much progress philosophy can make. Furthermore, even in the last century, philosophers did not completely agree on the objects and methods of philosophy. With respect to some issues, philosophers seemed to be engaged in entirely different projects.[23] Analytic philosophy is relatively young so there is not much evidence to suggest it can't work simply because there is a failure of consensus. And with the growing popularity of causal theories of reference and the treatment of philosophical objects as natural kinds, philosophers may once again be heavily divided.

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[22] In defending intuition, Bealer writes, "[A]lthough different people do have conflicting intuitions from time to time, there is an impressive corroboration by others of one's elementary logical, mathematical, conceptual, and modal intuitions. The situation is much the same with observation: different people have conflicting observations from time to time, but this is hardly enough to throw out observation as a source of evidence" (1996, 125). My emphasis though is not simply on our elementary logical intuitions but on the intuitions philosophers share about the most basic cases like Gettier counterexamples or the organ transplant counterexample to simplistic forms of utilitarianism.

The problem then is not that philosophy practiced in a certain way does not yield uniform results, for there hasn't been an overwhelming consensus among philosophers on how best to do philosophy. It is hard to assess the legitimacy of philosophy when there is not much agreement on what philosophy should involve. And until philosophers do agree on their methods and the proper objects of study, we can't truly fault philosophy because of its inability to make progress, although we could fault philosophers for not making progress on the nature of philosophy. But as I mentioned earlier, metaphilosophy is ignored by many in the discipline. Philosophers, for the most part, do philosophy rather than study what they are doing. The same is true of many in the scientific community.

Other philosophers object to conceptual analysis for a different reason. They believe that our concepts and our rules for legitimate reasoning are culturally influenced or at least different.[24] There is no sense then in trying to discover what knowledge is, for there is no uniquely correct analysis of knowledge.[25] Furthermore, there is no method we could use to criticize the concepts of others that is not also culturally determined. So there is no way to show that a particular analysis of knowledge is the correct one or the best one. Philosophers should give up on the project of conceptual analysis, some claim, and propose concepts which suit our needs. The priority of the "What is F?" question takes on a completely different form: how should we define "F"?

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[23] See for instance, Richard Kirkham (2001) and Lief Wenar (2007).

[24] Alasdair MacIntyre (2002) suggests that different concepts of virtue have been the subject of analyses throughout history.

[25] It is difficult to give a correct formulation of this thesis for it does not seem correct to say that we each have different concepts of knowledge. What would make each of these concepts of knowledge? Is there something they possess in common? And if so, why should we take that to be significant since its significance derives from our idiosyncratic concept of the nature of concepts and

Opponents of traditional philosophy are also pessimistic about the use of intuitions as evidence. The evidence for philosophical theories relies substantially on appeal to intuitions, which usually generate non-inferential beliefs about the presence or absence of a philosophical object. But just as many philosophers practice philosophy without being able to clearly articulate its methods, they appeal to intuitions without giving a precise description of their nature. Some philosophers find intuitions utterly mysterious or occult and thus out of place in a sophisticated worldview, while others doubt intuition can be a source of evidence given that different people have conflicting intuitions. These considerations have led some philosophers to devise research programs that need not rely on intuitive appeals.

A Brief Preview

As you can see from the above, armchair philosophy is under attack from several quarters. As a committed armchair philosopher, I am keen to show that these objections fail and that even if some of the objections work, armchair philosophy can accommodate these objections while keeping the philosopher sedentary. To that end, in chapter 1, I describe the nature of armchair philosophy in more detail focusing mostly on the use of conceptual analysis.

In chapter 2, I discuss the use of intuition—the most important form of evidence for the armchair philosopher. I address several conceptions of intuition and highlight the work

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kinds? Perhaps the best way to characterize the issue is to say that different cultures associate different concepts with the same predicate (where the same for another language is a predicate that would be translated with our word "knowledge").

of George Bealer, which is the most skilled and sustained attempt to vindicate intuition use. I then examine several objections to intuition use and argue that among other things, these objections lead to strong global skepticism (i.e. we are not justified in believing anything). I also argue that current attacks on intuition reveal something important about knowledge: it is inherently egocentric (i.e. we must begin with that with which we are directly acquainted). Finally, I consider the attempt to undermine the epistemic legitimacy of intuitions via empirical investigation by surveying non-philosophers and recording their intuitions. I argue that this method fails to appreciate either what intuition is or the kind of intuition that could serve as evidence for the philosopher.

In chapter 3, I turn to attacks on conceptual analysis which focus on the nature of concepts rather than our source of evidence as to their structure. This objection is more fundamental than an attack on intuitions since many philosophers believe intuitions spring from concept possession. But if our concepts are ill suited for philosophical analysis, then intuitions cease to be an important source of philosophical evidence. Once again, I find most of these attacks to be inadequate, although I am sympathetic to the claim that philosophers may be analyzing different concepts. I then detail an alternative research program in philosophy: Hilary Kornblith's natural kinds approach. I believe the natural kinds approach to philosophy completely misunderstands the nature of philosophical objects and is subject to several devastating objections.

Finally, in chapter 4, I outline my own approach to epistemology which seeks to accommodate some of the concerns raised by those who attack armchair philosophy. My claim is not that all arguments against armchair philosophy fail to work. Instead, I focus on a more modest conditional: if certain arguments against armchair philosophy work, armchair philosophy can still be done at least in the area of epistemology.

At this point, I am still unsure about the prospects of conceptual analysis, although I am open to the possibility that conceptual analysis is defensible. If it is not, I still think philosophy can be defended as an autonomous armchair discipline, one that relies chiefly on reason and reflection. I believe this can be done, at least in the area of epistemology, by shifting the debate from conceptual analysis to conceptual criticism. The "What is F?" question still has priority but answers to it take on a different form. My approach emphasizes the priority of existential and normative questions in epistemology. It is my view that this approach vindicates internalism as the correct theory of epistemic justification.

CHAPTER 1
PHILOSOPHY AS ANALYSIS

The Objects of Philosophical Analysis

In their article, "Philosophical Theory and Intuitional Evidence" (1998), Alvin Goldman and Joel Pust claim that views on the nature of philosophical objects can be divided into two broad camps: mentalism and extra-mentalism. Mentalism restricts philosophical analysis to mental entities while extra-mentalism allows for the analysis of entities outside the mind. This taxonomy, though helpful, must be amended with a further distinction. There may be mentalists who believe only concepts or some appropriate analogue are the proper objects of analysis; others could argue that when an object is a non-conceptual mental entity to which we have direct introspective access, we should examine it rather than our conceptual representation. So in discovering and analyzing the relation of acquaintance, one need not attend to her concept of acquaintance but can inspect acquaintance itself. Perhaps the same can be said for beliefs or other mental states with which we are acquainted.[26] Obviously, we should forgo analyzing our concept of a thing when we have access to the thing itself.

In such cases, one's concept may be the result of acquaintance with the object. But there is a popular view in philosophy which claims that the nature of philosophical objects is determined by our concepts. Objects like knowledge or justice don't have essences independently of our conceptions of them. Perhaps then, for the mentalist, philosophical objects should be divided into those with which we are directly acquainted which in turn determine our conceptual representations of them and those with which we are not directly acquainted and are determined by our conceptual representations.

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[26] For some of these mental states, it may be that although we are in some sense acquainted with their presence, they are more opaque or less perspicuous than others. In such cases, it may be advisable to do conceptual analysis as well.

Thus theoretically, one could be a mentalist in the sense that one believes only our mental representations of things (our concepts) should serve as the objects of analysis, while another might recommend that we only confine ourselves to conceptual analysis when we are analyzing things other than mental properties or when we don't have immediate access to those properties.

Both kinds of mentalism take a jaundiced view to at least some implications of extra-mentalism[27] because, traditionally, the view has been charged with an implicit commitment to a mysterious form of knowledge. Extra-mentalism implies that we can discover the nature of some extra-mental philosophical entities apart from inspecting our conceptual structures. Some extra-mentalists treat concepts as the objects of analysis but believe those concepts exist outside the mind. Mentalists complain that our access to these alleged objects borders on the occult and thus does not fit into a sophisticated scientific view of the world. This applies equally to philosophers like G.E. Moore who think they can get a universal like moral goodness before the mind or George Bealer who believes concepts are ante rem entities: "[T]hey are mind independent entities which would exist whether or not they apply to anything" (1998b, 261).

In *An Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology*, Matthias Steup proposes we understand concepts as properties that can be multiply exemplified. He then goes on to endorse extra-mentalism:

> Since we view concepts as universals, we must not confuse them with ideas in people's minds, which are particulars. When we engage in a philosophical examination of such things as knowledge and justification, then, what we are interested in is not what ideas of knowledge and justification people carry in their heads, but rather

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[27] Extra-mentalism is not the view that all objects of philosophical analysis are outside the mind; it only implies that some objects of analysis are outside the mind. Extra-mentalism tends to be motivated by a desire to analyze the objects themselves rather than our representations of them and thus is happy to analyze mental entities like beliefs or acquaintance instead of our representations of them. There are extra-mentalists however who don't believe we are analyzing things like knowledge, truth, and moral rightness themselves. Instead, they take concepts to be outside the mind.

> what people have in common when they know something and when they are justified in believing something. (1996, 21)

Similarly, Bertrand Russell's writings often suggest that philosophical analysis involves bringing a universal before the mind where universals for Russell are mind-independent entities.[28]

A different kind of extra-mentalism is gaining wide currency these days. As Aron Edidin observes, "The view that philosophy is an object-level discipline whose methods are continuous with those of the empirical sciences is sufficiently widespread" (1985, 538). With the progress of the natural sciences and the popularity of causal theories of reference, philosophers like Hilary Kornblith have tried to model philosophical investigation on scientific investigation. Instead of analyzing our concepts of knowledge or justice, he suggests we examine knowledge and justice themselves.[29] And with the apparatus of causal theories of reference, he believes we can single out natural kinds like knowledge and subject them to empirical investigation. This approach manages to avoid the pitfalls that accompany a mentalist approach to philosophical analysis and the mysterious knowledge that afflicts other kinds of extra-mentalism. But whether philosophical objects can be treated as ontologically similar with scientific natural kinds is a contentious point and one we will take up later.

Ernest Sosa also seems to learn toward an extra-mentalist approach to philosophy. In vindicating the use of intuition in philosophy, Sosa takes care to distinguish philosophical analysis from linguistic analysis and linguistic intuitions. Gettier cases don't involve asking "whether 'knowledge' applies to the protagonist in a certain example. The question is whether the protagonist who satisfied the conditions specified in the example would *know*"

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[28] See Russell (1997) especially chapter 9.

[29] "On my view, the subject matter of ethics is the right and the good, not our concepts of them. The subject matter of philosophy of mind is the mind itself and not our concepts of them. And the subject matter of epistemology is knowledge itself, not our concept of knowledge" (Kornblith 2002, 1).

(2005, 105). He defends his claim by an appeal to phenomenology (an appeal which we shall see may undermine extra-mentalism). When we ponder Gettier cases, we consider whether a justified true belief could be knowledge even though the belief was derived from a justified false belief. At no time in that ratiocinative process do we ask whether our word "knows" is correctly applied in such a case. The reasoning takes place at the object level, not the meta-linguistic level.[30] We may need to focus on our word "know" if we suspect our interlocutor is using the word in a different way and thus may be speaking of something else altogether. The same is true of the sciences and mathematics. But, "[w]here the discussion proceeds smoothly enough, and disagreement is either explicable or recedes through discussion, there semantic ascent is unnecessary" (2005, 105).

To support his argument, Sosa applies the above reasoning to the case of shapes. If we ask ourselves whether a hypothetical triangle on a plane surface is also a square, we know the answer to the question because it is intuitive. Moreover, it is clear that if we ask whether the word "square" applies to our hypothetical figure, we are asking a different question. Granted, if we are using the term "square" properly, we get the same answer. But "it is equally obvious that the being square of any figure is a different condition from its being correctly characterizable as 'square' in my idiolect of the moment" (2005, 105).

Let's summarize the argument thus far: phenomenologically speaking, when we think about Gettier cases or whether a triangle on a plane surface is a square, we are thinking about the objects themselves and not about words. (Perhaps then, philosophical objects have natures or essences apart from our representations of them just as triangles do.) Furthermore, what makes something knowledge or a square is not dictated by ones' idiolect at the moment. Thus we might conclude that if we want philosophical knowledge of knowledge or moral rightness, we should continue to think about the things themselves and not the words we use to pick them out.

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[30] Sosa's arguments are designed to rebut Stich's thesis that analytic epistemology is nothing more than epistemic xenophobia. One task of analytic epistemology is to discover which forms of reasoning are justified or correct. Some of our reasoning processes are culturally acquired. To discover which ones are justified, we are to engage in conceptual analysis. But, Stich goes on to argue, our evaluative epistemic concepts are culturally acquired and thus are likely to vary from culture to culture. Sosa attempts to avoid this problem by shifting analytic epistemology to extra-mentalism. However, intuitions play a pivotal role in his account of epistemology—intuitions about whether a subject would know in a particular case. If philosophical investigation is concerned with knowledge itself rather than our representations of knowledge (which may be culturally acquired), then the mind must somehow come into contact with knowledge. And as many mentalists argue, intuitions of this sort are mysterious. Only intuitions that emerge from someplace in the mind are said to be philosophically respectable. Thus Sosa may avoid one trap only to fall into another.

There is a problem with the above reasoning. Sosa uses an argument from analogy: he compares our philosophical thinking with our thoughts about shapes. But we can see shapes or imperfect instances of them. So our access to the referents of shape terms is different than our access to many philosophical objects. I know that triangles can't be squares because I have seen triangles and squares. Granted, there is more involved in the process of knowing the claim then merely seeing triangles and squares. But my categorization judgments and other mental processes get underway by being grounded in some familiarity with the things themselves. We develop our word "square" by investigating squares themselves.[31] We can't say the same for knowledge. The two are phenomenologically different.

So, one might argue that "our *way* of knowing the facts of philosophy has to be through knowing facts about proper usage" (2005, 105). But Sosa replies, "Surely we don't know an apple we see to be red by knowing that our word 'red' applies to it. The redness of that apple is something different from the applicability of our word, nor do we know the former by reasoning from the latter" (2005, 105-106). Perhaps Sosa has in mind a kind of de re knowledge where we don't know the truth of a proposition but know the thing itself. However, for propositional knowledge, one must recognize that one's representation of a thing corresponds to the thing. And that representation is communicated via words. Thus one must have a minimal understanding of what one means to know that what one believes is true. Meaning is more basic than truth, in other words. One must know what a sentence means before one can assess its truth.

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[31] This is similar to our scientific concepts which may point to an important difference between them and philosophical concepts. According to one view, the goal of scientific concepts is to form concepts that capture natural kinds discovered in the world. They can be modified when scientific investigation shows they do not cut the world at the joints. Even if this is so, the same does not appear to be true of philosophical concepts. This is because we don't seem to have independent access to many philosophical objects; we get to them via conceptual inspection. But this method of philosophical investigation can actually hurt the philosopher. For by confining herself to concepts, she fails to pay attention to entities in the world that may be of philosophical interest. I shall argue later that the internalist/externalist controversy has helped the philosophical enterprise in a way philosophers fail to recognize since they are wedded to concept analysis. The debate has exposed various ways of reasoning and multiple belief forming processes. Thus we are now able to examine the different conditions one can satisfy in forming a belief and ask which ones are the most valuable from the point of view of being human and satisfying distinctly human intellectual desires.

There is a sense in which Sosa is correct. Our knowledge of the world or our acquaintance with the world precedes our use of terms in picking out that with which we are familiar. And so we easily shift between thinking about the things to thinking about words because we constructed the words out of our acquaintance with the things themselves or their appearances. But there does not seem to be an analogue for many philosophical objects. My use of the term "moral rightness" did not originate in the same way as my use of terms like "red" or "square." Phenomenologically speaking, they are different. I was acquainted with a square appearance and a seeming of red. But I don't find myself acquainted with moral rightness, or at least if I am so, it suffers from a certain opacity or fogginess. There isn't, in the words of Descartes, a clear and distinct perception.

Also, as some argue, it is possible that the philosophical object fails to obtain. We may not have knowledge, no action may be morally right, or we may never act freely. Thus, it can't be the case, at least initially, that we are investigating the thing itself (unless of course it is an uninstantiated universal to which we have access).[32]

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[32] I wonder if the extra-mentalist could concede that philosophical analysis could be done in the absence of an object's existence, but when the object does exist, the mind does recognize its instances and thus one need not stick to the mind.

Problems with Extra-Mentalism

Some extra-mentalists write as though we are analyzing facts when doing philosophical analysis. If the extra-mentalist believes there can't be uninstantiated universals, then the universals approach implies we are inspecting facts. As Russell argues, we often get the universal before the mind by seeing instances which allows us to abstract away from those instances.

Richard Fumerton (1983) argues that this approach to analysis is mistaken. He proposes that we take facts to be non-linguistic complexes which make sentences or propositions true. With the notion of a fact in place, he goes on to raise several important objections.

He first argues that facts cannot be the objects of analysis for some philosophical issues because the existential question has not been settled. If skepticism is true, we can still do an analysis of knowledge. Indeed, we must do an analysis in order to be justified skeptics:

> [S]ince a philosopher's providing a correct analysis of knowledge is not only consistent with his embracing skepticism but is an essential part of an ideal defense of skepticism, it cannot be *facts* of the form S knows that P upon which a philosopher is directing his attention in analyzing knowledge. (1983, 480)

The same could be said for moral rightness or goodness. The moral nihilist who argues that nothing is right or wrong, good or bad, has a burden to discharge: she should tell us what moral rightness or goodness is, for she is not justified in denying their existence unless she has some notion of their nature.

This is why philosophy usually begins with the "What is F?" question. We should understand what something is before we assess whether that thing exists in the world. This also explains why philosophy is different from science. Scientists often first stumble across something which exists and then seek to discover its nature. Philosophy on the other hand first seeks to discover the nature of a thing and then moves on to the existential question.[33] The existential question in some areas of philosophy is secondary; the "What is F" question is primary.[34]

So Fumerton argues that facts cannot be the objects of analysis because the analysis can be performed in the absence of those facts. One can analyze knowledge even if we don't know anything. But I wonder if it is logically possible for humans to exist in a world devoid of knowledge. First of all, as Fumerton observes, a global skepticism which denies we can justifiably believe anything is self-refuting (1995, 50).[35] If one claims we can't justifiably believe anything, then one should know or justifiably believe that we can't justifiably believe anything. In the absence of knowledge or justification, one has no reason to accept global skepticism. One is simply guessing and a guess should not compel belief. So one might conclude that global skepticism is false, for we must justifiably believe something, otherwise we can't even argue for global skepticism Thus, we aren't analyzing justification in the absence of any justificatory facts.

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[33] One can easily imagine Plato augmenting his response to Meno by adding that Meno's question may be fruitless. Upon investigating virtue, we may find it is not the sort of thing that can be exemplified by humans. Perhaps it is only a property of the gods.

[34] The debate over universals is one area of philosophy where this is not so. There is agreement over what a universal is. Even if there weren't, one could simply stipulate what she takes a universal to be. The important question in that debate is whether universals (understood in a certain way) exist. This raises an important question: why don't other areas like free-will, knowledge, truth, and moral rightness proceed in the same way? Maybe the important question in the debate about truth is not what truth is but rather whether correspondence is a relation that can obtain. For surely if there is such a relation, it would be an important one; we would often seek to instantiate the relation. What we call it is beside the point. As long as it exists, it is something of value. Perhaps philosophers don't proceed in this way because they believe that truth exists and that it is easier to discover its nature than to stipulate its nature and then discover whether any such thing exists. If we agree that truth exists and one can argue that truth must be correspondence, then one can convince others that such a relation exists without having them discover it directly by being acquainted with its presence. For free-will, moral rightness, and knowledge, these are implicit normative claims or directly tied to a normative claim (like responsibility in the free-will case). So the stipulative approach does not appear to hold much promise because one's stipulation may fail to capture the normative character of the thing.

[35] Fumerton goes on to argue that the charge of self-refutation should not make the anti-skeptic too optimistic. For if by reasoning well one can arrive at a conclusion which casts a skeptical cloud over reasoning in general, that suggests something is amiss with reason. If certain reasoning processes are epistemically innocent, then one should not, through the correct use of those processes, be able to arrive at a conclusion which undermines them (or so it seems).

I believe this argument is compelling against global skeptics but not against global skepticism. Philosophers often argue against global skepticism by attacking the global skeptic. In other words, they attack the theory by placing it in the mouth of a fictitious global skeptic. By doing so, global skepticism, when asserted by a global skeptic, is shown to be self-refuting. But what if instead of putting the thesis in the mouth of a global skeptic, we only consider the proposition that we don't know or justifiably believe anything? This proposition is not self-refuting. One is simply considering the proposition—neither asserting nor rejecting it. And can't the thesis of global skepticism be true even though we could never know or justifiably believe it?

So, refutations of global skepticism often attack a fictitious global skeptic requiring that fictitious character to defend the thesis of global skepticism. Instead, we should direct our attention toward the thesis itself. By attacking the global skeptic, one has only shown that we cannot justifiably accept global skepticism. But that does not make any more probable the proposition that global skepticism is false. Global skepticism could still be true even though we could never know it to be true.

This reveals something quite important about the skepticism debate. One cannot refute the thesis of global skepticism by argument without begging important questions. Furthermore, one need not take the argumentative route. The theory is known to be false because we obviously know something—in particular, we know that we ourselves exist. I am immediately aware of my own existence. I can't be mistaken about my own existence—it is incorrigible. Since I know that I exist, I know that global skepticism is mistaken. Thus, to refute the claim of global skepticism, one must take something as given and the best candidate is knowledge of one's own existence. If cognitive agents exist, they are immediately aware of their own existence. Thus, it is logically impossible for global skepticism to be true while cognitive agents exist. *A fortiori*, it is logically impossible for us to do a philosophical analysis of knowledge in the absence of any knowledge. Only skepticism of a class of propositions could be true.

If I am right, then one shouldn't argue that we can't analyze facts of the form "S knows that P" because such facts could fail to exist.[36, 37] Perhaps we need another argument for thinking philosophical analysis is not an inspection of facts.

Before we get to that argument, I wish to distinguish my approach to epistemology from the dogmatic stance toward skepticism assumed by some epistemologists. They believe it obvious, a matter of common sense, that there is a world of material objects, that we have hands, or that I am typing on a computer at the moment. This is the unquestioned starting point of their epistemic research. Skepticism, even of the local variety, is ignored altogether.

These epistemologists must not be using the natural kinds approach to epistemology. According to this view, we should fix the referent of our investigation by means of causal

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[36] One seems unable to make a similar distinction in the aid of a truth skeptic. Even if we take the proposition out of the mouth of a truth skeptic, the proposition that there is no truth is either true or false thus creating difficulties that the epistemic skeptic need not face. One could argue that in the case of truth, there obviously are truths given the self-referential absurdity of a proposition denying their existence. Thus the only question is what sort of thing truth is.

[37] I believe a similar argument might be raised in the context of moral philosophy. Suppose that natural law theory is true and that a good person is one who satisfies her specifying capacities (the Thomistic view where being and goodness are convertible). On this view, as long as there are cognitive agents, goodness exists. So it is logically impossible for cognitive agents to exist while moral properties fail to. But this hinges on the correct analysis of moral goodness. This reveals an important feature of claims like Fumerton's. To argue that it is possible there are no moral or epistemic facts is to say that relative to what we know at the moment (before doing the philosophical analysis), such things may fail to exist. We are dealing with epistemic possibility. But if they must exist if cognitive agents exist, then it is logically impossible they don't exist when we start doing the philosophical analysis. So it is only epistemically possible given that, for all we know, the correct analysis of moral rightness may imply that there are no such entities in the world (e.g. if divine command theory were true even though God did not exist). We can't confidently say that it is logically possible that moral rightness does not exist. Thus it may be that it is not even epistemically possible that knowledge does not exist, for relative to what we know, which minimally includes one's own existence, it is not possible to know nothing.

connections or a reference fixing definite description and then examine the object empirically. Once we have picked out the object, we may discover that it fails to form a natural kind. The natural kinds approach, strangely enough, sides with the history of philosophy in taking skepticism seriously (although the skepticism is a strange sort since knowledge turns out to be nothing at all).

Many of the most significant philosophers of the past have recognized the legitimacy of skeptical worries and have tested theories on their ability to ameliorate skeptical concerns. "Radical skepticism, after all, is the goad that, more than any other problem, has historically impelled epistemological reflection" (Fales 1996, xiii). Thus, impatience with skepticism marks a significant break with the epistemology of the past.

I believe this is a problem for several reasons. Most significantly, those who refuse to give any credence to most local skepticisms fail to appreciate the nature of the philosophical process. The canvassing of initial intuitions and the construction of a theory that accounts for those intuitions constitutes only the first step of that process. One's theory is then subjected to further intuitions, which are then used to make modifications to the theory, which is then subjected to further intuitions and so forth. As one moves further along in this journey toward equilibrium, one's initial intuitions may be discarded in favor of stronger intuitions that cropped up further along in the equilibrium process.

One does not usually become a local skeptic about the physical world by immediately apprehending that our beliefs about the external world are unjustified. The skeptic can begin with the strong intuition that we, for the most part, know what we take ourselves to know. But the skeptic believes he has come across arguments where the premises are more certain or have more intuitive force than his intuitions about particular cases. Fumerton (1995), for example, argues that there is a logical gap between our evidence for believing propositions about the physical world and the corresponding facts. Using the principle of inferential justification, which enjoys a healthy amount of intuitive plausibility, he goes on to argue that we cannot bridge the logical gap by any non-deductive route. Once exposed to the argument, our intuitions about particular cases may change or dramatically weaken. This shows why intuitions in isolation are not reliable or of little epistemic worth—a theme we will address later. It is only when enough intuitions have been canvassed and enough considerations entertained that one can be reasonably assured that his intuitions are more likely to approximate the truth.

Thus, it is not egregious to begin one's epistemic investigation leaning toward anti-skepticism since the intuition that one knows facts about the physical world constitutes part of the evidence for her theory. It is egregious, however, to begin with the dogmatic assumption that some branch of local skepticism must be mistaken before canvassing all the relevant intuitions and before one travels a considerable distance toward achieving reflective equilibrium. Neither the epistemologist nor the person on the street can be certain at the outset that they will not come across an argument or intuition further along in the equilibrium process that undermines their justification for dogmatically believing we know facts about the physical world.

My argument against the possibility that we don't know anything at all only countenanced one case of knowledge—knowledge of one's own existence. Since we can't be mistaken in thinking we exist and since we are immediately aware of our own existence,[38] there is no argument the skeptic could raise further along in the equilibrium process where its intuitive force could rationally lower our degree of justification for believing that we exist. This is not necessarily the case for beliefs about the physical world. Surely, even the most dogmatic epistemologist must admit that our knowledge of our own existence is more certain than our knowledge of the physical world. My argument then is not merely a dogmatic denial of several kinds of local skepticism. It still leaves open the skeptical possibility for propositions about the physical world, the past, and so forth.[39]

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[38] The addition of immediate awareness has unfortunately been ignored by classical foundationalists in the past and by present critics of classical foundationalism. Incorrigibility does not capture what is unique to the classical foundationalist perspective for even reliabilism could satisfy this constraint for some basic beliefs if those beliefs were produced by completely reliable belief independent processes. If the externalist could satisfy this condition, then there must be something else the classical foundationalist is trying to capture. What is it about the classical foundationalist's use of incorrigibility that distinguishes it from complete reliability? The answer lies in our relation to those facts about which we cannot or are unlikely to be mistaken. Some of our beliefs are incorrigible or approach incorrigibility because we are directly acquainted with the fact that makes them true. It is my immediate awareness of the fact that I am in pain and not the fact that pain beliefs result from very reliable cognitive processes that makes incorrigibility or near incorrigibility an interesting concept for the classical foundationalist. Incorrigibility then should not be the ground of non-inferential justification for the classical foundationalist. At most, it should only be the residue of non-inferentially justified beliefs. For a similar argument, see Fumerton (1995).

The phenomenology of philosophical investigation provides another reason for denying the fact directed interpretation of analysis for most philosophical issues. In some cases, we are able to analyze a fact directly; the philosophical object is immediately or directly before consciousness. A red-round sense datum is one example of an object open to immediate or direct philosophical inspection. There is a distinctive phenomenology that is associated with such analyses. The object is clearly before the mind; clarity and distinctness characterize one's access to the object. It is the analogue of an empirical investigation of an object in good light at arms length. But for most philosophical topics, the phenomenology of philosophical investigation is entirely dissimilar to inspecting one's red-round sense datum. There is nothing one can point to or refer to in one's conscious experience that can plausibly be identified as the philosophical object. Perhaps then, our access to such objects is at best indirect via our conceptual structures.

In responding to another extra-mentalist approach which takes propositions or states of affairs to be the objects of analysis, Fumerton makes the following comment:

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[39] Fumerton (1995) speaks of epistemological commonsensism which is the view that "one must simply rule out skeptical conclusions from the start" (42). This view points out that we must begin somewhere; we can't call every belief and every reasoning process into question without conceding victory to the global skeptic. And with this I agree. But starting from the given is far more advantageous then starting with common sense physical object beliefs. It is much more difficult to prove skepticism of the given than it is for physical object beliefs. In other words, (and this is a point I will stress later), if there are minds which can know and a world distinct from the mind, then the best position one could get in epistemically speaking is to be directly aware of a fact which makes a belief true. It doesn't get any better.

> It would be difficult to understand why providing a philosophical analysis is so often difficult, and results in so much controversy. On both views when I am about to perform a philosophical analysis, say an analysis of causation, there is this nonlinguistic complex, something *there* before my consciousness, at which I direct my attention in order to discover its constituents. But just ask yourself – and here I must rely again on an honest report of a phenomenological experiment – whether this is so. (1983, 484-485)

The obvious answer to Fumerton's question is "No." Thus one might conclude that since the phenomenology for cases where we obviously have access to the object itself is quite different from most other cases of philosophical analysis, in the latter cases we aren't analyzing the object itself.

Consider the difference between our access to our pain or other conscious mental states and our access to states of knowing. One's pain is immediately before her consciousness; the relation is so intimate that it is highly unlikely if not impossible she could believe she is in pain when she is not.[40] One is directly confronted with the pain itself making demonstrative reference possible. But this is not the case when analyzing knowledge. There is a felt difference. Unlike the pain case where we are rarely mistaken and can use demonstrative reference, the likelihood of believing falsely that one has knowledge before the mind is more substantial. This is shown in part by our inability to refer to it through demonstrative reference.[41]

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[40] Some classical foundationalists have argued that our beliefs about pain are incorrigible: S's belief that p is incorrigible if and only if S's belief that P is contingent and necessarily if S believes that p, then p is true. (Some define classical foundationalism as the belief that non-inferentially justified beliefs about contingent propositions are incorrigible. But even a reliabilist could satisfy this constraint if completely reliable causal connections engendered unconditionally justified beliefs. The heart of classical foundationalism, I believe, is a desire to ground all knowledge in direct confrontations with reality.) There are several arguments against the incorrigibility thesis, one of which relies on the possibility that one's belief that one is in pain and the pain itself are distinct mental states thus making it logically possible for one to occur in the absence of the other. For an intriguing response to this objection, see Timothy McGrew's "A Defense of Classical Foundationalism." Even if our beliefs about the presence or absence of pain are not incorrigible, they are highly reliable and rightly impart a healthy measure of assurance. There is an intimacy that obtains between me and my mental states that doesn't obtain between me and other objects. This is evident from the fact that I can refer to them using demonstrative reference whereas others can't refer to my mental states in the same way.

I wonder if the above argument makes an assumption that is unwarranted—namely, that all instances of object directed analysis must be phenomenologically similar to the paradigmatic examples. Suppose that we can directly see physical objects themselves; our perception of them is not by means of their appearances but extends to their surfaces. If this is so, we are able to see the surfaces of physical objects not only when they are at arm's length but when they are considerably off in the distance. Yet, the phenomenology of these two cases is quite different. The differences in the phenomenology explain why in some cases we can be reasonably confident that our judgments about the object are true while, in the other case, there is a justified hesitance or incredulity. So if the phenomenology can be different even though one is seeing the objects themselves in the case of perception, then perhaps the same could be true for philosophical objects.[42]

One could further argue that the phenomenological argument proves too much. Since we obviously don't bring a concept before the mind in doing conceptual analysis—the concept is in some sense tacit—then we must not be analyzing the concepts themselves. And if this phenomenology is compatible with the analysis of concepts, then why not philosophical objects themselves? For there seem to be some concepts one can get directly before the mind or which are in some sense more clear and distinct. My concept of red seems to be such. But there are others that are difficult to get before the mind which is why we must use intuitions to make their tacit structure explicit.

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[41] Perhaps another reason can be located in the fact that knowledge is a complex entity made up of several constituents. Thus to recognize the presence of knowledge, one must recognize that those constituents obtain, and that when they obtain together, they constitute a distinct entity. The same need not be true for recognizing that one is in pain. And for physically complex objects, we recognize which parts constitute an individual object usually because the parts together mark out a uniform region in space.

[42] What about cases of a priori knowledge which are not easily classified as analytic—the law of non-contradiction for instance or our knowledge of mathematical truths? If one is willing to admit that we know at least a few things a priori where that knowledge cannot be reduced to a logical truth through the substitution of synonymous expressions, then the phenomenology in those cases would be similar to the phenomenology of analyzing extra-mental philosophical objects. Perhaps then those who recognize instances of synthetic a priori knowledge should avoid using the phenomenological argument to defend mentalism.

Thus the extra-mentalist could argue that the phenomenology does not help us one way or the other since the truth of conceptual analysis implies a similar phenomenology. Just as our concepts are tacit at the outset of a philosophical investigation and the use of intuitions in the context of the equilibrium process make that concept more explicit, so too, the extra mentalist could argue, philosophical objects are tacit at the beginning even though we have access to them, but that access is severely limited until enough intuitions are canvassed. The canvassing of intuitions and the achieving of equilibrium is similar to reaching the point where one is able to examine an object, previously far away, at arms length.[43]

One lingering question is how intuitions can obtain when the objects of intuition are located outside the mind. What would the process be like? There appears to be no explanation of the process which is compatible with our present knowledge of how the brain works. Many argue that such intuitions are mysterious and should not be entertained by anyone with a sophisticated scientific view of the world. Most likely then, the most significant objection continues to be the hackneyed one of explaining our knowledge of these extra-mental entities. One could either direct his attack on the implausibility of these mind independent objects or on the nature of the relation that would permit access to them.

Aaron Edidin voices the concern of many philosophers when he argues that states of affairs cannot be the objects of intuition because "it makes the process of intuition unnecessarily mysterious. By what sort of mechanism are we in contact with these states of affairs, most of which are not actual?" (Edidin 1985, 542) To explain the process better, the extra-mentalist will use such terms as grasping, apprehending, or acquaintance in the hope of shedding some light on what the process involves.[44] But Edidin and others feel that the response attempts to illuminate the unclear with the opaque.

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[43] If acquaintance or immediate apprehension comes in degrees, that would further support my argument. Perhaps the beginning of philosophical analysis involves the lower limit of acquaintance. One is acquainted with the object, but the acquaintance is so vague and indistinct that one must use intuitions to reveal the structure of the object. Intuitions then would serve to increase our degree of acquaintance with the object.

I suspect many philosophers find the use of these terms dissatisfying because they believe an explanation has not been given until one has reduced epistemic terms to nomological connections or objects which pull their weight in a scientific view of the world. But this is precisely what the extra-mentalist denies. He often has no more in mind in our knowledge of extra-mental philosophical objects then our knowledge of our own mental states. Granted, some externalists find the notion of an immediate apprehension of one's mental states troubling. But the onus for the extra-mentalist is not whether there is a mysterious faculty that can reach out and capture the extra-mental world. The important question is whether the relation of acquaintance can extend to objects outside the mind. If one faults the extra-mentalist, as Edidin does, by charging him with the introduction of a mysterious mechanism, then one is likely to overlook his use of a relation some mentalists find acceptable. The mechanism at work is the one involved in knowing our own mental states.[45]

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[44] Edidin calls these "metaphors" but for those, like myself, who believe there is a sui generis relation of acquaintance or direct awareness which grounds all knowledge, the terms are not to be understood as metaphors. They identify an unanalyzable relation and a primitive in our ontology. Use of terms as the "mind's eye" or the expression "seeing that the proposition is true" are admittedly metaphorical, but not so with the above primitive terms.

[45] There are some items of knowledge which support the possibility that acquaintance can extend to objects outside the mind. Take entailment relations for instance. One is able to apprehend that some propositions entail others. Even if one takes the relata of entailment relations to be mental states, our ability to recognize a sui generis relation holding between them must make the antagonists of extra-mentalism uncomfortable. Kornblith attempts to recast inferential relations on the model of probabilistic frequency. He thinks entailment is nothing more than complete reliability in inferring one proposition from another (2002, 22). I argue later that this account completely ignores the phenomenological evidence. It also fails to explain why these inferences are completely reliable. Our knowledge of the law of non-contradiction is also mysterious for the implacable naturalist. And for

Although the extra-mentalist does struggle to explain our knowledge of these extra-mental entities, the failure of her opponents to realize the similar poverty of their own situation is equally troubling. Edidin attempts to plunge the proverbial dagger into the heart of the extra-mentalist by making the following comparison:

> This situation is in especially painful contrast to that of intuition's analogue in the empirical sciences. We already have some considerable understanding of the process of perceptual recognition, and we know how to improve that understanding through empirical research. (1985, 542)

Edidin fails to note how we gain an understanding of the process of perceptual recognition: by using the very processes under investigation. We satisfy our curiosity about the reliability and inner-workings of specific belief-forming mechanisms by using those very mechanisms. If the extra-mentalist were to claim that she knows a sui generis relation can extend to philosophical objects outside the mind because she directly apprehends her direct apprehension of extra-mental objects, the externalist would find it laughable and perhaps rightly so. But this type of appeal should not distress the externalist/naturalist in epistemology since he should have no qualms using a method of belief formation to acquire justified beliefs that the method of belief formation is reliable (see for instance, Fumerton (1995) Chapter 6). As long as a method of belief formation is reliable, one can use that method to generate justified beliefs about its own reliability. But when attacking extra-mentalism, the externalist looks for something more. Question begging is no longer satisfactory. He could argue that his situation is preferable since at least he has an explanation of how his favored belief-forming mechanisms work. But when those explanations come at the price of begging the question, is there any difference from the

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those who accept the theory that truth is a sui generis relation of correspondence that holds between our representations and the facts themselves, our ability to apprehend the presence of that relation in the case of beliefs about our own mental states seems quite mysterious as well. If one is at all sympathetic to these forms of knowledge, then she should be willing to give more credence to the idea that we can apprehend extra-mental entities.

epistemic point of view between those who beg the question without yielding much data and those who beg the question and acquire a substantial amount of question begging evidence?

Of course, the above argument does nothing to establish the extra-mentalist thesis. But it does show that those who attack extra-mentalism often require more from the extra-mentalist than they can accomplish themselves.

Goldman and Pust raise a similar objection to Edidin's:

> The problem is the apparent "distance" or "remoteness" between intuitions, which are dated mental states, and the non-physical, extra-mental, extra-temporal entity. How could the former be reliable indicators of the properties of the latter…wherever it is obscure, as it is here, how a causal relation or counterfactual dependence of the right sort could obtain, there are grounds for serious doubt that the reliable indicatorship relation obtains. (1998, 185)[46, 47]

Goldman is not simply attacking the possibility of epistemically justified intuitions but has his focus trained on intuitions of a certain kind: intuitions which take as their object entities outside the mind. He believes that if intuitions are to count as a basic source of evidence, they must satisfy two conditions. First, a mental state is a basic source of evidence only if mental states of that kind are reliable indicators of the truth of their content. Previous attacks on Goldman's reliabilism have made it apparent that his conception of reliability is something like counterfactual long run frequency. Second, there must be a counterfactual dependence between basic evidential sources and the facts which make their contents true. "If the object in a person's visual field were red, the person would seem to see that

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[46] This continues to reflect Goldman's view while Pust has adopted a healthy rationalism as you will be able to glean from chapter 2. Thus, henceforth, I will refer particularly to Goldman.

[47] When Goldman and others appeal to causation in this context, they don't have an innocuous conception in mind. One's view of the nature of causation will influence whether one believes the counterfactual dependence can only occur among objects with spatiotemporal locations. Robert Koons in *Realism Regained* (2000) argues at length that causation is not only horizontal between concrete objects but can be vertical as well. Abstracta can enter into causal relations. But one doesn't need to assume this account of causation to thwart the implications of Goldman's conditions. The Humean conception of constant conjunction would suffice.

something is red; if the object in a person's visual field were yellow, the person would seem to see something yellow" (1998, 180). Goldman goes on to note that

> in standard cases of basic evidential sources there is also a distinctive causal route from the family of states of affairs that make the [mental] contents true or false to the family of [mental] states…if we believed that there is no such causal route, there would be grounds for doubting that there are counterfactual dependencies of the indicated sort. And if there were no counterfactual dependencies of the indicated sort, there would be grounds for doubting that the reliable indicatorship relation obtains. (1998, 181)

Since Goldman is a mentalist who believes that concepts have contents which are "embedded in, or born by, psychological structures, which are neural or neural realized states" (1998, 189), and since these states give rise to intuitions via a causal process, his account of intuition satisfies his conditions for a basic evidential source.

I tend to find this conception of evidence inadequate. The purpose of evidence is to *indicate* whether a belief is true and on Goldman's conception, the truth-indicatorship relation may be entirely unknown to the agent. What good is evidence if it does not enhance in any way one's apprehension that one's belief is true? Evidence is supposed to make the truth of a claim evident.[48] There is no reason for Goldman to call intuitions evidence; he should simply call them "the progenitors of reliable beliefs."

In raising this attack, I am showing my hand a bit early. I am committed to the principle that if one is not immediately or directly aware of the truth of a proposition but must instead rely on evidence, then one must be aware of the evidential connection holding between one's evidence and the truth of one's belief. In other words, I am committed to the principle of inferential justification: if S is justified in believing P on the basis of some evidence E, then S must be justified in believing E and justified in believing that E makes probable P (where the probability need not be frequency and perhaps must not be in order to alleviate skeptical concerns). As I will argue at length in Chapter 2, I believe intuitions are only inferentially justified since they are not direct apprehensions of some fact. They serve to indicate the structure of a philosophical object. Moreover, the nature of the philosophical process reveals that only when one has reason to think that he has canvassed enough intuitions can one be reasonably confident that his intuitions of more complicated philosophical claims are approximating the truth.

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[48] Bealer also raises objections to a reliability condition for evidence. We will examine his objections later when we address his defense of intuition use.

Laurence BonJour implicitly relies on the principle of inferential justification in arguing for the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. More importantly, his argument shows that denying extra-mental intuitive knowledge is epistemically costly. He defends the existence of a priori knowledge by focusing on a much neglected topic: our knowledge of the inferential connection holding between the premises and the conclusion of an argument. He thinks that to be justified in holding a belief on the basis of premises, one must have a reason for thinking the belief must be true or is likely to be true given that the premises are true. When considering whether one could acquire this reason via an appeal to experience, BoJour gives the following reply:

> Could an argument of any sort be entirely justified on empirical grounds? It seem clear on reflection that the answer to this question is "no." Any purely empirical ingredient, can, after all, always be formulated as an additional empirical premise. When all such premises have been explicitly formulated, either the intended conclusion will be explicitly included among them or it will not. In the former case, no argument or inference is necessary, while in the latter case, the needed inference clearly goes beyond what can be derived entirely from experience. Thus we see that the repudiation of all a priori justification is apparently tantamount to the repudiation of argument or reasoning generally. (1999, 5)

If BonJour is right, there is a kind of intuitive knowledge which cannot be reduced to causal connections holding between neural borne concepts and neural borne intuitions. Most likely, the a priori knowledge BonJour has in mind is the kind which extends outside the mind.

There is one hitch with the argument: The externalist would deny BonJour's assumption that one must be justified in believing that the appropriate inferential connection obtains between one's evidence and the target belief. In other words, she rejects the second part of the principle of inferential justification. So the debate at this point hinges to some extent on the debate between internalists and externalists. What is ultimately motivating Goldman's attack on extra-mentalism is his externalism about evidence. That is not to say that an internalist will be an extra-mentalist. But most likely there will be features of an internalist's ontology that would not make extra-mentalism as repugnant initially. We will turn to the externalist/internalist controversy in the last chapter where I will explain why an internalist theory of justification is more attractive.

Conceptual Analysis

Let's assume for the moment that the extra-mentalist approach is implausible (although I am not yet convinced it is). Attacks on extra-mentalism tend to target its alleged reliance on a mysterious faculty of intuition, which is somehow able to reach out and latch on to the structure of universals. These attacks are well known in philosophical circles. What is not so well known is the current attack on armchair philosophy which focuses on a species of that philosophy: conceptual analysis.

For some time now, the kind of philosophy which has flourished in the United States and England is analytic philosophy. Although there are disputes over the nature of analytic philosophy, it is common to characterize it as a meta-linguistic discipline which is different in kind from the object level investigations of the empirical sciences. The philosopher is chiefly concerned with our representations of objects rather than the objects themselves. In short, the philosopher is normally said to be doing conceptual analysis.[49]

The following quotes are characteristic of the literature on conceptual analysis:

> Mentalism interprets philosophical analysis as trying to shed light on the *concepts* behind philosophically interesting predicates, where the

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[49] "One hallmark of twentieth-century Anglo-American philosophy has been the analysis and clarification of philosophically important ideas or concepts—concepts like *knowledge, freedom,* and *belief*" (Graham and Horgan 1998, 271).

> term 'concept' refers to a psychological structure or states that underpins a cognizers deployment of a natural language predicate. (Goldman and Pust 1998, 187-188)
>
> Categorization intuitions are assumed to lead us to tidy sets of necessary and sufficient conditions because, it is further assumed, these intuitions are generated by underlying representations of necessary and sufficient conditions…it is assumed we have tacit knowledge of the essence of abstract concepts, that the essence is a small set of necessary and sufficient conditions, and that we can uncover this knowledge by appealing to our intuitive categorization judgments. (Ramsey 1998, 165)
>
> When philosophers analyze a concept they are seeking an explicit account of the concept's content – a content that they already know in some implicit manner. This implicit knowledge provides intuitions that guide us in formulating proposed analyses, and allows us to recognize counterinstances to these proposals. Our inability simply to state the correct analysis is explained by this distinction between the implicit knowledge we already have and the explicit knowledge we seek. (Brown 1999, 33)
>
> Let us simply construe [conceptual analysis] as an attempt to provide an illuminating set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the (correct) application of a concept, where an illuminating set is roughly one which brings out the content or the structure of the concept in such a way as to clarify the concept and indicate its relation to at least some other concepts, most typically those representing its constituents. (Audi 1983, 90)

From the above, we can begin to identify those features which characterize conceptual analysis. First, conceptual analysis takes concepts to be the objects of philosophical analysis. Usually these concepts are understood to be mental representations rather than abstract entities. The advantage of conceptual analysis is that it avoids the problems that plague extra-mentalism. The intuitions involved in conceptual analysis are more acceptable and are rarely stigmatized as "mysterious" since they don't extend to objects outside the mind. Instead, they are the result of concept possession and concepts themselves are, in some appropriate sense, in the mind.

Second, because of their structure, concepts have necessary and sufficient conditions for their correct application. These concepts are non-conscious entities which makes access to them via introspection impossible. We need indirect access to their structure. Since these concepts are in the mind, philosophical considerations tend to evoke intuitions which provide evidence of their structure and their conditions of application. Intuitions then serve as the data for philosophical theories (or at least those theories which attempt to elicit the structure of a concept).

So according to the conceptual analyst, the "What is F?" question is really an inquiry into the concept F and the necessary and sufficient conditions for its correct application. And intuitions furnish the data for discovering the conditions of its application, for they result from concept possession.

Philosophers often prompt intuitions by asking "What would you say if…" questions. The question is designed to prompt an intuition whether a concept applies in a particular case. Other times, philosophers begin with a different set of intuitions. They may appeal to a theory's explanatory benefits, attack an opposing theory by exposing unwanted implications, or they may begin with an intuitively compelling principle. Whatever the intuitions may be, they then serve as the data for the initial construction of a theory (where by "theory" I mean a specification of the necessary and sufficient conditions for a concept's correct application). More intuitions are canvassed, some of which may be inconsistent with the earlier intuitions. In that case, the stronger intuitions are kept and adjustments to the theory made. Further intuitions are canvassed and more adjustments made to the theory until equilibrium is reached: the theory implies the intuitions and the intuitions imply the theory. This, of course, is an idealized characterization of the process. The business of philosophy is messier. But something akin to the above occurs when philosophers do conceptual analysis.[50]

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[50] Joel Feinberg gives a similar characterization in his description of social philosophy:

> Correct general principles and ultimate policies do not reveal themselves spontaneously, nor are they deduced from self-evident principles. The only way to arrive at them is to begin with those singular judgments and attitudes about particular social issues in which we have the greatest confidence, and attempt to extract their implicit rationales. We then tentatively apply the extracted principles to perplexing borderline cases, revising the general principle where necessary to accommodate the specific judgment, and

Conceptual Analysis as the Search for Definitions

It is common to define conceptual analysis as a search for the meaning of terms like "knowledge," "truth," "free will," or "moral rightness." But the definitions the philosopher has in mind are strikingly different than the definitions sought by the lexicographer. The philosopher's definition does not purport to give the meaning of a word if "meaning" is used to signify a group of synonymous expressions. Furthermore, some philosophical concepts may not be amenable to philosophical definition while lexical definitions could still be given (as in the case of "acquaintance").[51]

Michael Huemer thinks moral analytic reductionism requires synonyms for a correct analysis. He discusses the view when he defends G. E. Moore's open question argument:

> *Analytic reductionism* holds that the meaning of any moral term can be given using non-moral terms. For example, an analytic reductionist might hold that 'x is good' is synonymous with 'x increases the total amount of enjoyment in the world'. Or one might hold that 'x is good' is synonymous with 'x is something that we desire to desire'. (Huemer 2008, 67)

If analytic reductionism, which is a species of analytic philosophy, implies that a correct analysis involves the discovery of synonymous expressions ultimately yielding an analytic truth (a tautology) by the substitution of synonymous terms or expressions, then clearly many analytic philosophers don't behave as analytic reductionists when seeking an analysis of knowledge or good. But they still could think goodness just is fulfilling one's specifying

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> modifying the particular attitude where required by a well-tested or deeply entrenched general principle, always aiming at the ideal of a comprehensive personal and interpersonal coherence in which singular judgments and general principles stand in a "reflective equilibrium." (1973, 3)

[51] We would do well then to keep Richard Miller's admonition in mind: "Concepts underlie words and Analytic philosophers' only concern with words is as a convenient way to get access to concepts. Analytic philosophy should not be 'strawmanned' as a trivial obsessing about words. It is really about concepts and ultimately about the things picked out by the concepts" (2000, 234).

capacities or increasing the total amount of happiness in the world without having to rely on the relation of synonymy.[52]

Robert Audi, on the other hand, argues that the definition the philosopher is looking for is an analysis which helps him to understand what a thing is.[53] We can define "desire" as "want" but the philosopher is no closer to discovering the nature of desire. "The defining expression has indicated no 'parts' or constituents or structural characteristic of the concept expressed by the term being defined" (Audi 1983, 89).

There are other reasons for thinking an analysis is not the discovery of synonymous expressions. According to Audi, the correct philosophical definition of "knowledge" may be undefeated justified true belief, but it is hard to believe that the average person means the above definiens in the lexical sense of synonymous expression (especially if "undefeated" is to be cashed out in terms of causal connections, probabilities, or discriminative capacities). What they mean by "knowledge" is apprehending, recognizing, discovering, being certain, etc. Perhaps after reaching an analysis of knowledge, say, justified true belief, we may begin to mean justified true belief in the lexical sense. But clearly before an analysis is done, we don't usually mean the analysis in question. What we mean by terms tends to be more transparent than a correct analysis of the concepts which underlie their use.

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[52] G.E. Moore had the unfortunate habit of speaking in terms of meaning analysis when he was in fact not trying to analyze verbal expression but concepts. Perhaps the best place for discovering Moore's conception of analysis occurs in his reply to his critics in the Schilpp volume (*The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*). In his reply, Moore says he understands the objects of analysis to be something other than verbal expressions. The objects of his analysis have always been ideas, concepts, or proposition. Hence, he concludes that he never intended "analysis" to be understood to apply to assertions about the same meaning of two expressions.

[53] There are other benefits to finding the definition of a concept—exposing its necessary and sufficient conditions for application. For some concepts, those conditions can help us to identify further cases of a concept's instantiation; they serve as markers or indicators that the concept truly applies. However, some philosophers mistakenly assume that in exposing the essence of a thing, we will automatically have criteria we can use to determine its presence. Jean Hampton, for instance, argues against the divine authority theory of legitimate political authority by noting that we would be unable to tell who has legitimate rule (1997, 9). But it could be the case that we can't tell when certain philosophical objects like authority, free-will, or justification obtain. (Goldman is careful to point this out in *Epistemology and Cognition*. He does not want the reader to think that an adequate specification of the criteria of the rules of justification will also allow one to tell whether a belief is justified.) Another point to keep in mind is the possibility that a concept has necessary and sufficient conditions for its application that may fail to reveal the essence of the philosophical object under investigation. This is the case for the concepts "equilateral" and "equiangular." In these cases, the conditions serve primarily to help identify more opaque instances of the concept.

So the philosopher is not searching for synonymous expressions or the terms she normally associates with a word.[54] In the language of Fumerton (1983), the philosopher is not looking to relate language to language but desires instead to relate language to something non-linguistic. She is trying to relate her concept or term "knowledge" to something non-linguistic—namely, knowledge itself. And to do that, she must discover the conditions under which the concept/term truly applies (or in Fumerton's vernacular, the different level meaning rule she implicitly follows which relates language to something non-linguistic).

So there is a sense in which the conceptual analyst gets outside the mind. She discovers the structure of a concept by entertaining propositions, states of affairs, or even facts (assuming the concept is instantiated, although one must be willing in some cases to recognize that as she moves further along in the equilibrium process, what she took to be an instantiation of a concept was no instantiation at all). Thus Fumerton writes,

> Philosophical understanding of the sentence I use *will* involve entertaining a nonlinguistic proposition or state of affairs (however that is understood) because philosophical understanding is realized only when we come to know what rule it is that we are following when we use the sentence, a process which involves bringing before one's mind the rule relating language to the world, a process which, in turn, involves bringing before one's mind the respective relata. (1983, 491)

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[54] G.E. Moore in *Principia Ethica* stresses the difference between giving a definition in terms of synonymous expressions and a philosophical definition which specifies the nature of the object. When addressing whether to define "good" using synonymous terms, he writes, "[T]his is not the sort of definition I am asking for. Such a definition can never be of ultimate importance in any study except lexicography…My business is solely with that object or idea, which I hold, rightly or wrongly, that the word is generally used to stand for. What I want to discover is the nature of that object or idea" (Moore 1999, 58). Note that Moore concedes that the object he is investigating may not be denoted by our word "good." This is blatantly then a form of extra-mentalism.

However, Fumerton's account differs in important ways from traditional conceptual analysis. He believes the initial goal of the philosopher is to discover the different level meaning rule he follows in using an expression. A different level meaning rule might be the following: "Regard 'alpha' as a correct description of all and only those possible situations in which alpha is the case" (1983, 490).[55] And one uncovers a different level meaning rule by discovering that she has a disposition to regard a certain term as a correct description of certain situations understood in a certain way. Pertaining to intuition use, perhaps Fumerton would argue that one discovers she has the disposition by entertaining cases where those cases activate an intuition (an intellectual seeming that S knows that P, for instance) which then provides evidence for thinking one does have the disposition in question. Once one discovers that she has the disposition to regard, say, "knowledge" as a correct description of certain situations understood in a certain way, she has brought before her mind one of the relata—knowledge itself. Hence, she can now attempt to break down the pertinent philosophical object into its ultimate categorical constituents. Meaning analysis is to give way to ontological analysis.

So once we discover the different level meaning rule, we know which situations should count as knowledge, causation, truth, etc. But if the philosophical constituents of those states of affairs, which we have entertained in discovering the different level meaning rule we follow, are complex, it is the business of the philosopher to separate them into their ultimate categorical constituents. In doing so, he gains some understanding of what the thing is.

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[55] Perhaps the best way to understand the "regard" in this definition of a different level meaning rule is in terms of an intuition. To avoid the pitfalls of behaviorism, Fumerton is careful not to characterize the rule in terms of use since that would imply a disposition to say certain things in certain circumstances. But if to regard is not to use, then in discovering one has a disposition to regard, one discovers he has a disposition to be in a certain kind of mental state. And intuition fulfills this role rather nicely. Although Fumerton can understand the regarding in a different way (perhaps it is unanalyzable), intuition still will most likely play a role in producing the regard via an intellectual seeming that alpha is the case. For one doesn't simply find himself regarding that "alpha" is a correct description of a certain case. Something actualizes one's potential to regard and that is intuition.

Philosophers like Goldman, who are suspicious of extra-mentalism, should not reject this formulation since the intuitions prompted by thinking of non-linguistic objects are still the progeny of something in the mind. One does not begin the analysis by leaving the mind. The direction of knowing is still from the mind to the world, for one discovers a dispositional fact about oneself first. If we were exclusively inspecting extra-mental entities, then intuitions would somehow extend outside of the mind to the world and thus bring the world to the mind. But since intuitions could still be mental borne (meaning that when one considers propositions or states of affairs, the intuition comes from the side of the mind) and concepts determine the structure of philosophical objects, the direction of knowing is from the mind to the world even though one takes in propositions or states of affairs in constructing the analysis.[56]

Richard Miller makes a similar point:

> Philosophers as well as other language users have internalized rules…that govern how words are used. When language users reflect on hypothetical situations, they are able to tell whether or not they would use a certain word to describe the situation. This knowledge is what we call an intuition. It is a subjective feeling that is the result of a linguistic habit or rule governing the use of certain words. (2000, 235)

Once again, since these rules are internal rules, the intuitions engendered by appeal to hypothetical or actual cases are one's evidence for thinking one has a disposition to regard certain terms as correct descriptions of certain situations understood in a certain way. By canvassing enough intuitions, one moves closer to making the tacit rule one is following explicit.

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[56] I mention Fumerton's account because I believe the best way to defend armchair philosophy against recent attacks is to eventually get outside the mind in doing analysis. Fumerton's account is helpful since one does eventually move on to ontological analysis. What I shall propose later will build on this conception of philosophical analysis.

The idea that the philosopher is making explicit a tacit rule or the tacit structure of a concept, which somehow influences our behavior or intuitive output, is not unique to philosophy. The situation is analogous to those who can follow syntactical rules without being able to articulate them.[57] In discovering syntactic rules, we examine cases that evoke our linguistic intuitions. These intuitions reflect the syntactic rules we tacitly follow. They are the offspring or the residue of what is merely unconscious and implicit in the agent.

In drawing parallels between philosophical analysis and linguistic analysis, it is common to appeal to the work of Chomsky:

> Chomsky and other linguists have proposed that speakers possess tacit knowledge of their native language…Chomskians assume that we can ascertain a set of syntactic rules for English by looking closely at the intuitive linguistic judgments of competent English speakers because…these judgments are generated by an actual, cognitively represented grammar of English. On this view, intuitive judgments serve as data against which we can test hypotheses about the nature of the underlying structures that produce them. (Ramsey 1998, 165)[58]

So, conceptual and linguistic analyses have several points in contact. For both, the goal is to make explicit tacit, unconscious features of the mind. Both assume there is an underlying structure that is revealed by probing our intuitions about specific cases. Intuitions spring from these underlying structures and help raise them to consciousness.

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[57] This point is important to philosophy since it explains why we are able to use concepts or follow certain rules relating philosophical terms to the world without knowing what they are. Karen Neander draws a parallel between our ability to use a grammatical rule without knowing what it is and our ability to use a concept without explicitly knowing its structure to defend her view that proper function is to be analyzed in terms of natural selection (1991, 175-176). And Fumerton (1983) uses the above fact to resolve the paradox of analysis. The paradox arises because to give a correct analysis of a philosophical concept, one must already have some familiarity with it, otherwise one wouldn't be able to raise the philosophical question intelligibly. But if one is already familiar with the philosophical object under scrutiny, why does he even need to do the analysis? The way out of this quagmire is to focus on our ability to follow a rule or use a concept without knowing what the rule or concept is. And our ability to do so in the context of syntactical rules provides evidence for thinking the same holds in philosophy.

[58] See also Stich (1991) 80-81.

Even though philosophers specialize in deductive arguments, conceptual analysis is curiously an inductive enterprise. Philosophers often generate theories by examining particular cases and extracting their essential properties. The more cases that have been examined, the better support there is for a theory. But this does not provide the principle means of evaluating a theory's plausibility. The construction of counterexamples, which is a deductive form of argumentation, constitutes the most important source of evidence. And the absence of any counterexamples is the most prominent point in favor of a view. So we could say that the most significant form of philosophical evidence is an induction on deductive forms of reasoning. The inability to construct a counterexample or the failure to come across one provides inductive evidence that one's view is correct. Consequently, even if a theory consistently yields the right verdict about a concept's application, it still may falter over new cases. Thus, we can never be truly certain that we have arrived at the correct analysis of a concept. There is always the possibility that someone with superior imaginative powers will construct a scenario our analysis fails to accommodate.[59]

Presuppositions and Motivations for Conceptual Analysis

There are several beliefs that lie at the heart of conceptual analysis. Some of them have been subject to recent attacks, which is why some philosophers have given up on the practice. If one wishes to defend conceptual analysis, she must show that some of these beliefs are in fact warranted.

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[59] Some philosophers have gone so far as to claim that philosophical knowledge is impossible. Richard Taylor, for example, ends the Introduction to his *Metaphysics* with the following advice: "You are therefore exhorted, in pursuing the thoughts that follow, to suspend judgment concerning the final truths of things—since probably neither you nor anyone else knows what these are—and to content yourself with appreciating the problems of metaphysics" (1983, 3). If by "knowledge," philosophers mean "epistemic certainty," then I agree. But some still harbor a deep pessimism even though they have a modest claim to knowledge in mind. Their pessimism stems from the recalcitrant disagreements persisting in philosophy. But one thing philosophers often over look is that not every philosopher is dealing with the exact same data set. Nor is a philosopher able to hold all the relevant data before her mind at once.

Conceptual analysts tend to assume that philosophical concepts are fundamental and do not change over time:[60, 61] "There is a massive central core of human thinking which has no history—or none recorded in histories of thought; there are categories and concepts which, in their most fundamental character, change not at all" (P.F. Strawson quoted in Miller 2000, 234). There are two points to keep in mind: the basicallity of philosophical concepts and their stability.

One reason conceptual revision is regarded as anathema in philosophy is that these concepts lie at the center of our conceptual schemes. Two illustrations will suffice. If we think of our conceptual scheme like a web, then philosophical concepts reside near the center. Any changes we make to these concepts will, like a ripple in a pond, influence those concepts nearer the web's periphery. But the connection between our fundamental philosophical concepts and other concepts is not immediately apparent. Our concept of water, for instance, is not built up out of our concept of knowledge. So how do these concepts influence the other concepts we have? The answer lies in our philosophical beliefs. Philosophical beliefs tend to reside at the center of our web, and those beliefs result from intuitions which emanate from concepts near the center of our conceptual scheme. We know that such beliefs reside at the centre of our web or, alternatively, near the foundation of our noetic structure, because changes to our philosophical beliefs should have drastic consequences for the other beliefs we have. We make assumptions daily about the existence of matter, other persons, knowledge, free-action, and a host of other philosophical beliefs, which if we were to modify, would rightly cause adjustments in much of what we believe. If I come to believe that water is H_3O instead of H_2O, that would incur several revisions to my

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[60] In chapter 3, we will examine several arguments for denying that philosophical concepts are static and not subject to change.

[61] Depending on how one understands concepts, it may not be intelligible to speak of revising or changing a concept. It would then be more correct to speak of changing the predicate one associates with a concept.

noetic structure. But the revisions would not be as far reaching as my coming to believe there is no memorial knowledge or that truth is merely coherence among my beliefs.[62] Since our philosophical beliefs are fundamental, the concepts which help to engender such beliefs are fundamental as well.

There is another sense in which philosophical concepts are fundamental. Imagine trying to communicate or think about the world without a working notion of truth, personhood, or knowledge.[63] If the world had been such that there was no water, we can imagine no problems with our thinking and communicating. But no matter which world we find ourselves in, as long as there are persons, it is hard to imagine thought and communication without certain dispositional philosophical beliefs in place.[64] In the words of Miller, "These categories are inescapable, and replacing them is literally unthinkable" (2000, 237).[65]

In addition to their basic character, philosophical concepts are assumed to be unchanging. The goal of philosophy is to clarify what we mean and have always meant by knowledge, justification, person, freedom, rights, and so forth. All those who have joined Plato in addressing perennial philosophical problems have attempted to discern the structure of concepts common to each person in the history of philosophy.[66]

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[62] I believe that philosophy seeks to answer the most basic questions we can logically think about and thus is more fundamental than the sciences. The philosopher does not assume answers to scientific questions in doing philosophy whereas the scientist assumes answers to many philosophical questions: What exists? Which methods of reasoning are legitimate? What is truth? Is sensory experience reliable? And others.

[63] There is another reason for treating questions about truth as fundamental. When a person denies the existence of truth, it is natural to ask "Is that true?" The propensity to ask this question indicates that truth is inescapable, that one is committed to the existence of some kind of truth to the extent one is making assertions. The only intelligible question then is not whether there is truth but what could it be. So perhaps a sufficient condition for a fundamental question is the need for an answer to that question to satisfy the same question raised at the meta-level. Thus, questions about knowledge are fundamental because in asserting that there is no knowledge or no justification, the question naturally arises whether one knows that there is no knowledge or justifiably believes that there is no justification.

[64] Communication seems to presuppose a working notion of truth. But once we have that in place, the question naturally arises as to whether one came by a truth accidentally. This then raises the question of justification and knowledge.

[65] These claims in the mouths of some philosophers reflect Kantian sympathies.

A similar point is made by Goldman and Pust when explicating the rationale for conceptual analysis. Conceptual analysts assume that competent speakers of a natural language "have the same conceptual contents lying behind their mastery of a particular predicate" (1998, 190). Some argue that if this assumption were false, philosophy would be nothing more than auto-biography and would fail to produce anything of value beyond one's own self-knowledge. But given our shared concepts, we can avoid mere verbal disputes. We have some assurance that even though the objects we seek to analyze are not before the mind, we have our minds turned toward the same thing.

Those who assume the thesis of shared concepts have a problem with which to contend. The truth of the thesis looks like a contingent matter. We could have different concepts associated with the same predicate. This raises a pressing question: what reason do we have for thinking we associate the same concepts with the same predicates? Our evidence would have to be empirical in nature if we are to have any at all.[67] And fortunately for the conceptual analyst, there is some forthcoming. Given the astounding success of some scenarios in prompting uniform intuitions (e.g. Gettier cases), the theory of shared concepts cannot be dismissed as insupportable.[68]

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[66] Karen Neander represents a different perspective, one which will occupy our attention later: "Since Conceptual analysis is aimed at discovering the criteria of application that people have in mind, and since these can and often do change over time, conceptual truths will always be relative to a linguistic community at a given time" (1991, 177).

[67] This raises another important question: if the thesis of shared concepts is a contingent matter and can only be answered by amassing empirical evidence, is it a question the philosopher is fit to answer? Most likely the answer to that question is "no." Perhaps then we were too hasty in assuming it is contingent. We will, however, keep that assumption in place for now while we appeal to some anecdotal evidence for thinking philosophers possess the same concepts.

[68] If this is truly a contingent matter, it is curious that philosophers do not systematically check to see whether their concepts are widely shared. As Goldman writes, "Philosophers seem to

There is other support as well.[69] Philosophers often apply a term in the same cases, withhold it from the same cases, and hesitate over the same cases. This suggests they have the same concept lying behind their use of the term. As already mentioned in the Introduction, debates in philosophy are coherent and well ordered. It is uncommon for the philosopher to believe he is simply talking past others or that his discussion with other philosophers is an exercise in futility because of rampant misunderstanding. There is also a rather large base of shared intuitions which permits philosophers to move their debate into the higher levels of theory construction. If philosophers possessed different concepts, then it is unlikely that these characteristics would obtain.[70]

This is just some of the initial evidence for thinking that philosophers have the same concepts lying behind their use of the same predicates. Yet, there are some problems

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assume great uniformity in epistemic judgments. This assumption may stem from the fact that it is mostly the judgments of philosophers themselves that have been reported, and they are members of a fairly homogenous subculture. A wider 'pool' of subjects might reveal a much lower degree of uniformity" (1991, 160). Philosophers have been rather cavalier in their assumptions about shared concepts if they regard the matter as contingent. We chastise those who make generalizations from their limited experience of their surrounding culture, but philosophers seem to be guilty of an unwarranted generalization as well. They need to do some social science to determine whether a belief in shared concepts is cogent. But Frank Jackson replies that philosophers do their own polling in a sense: "Everyone who presents the Gettier cases to a class of students is doing their own bit of fieldwork, and we all know the answer they get in the vast majority of cases. But it is also true that often we know that our own case is typical and so can generalize from it to others" (1998, 37). I am curious how we know that our own case is typical but Jackson does not offer any help here. Given the different contexts in which we acquire our concepts, it seems that the burden of proof is on Jackson. Also, as Brown (1999) points out, a professor's assessments of whether students in his course share his reactions is hardly a good example of polling methodology. But I suppose Jackson has been teaching long enough and to large enough groups to be in a better position than most in assessing whether we share the same concept of knowledge. Although I doubt his methods of inquiry would satisfy the conditions of good social science.

[69] I believe it is important here to focus on the behavior of philosophers in gathering evidence of shared concepts, for philosophers are the most competent in applying philosophical concepts. This point will be important in chapter 2. Evidence for shared concepts must be gleaned from those competent with the concepts.

[70] Another idea that may explain the evidence just as well is that philosophers possess concepts which considerably overlap in their content but also differ. Instead of possessing the exact same concepts, their concepts only resemble each other. We will look at this proposal in more depth in chapter 3.

looming on the horizon which require our immediate attention. On one popular construal of scientific concepts, the conceptual goal is to fashion concepts that correspond to natural kinds found in the world. We want a conceptual scheme which carves the world at the joints. Thus, once the scientist discovers those features which determine an object's membership in a natural kind, we should modify our concept to correspond to the natural kind discovered.[71] In short, it is possible for our scientific concepts to fail to capture natural kinds.

Important to this approach is the ability to fix the referent of a scientific concept in a manner that allows for conceptual revision without changing the referent. Causal-historical accounts of reference fixing are important to this process. Our scientific terms refer either because we inherit them through causal connections of the right sort or through our use of a reference fixing definite descriptions.

Consequently, the scientist may abandon a concept or revise it in the face of empirical evidence. She may discover that her concept fails to pick out any natural kind. Such is the case for concepts like phlogiston, caloric, or the Aristotelian notions of violent and natural motion. Other concepts may divide up the world pretty well but ultimately fail to pick out natural kinds. Brown gives the following example:

> Until quite recently, I considered conifer and deciduous trees to be mutually exclusive classes and I did have a principled basis for the distinction…However, I recently discovered that my classification does not match that used by botanists since their classification scheme includes deciduous conifers such as the larch. In other words, the concepts I associated with the expressions "conifer" and "deciduous tree" are not the same as the concepts that botanists associate with these words. This discovery led to a small revision in my botanical concepts. (1999, 45)[72]

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[71] Of course, this raises the question, "What is a natural kind?" which looks like a paradigmatic philosophical question. Thus the scientist must do some philosophical conceptual analysis before proposing that x is a natural kind.

[72] Karen Neander makes a similar point about our concept "water": "While it was once false as conceptual analysis that water meant 'liquid with the molecular structure HOH', the criteria of application have changed and kept abreast with our knowledge. Now a conceptual analysis of

Even though the philosopher can lend his expertise in conceptual analysis to the scientist in order to clear away conceptual debris, such analysis is not of ultimate importance in the sciences. The scientist is not concerned with what our concept of a bird is, but what it should be. This is why the scientist does not begin in the mind. The direction of inquiry is ultimately from the world to the mind. But if scientific concepts may need revision or if they may need to be invented, why not think the same holds for philosophical concepts as well? Why are they importantly different?

There is another difference in the philosopher's attitude toward philosophical concepts and other concepts. One rarely finds philosophers exhausting their energies trying to capture the structure of concepts like "house," "car," or "couch." Perhaps they find the analysis of such concepts boring or of little use. But I think this only explains part of their indifference. If certain kinds of philosophy involve conceptual analysis and the philosopher is supposed to be the best trained to discover the structure of a concept, why not take most concepts to be fit for conceptual analysis and thus open to philosophic investigation? There would then be no domain which is off limits to the philosopher qua philosopher.

I suspect philosophers don't take this attitude because they don't believe that every concept shares the features peculiar to philosophical concepts. We have already mentioned reasons for denying that scientific concepts do. Perhaps with regard to our everyday concepts, some of them are not sharp enough to serve as the objects of rigorous analysis; they are too vague and imprecise to yield necessary and sufficient conditions for their application. And even if they were, the point of many of these concepts is to facilitate a division of the world with certain characteristics—either carving the world at the joints or helping to facilitate our ends. If our concept of a car fails to divide up the world between

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water would have to include that water is HOH. I could be deceived into thinking that some other clear and thirst-quenching liquid was water. But if I learned that it was not HOH, I would then deny that it was water. So being HOH is now my criterion of water" (1991, 172).

cars and non-cars in the most natural way, then the concept should be modified. There is nothing sacred about such concepts. But why are philosophical concepts any different?

Finally, there is a difference in the way philosophers treat philosophical concepts and artifact concepts invented to furnish a taxonomy for philosophical theories. I have in mind such concepts as internalism/externalism in epistemology and ethics, realism/nominalism about properties, or naturalism/non-naturalism in ethics. These concepts are obviously invented to facilitate a helpful and efficient division of the philosophical landscape. Consequently, there needn't be only one concept associated with the same predicate. We should adopt that concept which facilities the clearest understanding of the debate existing between the two sides. For instance, many epistemic internalists have the vexing habit of defining internalism as the belief that one must have access to the conditions for justification via reflection or introspection. But this definition is inadequate for it places epistemologists who have more in common with these internalists in the camp of externalists.[73] The goal in defining "internalism" is to come up with a definition which divides the sides up so that the members of both sides have more in common with their respective members than any theory on the opposing side. In light of this, Fumerton writes, "It is almost always folly to suppose that there is some one 'correct' way to understand these technical disputes" (2002, 3).[74]

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[73] I am thinking for instance of internal state internalists like Feldman and Fumerton's theory of acquaintance and inferential justification. If however, availability to introspection or reflection is understood as nothing more than a condition on what counts as an internal state, then the definition is not as bad. But many externalists present the definition as though one must introspectively recognize that the conditions for justification obtain in order to be justified and such a definition is implausible for reasons already developed by Fumerton (2005).

[74] "Naturalism" is another philosophical term where it has become painfully clear that most philosophers are associating a different concept with the term. The question then is not "Who is right?" but rather, which concept facilitates the most helpful and efficient division of the philosophical landscape.

So, for philosophical disputes, the goal is to create concepts which pick out natural divisions among the philosophical theories. But why doesn't the same hold for the philosophical concepts of knowledge, truth, and free will, according to the conceptual analyst? Why not simply invent concepts to divide up the philosophical world in the most natural way?

Several relevant points emerge from the above. First, given the way conceptual analysts implicitly treat concepts, there doesn't seem to be the possibility that the philosophical concept misrepresents the world. Philosophical concepts are necessarily correct.[75] Thus, there is no reason to revise them in light of the philosophical data, for that data is culled from intuitions which emanate from the concepts themselves. Thus the conceptual analyst has every reason to reject causal theories of reference at least for philosophical terms. She can accept that causal theories provide the best account for how we refer to and discover natural kinds in the world, but she will then go on to argue that philosophical objects are importantly different from natural kinds and thus cannot be referred to in the same way. Once one begins to modify her concept of knowledge for instance, she is no longer talking about knowledge. One can't modify the concept without shifting the referent. Thus it is imperative that philosophers have the same concepts lying behind their use of philosophical predicates. Otherwise, they are not speaking about the same things.

In addition, the analysis is usually assumed to be possible even in the absence of any instantiations. The philosopher then gets out to the world via intuitions engendered by concept possession and thus ultimately gains access to the philosophical objects themselves by virtue of the concept's structure. If the concept had a different structure, then the object ultimately brought before the mind of the analyst would be different (assuming the conceptual analysis is successful).

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[75] Such concepts though are still normative—one can misapply them. For the sciences where concepts can be mistaken, the normativity is two fold: we can misapply them and the concepts can be incorrect. Scientific concepts can fail to represent accurately because we are able to refer and consequently examine objects independently of our conceptual structures. Our concepts do not determine what we are talking about. But for philosophical concepts (in those cases at least where the object cannot be brought directly before the mind), we have no way of referring to philosophical objects except through our conceptual structures. In other words, we come to realize the presence of philosophical objects through intuitions which are the progeny of concepts.

Which Came First—The Concept or the Thing?

These considerations lead naturally to another way of framing the issue. For philosophical concepts, which comes first—the concept or the thing? Given the above points about concept modification in the sciences and the pessimism associated with an analysis of our artifact concepts, I believe most conceptual analysts implicitly assume that philosophical concepts determine the nature of philosophical objects.[76] This explains quite nicely why there is a difference between our philosophical concepts and our scientific concepts. Even if the scientist discovers necessary a posteriori truths, those necessities exist independently of our conceptual structures. But for the analyst, the necessity that attaches to philosophical analyses is in virtue of a conceptual structure. This is why philosophy can be done from the armchair.

Concepts have necessary and sufficient conditions for their application not because philosophical objects have a prior essence but because philosophical concepts possess a certain structure which determines the essence of philosophical objects.[77] It is worth repeating a prior quote from Goldman and Pust:

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[76] This has led to the unfortunate habit of ignoring features of the world which might be of philosophical interest. Even if our concept of justification, for instance, does not include acquaintance, that relation should still be of significance to philosophers and human beings in general. More on this in chapter 4.

[77] Contrast this with the naturalist approach to philosophical analysis. By using an externalist theory of reference, one should be able to discover essences which already exist in the world apart from our concepts: "As I see it, epistemologists ought to be concerned with the nature of knowledge, not the concept of knowledge; the proper subject matter of ethic is the right and the good, not the concepts of the right and the good; and so on" (Kornblith 1998, 133). So, one should be able to discover the prior essence of knowledge, the right and the good and craft concepts which correspond to their natures. However, Kornblith admits that once we fix the referent and investigate an object empirically, we may discover it is a gerrymandered kind. Consequently, we may have to

> Our first dissatisfaction with the natural kinds approach stems from our doubt that all targets of philosophical analysis, or even most of them, qualify as natural kinds. Presumably something qualifies as a natural kind only if it has a prior essence, nature, or character independent of anybody's thought or conception of it. It is questionable, however, whether such analysanda of knowledge, justification, and justice have essences or natures independent of our conception of them. In our opinion, the lack of natural kind status would not place the topics of knowledge, justification, or justice outside the scope of philosophical analysis. Nor do we think that the corresponding predicates should be abandoned if they fail to pick out natural kinds. (1998, 186-187)

Also, the belief that philosophical analysis can be done apart from the instantiation of the concept implies, in the mouths of many conceptual analysts, that the concept determines the nature of the thing. Surely, if the object had a prior essence, then it would still exist in some sense even in the absence of any instantiations in the world. Perhaps it would be an uninstantiated universal.

So the extra-mentalist is in a position to claim that philosophical objects have natures apart from our conceptual activities. Whereas, the conceptual analyst, who is committed to mentalism, most likely believes that our conceptual structures determine the nature of philosophical objects. Thus there is no question of our concepts misrepresenting the world nor is there a need to revise our concepts on the basis of knowledge of the external world, for access to philosophical objects is via intuitions which emanate from our conceptual structures.

Conceptual Analysis and the Nature of Concepts

Theories about concepts can be divided into two classes: those which take concepts to be outside the mind and those which take them to be mental representations. Our concern is with concepts as mental entities, for most conceptual analysts assume such an

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modify our original belief that knowledge forms a natural kind and has an essence. But for the conceptual analyst, the only way this possibility could arise is if our concept of knowledge did not have a definite structure.

approach, and moreover, the problems we will be addressing later apply exclusively to concepts understood in this way.

For traditional conceptual analyses to be possible, philosophical concepts must have a certain structure.[78] According to the classical theory, concepts have a structure which makes them amenable to conceptual analysis. According to this theory,

> most concepts…are complex representations that are composed of structurally simpler representations. What's more, it's natural to construe their structure in accordance with the Containment Model, where the components of a complex concept are among its proper parts. Some of these components may be complex, as in the case of BACHELOR. But eventually one reaches a level of primitive representations, which are undefined. (Margolis and Laurence 1999, 9)

According to the classical view, concepts are composed of simpler concepts (the containment model).[79] In virtue of their composition, these complex concepts have necessary and sufficient conditions for their correct application. The conditions are simply the co-application of the simpler concepts to something in the world. If one of the simpler concepts fails to apply, then one of the conditions fails to be satisfied.

This view explains why many believe conceptual analysis is important. One truly understands a concept when he recognizes its proper parts. And if those parts are complex concepts, one needs to ferret out their parts to gain a philosophical understanding of them. Thus the analysis is not complete until one has reached the primitive concepts—those concepts which are not composed of any others.

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[78] You will note that throughout, I am careful to distinguish between the nature of concepts in general and the nature of philosophical concepts. I believe the conceptual analyst is wise to distinguish philosophical concepts from other kinds for the reasons mentioned above, and furthermore, because there is no reason to assume at the start that there aren't different kinds of concepts. Perhaps philosophical concepts compose a kind of concept, which although similar enough to other concepts to warrant categorization in the class of concepts, possess important differences singling them out as a species of concept. This will help initially to deflect complaints against conceptual analysis which focus on our scientific or everyday concepts.

[79] Laurence and Margolis (1999) also mention the inferential model: a concept is a structured complex of other concepts when it stands in a privileged relation to those other concepts (usually by virtue of inferential dispositions). Thus "color" is a member of the structured complex "red" because we have dispositions to infer from "x is red" to "x is a color." The inferential approach also implies that a concept can occur without the occurrence of its part. One can token the concept "red" without tokening the concept "color." For the containment model, the occurrence of a concept necessitates the occurrence of its parts.

What evidence is there for the classical view of concepts? Many have been attracted to the theory because of its explanatory power—in particular its ability to explain concept acquisition, categorization, epistemic justification, analyticity and analytic inferences, and reference determination.[80]

Concepts are constructed out of primitives which then contribute to more complex concepts, which then become the proper parts of even more complex concepts and so on.[81] So we build up concepts by combining them in various ways out of our simpler concepts. Categorization results from our ability to recognize that the features of a concept are satisfied. This helps to explain epistemic justification for one is justified in applying a concept when she recognizes that its parts are present. Thus, epistemic justification is a process where one verifies the constituents of concepts and the constituents of these constituents until the primitives are reached. This process is said to involve less epistemic risk since one proceeds by a series of steps verifying that the constituents for each level of complexity are satisfied.

The existence of analytic inferences can also be explained by the classical theory. There is a striking difference between the inference involved in "Smith is a man. So Smith is a weightlifter," and "Smith is a bachelor. So Smith is a man." With respect to the latter inference, Margolis and Laurence write,

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[80] What follows is culled from Margolis and Laurence (1999) 10-14.

[81] Historically, these primitive concepts have been treated as sensory perceptions. But as someone committed to acquaintance as a real relation, I would rather treat primitive concepts as arising from those objects with which we are directly acquainted. This would obviate the problem that some concepts cannot ultimately be reduced to a bundle of sensory impressions. For instance, Laurence and Margolis (1999) mention that some of our concepts have an irreducible functional component which cannot be cashed out in terms of sensory impressions.

> The inference is not only correct but seems to be guaranteed by the fact that it is part of the meaning of "bachelor" that bachelors are men. It's not as if one has to do a sociological study. The classical theory explains why one needn't look to the world in assessing [the inference], by claiming that the concept bachelor has a definitional structure which implicates the concept man, unmarried man, and so on. (1999, 12)

Finally, the classical theory nicely explains how concepts refer. The fact that concepts can refer to things in the world is one of their most important properties. But what explains their referential capacities? According to the classical theory, a concept refers to those things which satisfy the conditions specified by the concept's structure. It is the definitional structure of a concept which determines to what it refers.

These explanatory benefits provide much evidence for thinking concepts are classically structured or that at least a subset of the class of concepts are. Conceptual analysis often presupposes a classical theory of concepts although concepts need not be structured in this way for conceptual analysis to be legitimate and useful.

In chapter 3, we address some of the arguments against armchair philosophy that focus on the objects of conceptual analysis: the concepts themselves. However, before we get there, we must examine intuitions which are the most important form of evidence for the armchair philosopher. For if intuitions fail to provide evidence for thinking that a philosophical claim is true, then its difficult to see how the armchair philosopher will have any data to rely on when constructing his theories. Thus, to that matter we now turn.

CHAPTER 2
PHILOSOPHY AND THE ROLE OF INTUITIONS

In *Naming and Necessity,* Kripke writes that

> some philosophers think that something's having intuitive content is very inconclusive evidence in favor of it. I think it is very heavy evidence in favor of anything, myself. I really don't know, in a way, what more conclusive evidence one can have about anything, ultimately speaking. (1980, 42)

Despite Kripke's slightly exaggerated support for intuition, his claim basically reflects the outlook of the armchair philosopher. The most pervasive and noteworthy form of evidence for armchair philosophy is the data supplied by intuitions. Just as scientists largely rely on observation to gather the data for their theories, armchair philosophers use intuitions to cull the data for theirs. Intuition is the philosopher's eyes and ears. Without it, she would have very little evidence to go on; she would occupy a position of intellectual blindness.

The sedentary armchair philosopher must have the philosophical evidence brought to him. Intuition fills this role. Thus a defense of armchair philosophy must minimally vindicate intuition (or some epistemic counterpart). If intuition is shown to lack evidential import, I cannot see how armchair philosophy could continue as a legitimate intellectual enterprise.

Intuition use in philosophy is ubiquitous. Many philosophers use the data of intuitions as the primary evidence for their theories. These intuitions serve to indicate the truth of a theory where often, the theory seeks to answer the "What is F?" question.[82] Even those who rely on causal/historical accounts of reference to bypass intuition use often appeal to intuitions to support their theory of reference.

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[82] This is not surprising if philosophical analysis is conceptual analysis. If the truth makers for philosophical theories are ultimately to be found in our conceptual structures and intuitions help to reveal a concept's structure, then there is a good prima facie reason to think intuitions are truth indicative. Thus according to Ramsey, "[C]ategorization intuitions are assumed to lead us to tidy sets of necessary and sufficient properties because, it is further assumed these intuitions are generated by underlying representations *of* necessary and sufficient properties" (1998, 165).

When doing analysis, philosophers try to discover a true biconditional where, ideally, the right side specifies the nature of some object. The biconditional captures the analysis of the philosophical object, specifying the necessary and sufficient conditions for its occurrence in the world (and for all possible worlds). Philosophers often support the analysis by exposing its implications for actual and hypothetical cases. Intuitions that the cases are possible, and that in those cases the analysis and the object obtain, increase the probability that the analysis is correct. Those who doubt the truth of the analysis tend to adopt one of two strategies: they either prompt an intuition that the conditions obtain in the absence of the object (thus showing they are not sufficient) or that the object obtains in the absence of one or more conditions (thus showing they are not necessary).

Perhaps the clearest example of intuition use is the Gettier counterexamples. In each Gettier case, one has the intuition that the subject fails to know even though he has a justified true belief. This intuition is evidence for thinking that the classical analysis fails to specify sufficient conditions for knowledge. In response to Goldman's initial reliability analysis of justification, Laurence BonJour (1985) constructed several cases involving Norman the clairvoyant which prompted in many the intuition that Norman fails to have a justified belief despite satisfying the reliability conditions for justification.

One could multiply examples upon examples of intuition use in philosophy. But in the interest of space, consider Bealer's excellent summary:

> Chisholm's abnormal-conditions refutation of phenomenalism, Chisholm's and Putnam's refutations of behaviorism, the use of multiple-realizability in refuting narrow identity theses, the Twin-Earth arguments for a posteriori necessities and externalism in mental content, Burge's arthritis argument for antiindividualism in mental content, Jackson's Mary example, and so on. (1998, 205)

Joel Pust (2000, 7-10) lists several further examples of intuition use: intuitions about punishing the innocent to refute simplistic forms of utilitarianism; intuitions about teletransportation for theories of personal identity; and the flag pole case for refuting the D-N model of explanation.[83]

The role of intuition in philosophy is similar to the role of observation in the sciences. Scientists gather data by observing states of affairs. Theories are proposed to account for the data. These theories are evaluated against further observations and their ability to cohere with other well developed theories. In some cases, a well supported theory will not be discarded in the face of an anomalous observation, especially if the observation can be explained away, or the evidence for the theory is strong enough to render improbable the truth of the observation. In the same way, philosophers often evoke intuitions about particular cases in developing a theory. This initial theory is then tested against further intuitions (or the empirical evidence available from the armchair) where, in some cases, a conflicting intuition may be discarded if the overall intuitive evidence outweighs the strength of the particular case intuition. This process continues until an equilibrium between the theory and body of intuitions is reached. Furthermore, the process of gathering data in the sciences can range from simple cases to more complex cases requiring scientific training—cases where only "trained observers are capable of recognizing the relevant state of affairs" (Edidin 1985, 539).[84] The same can be said of philosophy. The process of prompting and using intuitions can range from simple cases requiring little if any skill (although I think these cases constitute a smaller portion of the philosophical data than most realize) to complex cases requiring philosophical skill and training.[85]

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[83] Judith Thomson stresses the importance of intuitive beliefs for moral philosophy when she claims that "it is precisely those beliefs [about cases] which supply the data for moral theorizing, and which go a long way—if not all the way—to setting the constraints on what constitutes an acceptable moral principle." Similarly, Mark Johnston expresses the prevalence of intuition for theories of personal identity: "Cases imaginary and real are produced. Competing accounts of the necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity are then evaluated simply in accord with how well they jibe with the intuitions wrung from these cases." (Both quotes were obtained from Pust 2000, pages 7 and 9 respectively.)

[84] To support this claim, Edidin mentions the following examples: "the observation of cancer cells under a microscope, of yellow-bellied sapsuckers in northern Guatemala, and of worship among the member of primitive societies" (1985, 539).

Although intuition use is pervasive among philosophers, many don't focus on its nature and epistemic status. Consequently, some of the disagreement over intuition borders on pseudo-disagreement for the term is used in a variety of ways. If we are to mount an adequate defense of intuition, we must move some distance toward specifying what it is.

What is Intuition?

Like "naturalism," the notion of intuition found in the literature is incredibly vague or ambiguous.[86] Analytic philosophers have not been very analytic on the subject matter of intuition. Sometimes, it's not clear what a philosopher means by "intuition" or, and perhaps more often, there are several different uses of the term in the literature with no acknowledgement of the equivocation. It is imperative then that when a philosopher refers to intuition or rails against its use, she specifies what she has in mind.

For example, when philosophers speak of intuition in the pejorative, they often mean an a priori rational insight into the abstract realm that would require the introduction of a new cognitive faculty. Mackie's famous arguments against ethical realism employ this conception.[87] In fact, most arguments against *ethical intuitionism* demand that the advocate posit a distinct rational faculty to explain how we could know self-evident basic moral obligations or the instantiation of a non-natural property like goodness.[88] But most uses of intuition in philosophy require no such thing. We must be careful then not to slide among different contexts assuming a univocal use of the term.

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[85] I argue later that the latter cases are more prevalent and that the intuitive behavior of the philosophical novice does not provide much evidence against the reliability of intuition. My view of intuition in general is stronger than W. D. Ross's view of intuition in the realm of ethics: "[T]he moral convictions of thoughtful and well-educated people are the data of ethics" (1995, 101).

[86] See Penelope Maddy (2007) for a candid discussion of the several uses of "naturalism" in the literature.

[87] This occurs in the epistemic component of his argument from queerness against the objectivity of moral values (1977, 38-41). Objective moral values would be metaphysically queer and thus would require a distinct faculty of knowing which must somehow reach out and apprehend the platonic/abstract realm. I think it is a mistake for a rationalist of this sort to accept that a distinct faculty must be involved. Audi, for example, argues that Ross is careful not to posit a special faculty for apprehending self-evident moral truths (1993, 299). The rationalist should argue that some instances of a priori knowledge involve the same relation in knowing our own mental states: acquaintance. Many historical empiricists recognized that we can be acquainted with some of our own mental states. For them, most likely, this was a sui generis relation. Indeed, as paradigmatic

I believe definitions of "intuition" must be in part stipulative since the philosophically important question is whether a specific mental state picked out by the definition can yield justified belief, not whether we have analyzed our concept correctly. Our concept "intuition" is more like the concept "supervenience" than the concept "knowledge." The term "supervenience" gained currency because of the need to pick out a hitherto unknown or only implicitly recognized relation. Our notion of intuition is of the same sort, standing for that which constitutes an important source of evidence for the philosopher qua philosopher. There are too many disparate notions of what this is however to think we all have the same concept in mind. And even if we did, the philosophically relevant question is whether the mental state picked out by an analysis can justify theories, not whether the analysis is correct.[89]

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classical foundationalists, they implicitly believed that all knowledge is rooted in relations of acquaintance. So, taking their cue from the empiricists, rationalists should argue that this relation is not confined to mental states but can extend to abstract entities. For some abstract entities, the truth-maker is immediately before consciousness. This seems to be the case for some relations like entailment or correspondence and for some truths like the law of non-contradiction.

[88] Those who oppose ethical intuitionism are not necessarily allergic to the use of intuitions. Rather, they object to the kind of intuition posited by ethical intuitionists. Most of them still use intuition in testing normative theories by appealing to hypothetical and actual cases or by intuiting certain moral principles (as some utilitarians do).

[89] We should treat intuition as we treat a priori/a posteriori distinction. The crucial question is not whether we have furnished the correct definition of a priori justification but whether the definition divides up the cognitive landscape in the most illuminating way by placing heterogeneous kinds of knowledge in separate categories. BonJour makes this point in his book on a priori knowledge. When addressing the negative conception of the a priori (knowledge independent of sense experience) he suggests that

> nothing ultimately hinges on issues of taxonomy. One could always insist on a version of the negative conception according to which any proposition whose justification did not appeal to ordinary sense experience or perhaps,

Unfortunately, one popular definition of intuition does not furnish the most illuminating taxonomy. Discussions of intuition in the literature often corral two distinct kinds of knowing under the same heading: immediate or direct apprehensions of some fact and intellectual seemings (the view I will be developing shortly). For instance, BonJour implicitly defines intuition using the first kind of knowledge:

> According to rationalism, a priori justification occurs when the *mind directly* or *intuitively* sees or grasps or apprehends (or perhaps *merely seems to itself* to see or grasp or apprehend) a necessary fact about the nature or structure of reality. Such an apprehension may of course be discursively mediated by a series of steps of the same kind, as in a deductive argument. But in the simplest cases, it is allegedly direct and unmediated, incapable of being reduced to or explained by any rational or cognitive process of a more basic sort. (1999, 15-16; emphasis added)

As you can see, BonJour lumps immediate apprehensions of facts into the category of intuitive knowledge. But doing so obscures important differences between immediate apprehensions and intellectual seemings.

For instance, immediate apprehensions involve a direct acquaintance with truth makers, truth bearers, and the correspondence between them. This relation of acquaintance obtains when some fact is immediately before consciousness. There is nothing standing between the self and the fact. Acquaintance then is a relation requiring real relata. As a sui generis relation, it is not an intentional mental state. On other hand, when one has an intellectual seeming that p, a sui generis mental state obtains—a seeming that p is necessarily the case. This is an intentional mental state and, unlike acquaintance, can occur in the

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> more narrowly, to ordinary sense and introspective experience would count as *a priori*. Such a conception would not be mistaken in any clear sense, but it would lump together kinds of justification that are very heterogeneous. More importantly, it would fail to highlight the epistemological issue that is, in my judgment, the most crucial: whether there is a mode of justification that depends only on pure reason or rational thought. (1999*,* 8-9)

When discussing intuition, whether the analysis corresponds to our concept is not as important as 1) discovering which mental states we use as evidence and 2) whether those states can play an evidential role.

absence of a fact to which it could correspond.[90] Thus one can have an intuition that S performed A freely even if hard determinism is true. There is no analogue for acquaintance. Better then to withhold the appellation "intuition" from the relation of acquaintance.

There are several other differences between acquaintance and intellectual seemings. The phenomenology between the two can be quite different suggesting that intuition is not immediate access to a truth maker. Acquaintance, to borrow a line from Descartes, is more clear and distinct than intuition. Moreover, justified belief via acquaintance is more reliable than justified belief on the basis of intuition; there seem to be fewer cases or conditions in which one can form mistaken beliefs on the basis of acquaintance. Further, many philosophers like Bealer believe intuitions resonate from concept possession. They arise from concepts hidden from the introspective gaze—concepts tacitly located in the mind (or outside it). Thus, for intuition, the truth indicative data is brought to the agent. But, for acquaintance, one does not need evidence for thinking one's belief is true (something which is truth indicative) since one has direct access to the truth maker. Finally, as I argue later, the degree of epistemic justification for an intuition increases the further along one is in the equilibrium process. I know of no analogous situation for my being acquainted with my own pain. A conflicting intuition can unpredictably arise and defeat a well entrenched intuition. But I don't know of any other acquaintance I could have which would defeat my justification for believing I am in pain at the moment. Thus there is no similar need to canvass other acquaintances to increase the justification of one's present belief resulting from acquaintance.

Given the differences between immediate apprehensions and intellectual seemings, we will presently confine our use of "intuition" to the latter. Even if one is working with a reductive analysis of intuition, the distinction between acquaintance and intuition will still hold.

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[90] I owe this point to Professor Fumerton.

George Bealer on Intuition

In recent years, George Bealer has mounted the most sophisticated and sustained attempt to defend intuition use in philosophy. His defense of intuition usually occurs in the broader context of his defense of the autonomy and authority of philosophy. If his view of intuition is correct, it could significantly bolster the cause of armchair philosophy.

Bealer's approach to intuition is unique because he resolutely acknowledges the phenomenological evidence.[91] I believe a credible account of intuition must honor the phenomenology associated with philosophical reasoning. Even though intuition is distinct from acquaintance, from the point of view of method, we should use acquaintance (introspection) to find what we do use as evidence or what could plausibly serve as evidence The failure to do so may help to explain, in part, the genesis of reductive analyses. The reductionist, already committed to a certain metaphysical stance, strives to find some mental state with which she is comfortable. The evidence from the first person perspective (the introspective perspective) is often ignored. From the armchair, this looks like ostrich philosophy. For what better evidence can one have than the evidence available from the first person perspective? Ignoring this evidence in favor of the third person perspective fails to appreciate that the third person perspective (say the perspective of the cognitive scientist) is the first person perspective for them.[92] One can't escape relying on what is given to him.

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[91] Pust, in following Bealer's approach as I do, makes the following claim about the methods he uses:

> Second, much of what follows involves a kind of phenomenological analysis (what some would derisively call introspective "armchair psychology"). I am, I admit, trying to determine what "having an intuition that P" involves from a first-person point of view. To that end, I make free appeal to how things seem to me when I have intuitions of various kinds and I expect that the accuracy of an account can be tested by appeal to such data. (2000, 31)

The reductionist approach to intuition is just one case where ignoring the phenomenological evidence yields strange results. Some even go so far as to give a reductionist account of acquaintance. Consider a reliabilist approach to justified belief that one is in pain. On this view, being introspectively aware of one's pain does not involve a relation of acquaintance. Introspective awareness is "just one's belief that one is in pain produced by the pain itself without the causal mediation of other beliefs" (2005, 123). But surely, I don't take my migraine medicine simply to rid myself of the belief that I am in pain. Even if I could somehow get myself to believe I don't have a headache when in fact I do, I would not feel any relief. Imagine if there were a reliable causal connection between our believing that we are in brain state C and our being in brain state C. Suppose further one cannot feel brain state C. There is obviously a significant difference between the state of affairs associated with this belief and the state of affairs associated with pain. In the former case, I don't feel the truth maker for my belief, but in the latter case, I most certainly do. Nor can the reductionist account plausibly explain why I hate headaches and enjoy the pleasure of reading a good book. There is an easy and straightforward answer given by the acquaintance theorist who honors the phenomenological data.[93]

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[92] If one disagrees, then we are off on a vicious regress. If the philosopher should rely on the authority of the cognitive scientist when doing the philosophy of mind, for example, and the cognitive scientist's justification does not hinge on her first person perspective, then she must rely on a third person perspective. This leads to a vicious regress, since, in the next case, the third person must be relied on again. If one can't get justification via the first person perspective, she must rely on the authority of another, who relies on the authority of another, and so forth.

[93] Richard Fumerton gives the following scenario to buttress his acquaintance theory:

> Suppose, for example, that one becomes convinced (perhaps through philosophical argument) that one can be in pain without being aware of that pain. One is further convinced by a neurophysiologist scanning one's brain that one is in severe pain right this moment, even though one isn't aware of it. Though one believes that one is [in] pain, one's situation is quite

A reductionist account of acquaintance shows how reductionist views which trivialize the phenomenology lead to strange results. We should keep this lesson in mind when talking about our present topic. In constructing an account of intuition, we must honor the phenomenology of the philosophical experience. Even if our concept of intuition happens to be reductionist (say, a disposition to believe), we would probably discover through introspection that the evidence we use for philosophical theories does not fit reductionist accounts or that other mental states could possibly play an epistemic role. I propose then we approach the matter of intuition by throwing off the constraints of conceptual analysis. Given the various uses of "intuition," better if our approach is in part stipulative.[94]

If the above point is not appreciated, one is less likely to recognize the tools used in the discussion. Some claim that discussions of intuition rely extensively on intuitions; we are using intuition to discover truths about intuition:

> Part of what is at issue here is what *counts as an intuition*. This is a rather tricky question. For one, in answering it, we presumably rely on intuitions; and as I'll remark below, that may seem troubling all by itself. (Lynch 2006, 227)[95]

> different from that of the person whose belief is based on direct awareness of that pain itself "present" before consciousness. (2005, 123.)

[94] I believe Pust implicitly accepts a similar approach when he writes, "First, my aim is to give an account of the psychological states the content of which are used as evidence for *philosophical* theories" (2000, 30). His concern then is with what we use as evidence for theories, not with mere analysis of our concept "intuition."

[95] According to Lynch (2006), Bealer finds fault with Sosa's identification of intuitions with dispositions to believe because it ignores the intuition that intuitions are conscious mental states. (Lynch also calls the claim "I exist," "intuitive." But intuition is not needed here. One is directly acquainted with his own existence. He doesn't need something truth indicative which stands between the mind and the truth maker. This is another case where the distinction between intuitions and immediate apprehensions is blurred.) But Bealer's argument hinges on the introspective evidence. His approach is deeply phenomenological. Therefore he can't be accused of begging the question. We aren't interested in an intuitive analysis of intuition. The concept of intuition is not our target. Rather we are trying to discover a mental state that could plausibly serve as evidence for philosophical theories—preferably, the one philosophers are already inclined to use.

If we were using intuition to analyze intuition and assess its reliability, that would be question begging and indeed a significant defect (although this shouldn't bother the epistemic externalist who should be comfortable using a form of belief formation to justify its own reliability as long as that method is indeed reliable). But this is not our approach. We will be relying on the phenomenological data as our guide. In other words, our analysis and defense of intuition will rely on the relation of acquaintance. We are trying to pinpoint conscious mental states which play a role in philosophical reasoning and perhaps could justify philosophical conclusions. Intuition then is unnecessary since these conscious states are given to us. Furthermore, as I will later argue, the justification of intuition depends on our ability to be acquainted with a necessary truth: that intuitions necessarily make probable certain beliefs. If things go well, we should be able to avoid appeal to intuition altogether.[96]

So we will not be using intuition to analyze its nature and epistemic status. We then avoid any implicit assumption that intuition is truth indicative and thus avoid begging the question. (It is curious that critics of intuition find the use of question begging evidence in the support of intuition reprehensible, yet have no problem appealing to question begging evidence in the justification of perception. They make free appeal to perceptions to justify the reliability of perception.)

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[96] When it comes to showing that beliefs which result from acquaintance are justified, this is where the justificatory chain ends. Clearly, acquaintance is the best position one can occupy with regard to truth. Epistemically speaking, one can't occupy a better position than being immediately aware of a truth maker, truth bearer, and the correspondence between them. As I argued in chapter 1, to defeat the skeptic, we must take something as given. Knowledge of our own existence seems as good a candidate as any, and that knowledge is achieved via acquaintance with the self. If I am acquainted with the truth maker for my belief, no further justification is needed, since nothing plays the truth indicative role mediating between my belief and the truth maker. The only question is whether acquaintance is a real relation. Unfortunately, perhaps the best one can do here is to say that she is acquainted with her states of acquaintance. This reply is not as strong as one would like. But suppose acquaintance is a real relation. Then one could not cobble together better evidence for thinking the relation exists than being acquainted with its existence. So if acquaintance exists, such an appeal is precisely how things should be.

Intuitions as Intellectual Seemings

In several articles (1996, 1998a), Bealer defends an account of intuitions as intellectual seemings. When you have the intuition that A, it seems to you that A. This seeming is a genuine conscious episode to which you have direct introspective access. He calls these seemings "intellectual seemings" to distinguish them from the seemings of sensory experience. He further describes them as sui generis, irreducible, natural (i.e. non-Cambridge-like) propositional attitudes that occur episodically.[97] As sui generis, these seemings can't be analyzed any further. That there must be unanalyzable entities is generally granted, but that there can be sui generis relations or mental states that are not reducible to items which figure into nomological explanation is not readily accepted. The success of Bealer's theory depends on whether he can pick out a unique mental state through "introspective ostension" (Pust 2000, 36) which cannot be reduced to other kinds of mental states.[98] For those who don't find themselves acquainted with this sui generis mental state, Bealer argues that attempts to identify intuition with other mental states fail.

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[97] "Intuitions are a distinct kind of psychological state with their own 'intellectual' phenomenology" (2000, 31). Bealer is not alone in defining intuitions in this way. John Pollack describes intuition as "a phenomenologically unique experience." Some, like Steup, gesture at the unique phenomenology of intuition by noting what intuition is not: "[W]hen you consider a proposition p and have an experience of being convinced of p's truth, and that experience does not involve perception, introspection, or memory, then you have a *purely intellectual* experience that p is true" (both quotes were obtained from Pust 2000, 32).

[98] Bealer finds himself in the same predicament as one who believes there is a relation of acquaintance. The latter, who believes there is a sui generis relation holding between oneself and some truth makers, can't analyze acquaintance any further than to give several synonymous expressions: acquaintance is an immediate or direct apprehension where there is nothing which stands between the mind and some fact. When queried why he believes there is such a sui generis relation, the acquaintance theorist may offer the following: I am acquainted with the fact that I am acquainted with certain facts. If an epistemological naturalist denies there is such a relation on the grounds that introspectively he can't find it, the acquaintance theorist will urge him to "look" again. Although there is indirect evidence for thinking acquaintance is a real relation, the best evidence one has is how things look from the inside.

One can distinguish intellectual seemings from sensorial seemings by appeal to their phenomenology alone. But Bealer further distinguishes the two by noting that intellectual seemings have necessity in their content whereas other seemings do not. However, he is not quite sure how best to analyze intuition using the notion of necessity (Bealer 1998a, 207).[99] And he is right to express some doubts.

We could say that S has the intuition that P if and only if it intellectually seems to S that necessarily P. Albert Casullo, in his *A Priori Justification* (2003), shows that it may be wiser to omit the modal content from an analysis of intuition (although his target is a priori justification in general). He considers several cases that recommend a modal free analysis: some people apparently lack the concept of necessity; some are modal skeptics while others are agnostics; and some suffer from modal ignorance—they may have the concept, but it plays no role in their cognitive lives.[100] In these cases, one can still know a priori mathematical and logical truths despite one's modal poverty. If this is the prudent route for a priori justification in general, then it may be advisable to eliminate necessity from our description of intuitions as intellectual seemings. Since philosophers use intuitions as evidence for their theories, we need a broad enough description that captures most philosophical reasoning and does not epistemically undermine the philosophical output of modal skeptics and agnostics.

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[99] Robert Audi (1993, 3) claims that Ross is not quite clear whether we apprehend the truth of a moral proposition or its self-evidence. He is not forced however to give up his intuitionism if he thinks we only apprehend the moral truths and not their self-evidence. Genuine intuitions do not require self-evidence in their content.

[100] Casullo errs when he assumes that if a priori justification involves an apprehension or intuitive seeing that p is necessarily true, then necessarily, one believes that p is necessarily true (2003, 15). This strengthens his argument since obviously some lack modal beliefs. But there are many ways in which this alleged connection between apprehension and belief can be severed. One may intuitively "see" a proposition of mathematics but not believe it because the mathematics community denies its truth. If we deny that intuitions, broadly construed to include intellectual seemings and apprehensions, entail belief, then some of his cases can be explained away. One could argue that necessity is a part of the content of one's intellectual seeming but that most fail to attend to that part either because of conceptual deficiency or ignorance. Nevertheless, the case of modal skepticism still remains a difficulty. One could argue that the modal skeptic fails to apprehend that necessity is constituent of her seemings but this is a blunt philosophical tool. It is better that we construe intellectual seemings broadly enough so that there is the possibility that necessity is not a constituent for some thus allowing that they too have intuitions.

Pust recognizes that the philosophically untutored can have intuitions without modal content. With this in mind, he offers an alternative to describing intuitions as intellectual seemings of necessity:

> S has a rational intuition that p IF AND ONLY IF (a) S has a purely intellectual experience, when considering the question of whether P, that P; and (b) at t, if S were to consider whether p is necessarily true, then S would have a purely intellectual experience that necessarily p. (Pust 2000, 39)

This analysis unfortunately does not overcome the cases of modal skepticism and agnosticism. One who suspends judgment over the existence of necessary truths can still construct justified philosophical theories from the armchair. So, we will begin with the following analysis of intuition: (A1) S has the intuition that p if and only if S has the intellectual seeming that p.[101]

What then are these intellectual seemings? The majority of philosophers experience them. When they consider Gettier cases, it seems to them that the subject fails to know despite having a justified true belief.[102] According to Bealer,

> '[S]eems' is understood, not in its use as a cautionary or "hedging" term, but in its use as a term for a genuine kind of conscious episode. For example, when you first consider one of de Morgan's laws, often it neither seems true nor seems false; after a moment's reflection, however, something happens: it now just seems true. (1998, 207)

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[101] This analysis does not bar us from arguing further that some and only necessary truths can be the objects of intellectual seemings. Typically, intuitions result from allowing one's mind to range over possible worlds to find what is true in all of them (even if the notion of a possible world functions only as a heuristic). In other words, typical intuition use ranges over necessary truths. When we address later why intellectual seemings occur and why they have evidential import, we will find stronger reasons for thinking intellectual seemings only take as their objects necessary truths.

[102] Even someone like Alvin Plantinga is willing to admit an epistemic role for unanalyzable mental states that can only be picked out via their unique phenomenology. Here is his fourth condition for a priori justified beliefs: "and (4) to form this belief with that peculiar sort of phenomenology with which we are well acquainted, but which I can't describe in any way other than as the phenomenology that goes with seeing that such a proposition is true" (1993, 106).

If a philosopher can't find intellectual seemings through introspective ostension, Bealer next shows that intuition cannot be identified with any other mental state. There is however a lingering problem we must address before looking at reductionist accounts. Bealer admits that there are other types of seeming that might properly be called intuition though they are not philosophical. "We have a physical intuition that, when a house is undermined, it will fall" (1998a, 207). This case raises a special problem for it differs from sensorial seemings and thus can't easily be separated from intellectual seemings by appeal to phenomenology. Bealer tries to separate them by using necessity: "This does not count as a rational intuition for it does not present itself as necessary: it does not seem that a house undermined *must* fall; plainly, it is *possible* for a house undermined to remain in its original position or, indeed, to rise up" (1998a, 207). We have seen that this route is unpromising for it fails to count the evidence modal skeptics use to support theories as intuitive evidence. Since philosophers commonly use intuitions as evidence for their theories, we would like an analysis broad enough to capture the epistemic behavior of most philosophers. The solution is to look elsewhere for the differences. Since both are seemings, we must look on the outside to find their different properties.

Unlike philosophical intuition, physical intuition is rooted in past observations which most likely were not accessible from the armchair. The intuition in Gettier cases is not rooted in past observations of knowledge. For many philosophers, Gettier intuitions have logical necessity in the content whereas for scientists, the physical intuition has nomological necessity. Also, the question that evokes the physical intuition does not possess the earmarks of a philosophical question: ubiquity of the object, the ability to answer the question regardless of one's place in time and space, and an answer yielding a logical or metaphysically necessary truth or falsehood. In short, in the case of philosophical intuition, the philosopher confined to the armchair already has all the empirical evidence she needs. This is not so for the scientist since she investigates contingent facts (or a posteriori necessities). Finally, on many accounts, philosophical intuitions are solely rooted in concept possession. This is not so for physical intuition.

We are left then with the following initial analysis of intuition: (A2) S has the philosophical intuition that p if and only if (1) S has the intellectual seeming that p and (2) the p is either logically or metaphysically true or false. This is because p pertains to a subject matter involving ubiquitous objects which can be analyzed regardless of one's place in time or space. The seeming that p emanates from a concept which has necessary and sufficient conditions for its application or an object which has non-a posteriori essential properties.

What Intuitions are Not

There are important differences that separate intuitions from other more familiar mental states. Intuitions, for example, can't be identified with belief states. One can have a belief without a corresponding intuition and one can have an intuition without a corresponding belief.

> There are many mathematical theorems that I believe (because I have seen the proofs) but that do not *seem* to me to be true and that do not *seem* to me to be false…Conversely, I have an intuition—it still *seems* to me—that the naïve comprehension axiom of set theory is true; this is despite the fact that I do not believe that it is true (because I know of the set-theoretical paradoxes). There is a rather similar phenomenon in sense perception. In the Muller-Lyer illusion, it still *seems* to me that one of the two arrows is longer than the other; this is so despite the fact that I do not believe that one of the two arrows is longer. (Bealer 1998a, 209)[103]

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[103] Bealer further argues that beliefs are more plastic than intuitions: "For nearly any proposition about which you have beliefs, authority, cajoling, intimidation, and so forth can, fairly readily, insinuate at least some doubt and thereby diminish to some extent, perhaps only briefly, the strength of your belief. But seldom, if ever, do these things so readily diminish the strength of your intuitions" (1998a, 208). I think he overstates the case a bit for I suspect most recognize that in the beginning stages of their philosophical study, they found their intuitions to be quite malleable, especially when speaking with an expert philosopher. I think Bealer should make the more modest claim that for some, beliefs are more plastic than intuitions, and for others, intuitions are more plastic than beliefs. This is not so for the philosopher who uses intuition to guide belief. Yet, the existence of some cases of plasticity shows that belief is not identical to intuition.

In addition, development as a philosopher should create a stronger disposition to suspend judgment, at least until one has traveled some distance toward achieving reflective equilibrium. For diffident philosophers like myself, we may have the intuition that p even though we are hesitant to form a belief until we have been exposed to a variety of counterexamples and the intuition has held up to philosophical scrutiny. This is not a case where one has a weak belief which becomes stronger after surviving a dialectical assault. One can genuinely suspend judgment despite it seeming to one that p is true. Brian Weatherson supports this idea with a different kind of case:

> If one's intuitions are running rampant, one may even have an intuition about something that one believes to be strictly indeterminate. For example, some people may have the intuition that the continuum hypothesis is true, even though they believe on reflection that it is indeterminate whether it is true. (2003, 3)[104]

These examples make quite clear how the phenomenology of intuition differs from belief. Beliefs need not be accompanied by an intellectual seeming, and in philosophy, intellectual seeming often compels belief. The philosopher rarely adopts a philosophical belief in the absence of an intuition (unless her belief is based on the authority of another).

Bealer is also keen to distinguish intuitions from judgments, guesses, and hunches. Just like beliefs, one can experience an intellectual seeming while suspending judgment. And we make judgments about many things in the absence of seemings as well. One might on the other hand argue that hunches are the lower limit of intuitions with the upper limit involving strong belief. But appeal to phenomenology should once again make clear that intuitions can't be identified with hunches:

> [S]uppose that during an examination in beginning logic, a student is asked whether the following is a logical truth: if P or Q, then it is not the case that both not P and not Q. The student might have a hunch

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[104] Weatherson also points to examples from mathematics: "It does not seem to be the case, in the relevant sense, that 643 × 721 = 463603. Unless one is rather good at mental arithmetic, there is nothing that 643 × 721 seems to be; it is out of the reach of intuition" (2003, 3).

> that it is. But something else could happen: it could actually *seem* to the student that it is. (1998a, 210)

More Sophisticated Reductionist Accounts

Clearly, intellectual seemings can't be identified with beliefs, guesses, hunches, or judgments. But some remain optimistic that intuition can be identified with other more familiar mental states. One popular alternative is to identify intuition with the disposition to believe:

> Seemings then, whether sensory or intellectual, might be viewed as inclinations to believe on the basis of direct experience (sensory) or understanding (intellectual) and regardless of any collateral reasoning, memory, or introspection—where the objects of *intellectual* seeming also present themselves as necessary. (Sosa 1996, 54)[105]

Ernest Sosa believes this view can accommodate Bealer's reasons for positing a sui generis mental state without the ontological baggage. For example, he argues that in the case of the naïve comprehension axiom, one is still disposed to believe it despite believing that it is false. When confronted with Gettier cases, we are disposed to believe that the subject fails to know despite having a justified true belief. When seeing the Muller-Lyer illusion, one is inclined to believe that one line is longer than the other (1996, 155).

Here, in part, is Sosa's defense of his reductionist account:

> [S]eemings (intellectual or sensory) might be definable in terms of what one does or *would* believe in certain circumstances. Thus in the Muller-Lyer illusion, in the absence of measuring and in the absence of memory about the already established misleadingness of the situation, *if* one relied just on perception, one *would* believe that one line was longer than the other. (1996, 154)

Sosa passes over what we obviously use for evidence in our judgment that lines in the Muller-Lyer illusion differ in length: the visual seeming that the lines differ. The way the lines appear is the root of one's belief and constitutes the evidence for thinking the lines differ. There may be a disposition to believe, but that disposition is rooted in the visual seeming. If it weren't, then one would mysteriously find oneself believing that the lines differ with no visual seeming whatsoever. This is peculiar both from the phenomenological and the epistemic perspective. For why would one even be tempted to think that the sudden appearance of a perceptual belief arising from a disposition has anything to do with truth? Without a visual seeming grounding the belief, the best conclusion is that one's doxastic dispositions or states are malfunctioning. Indeed, on his account, perception must be reduced as well, otherwise he must admit we clearly use perception—the way things look—as evidence for perceptual beliefs.

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[105] According to Timothy Williamson, "[S]o-called intuitions are simply judgments (or dispositions to judgment)" (2007, 3).

To give a unified account of seeming, Sosa must ignore the most obvious candidate of evidence for perceptual beliefs. In the past, this has been most readily identified as visual seeming. In the case of sensory seemings, there is a way things appear. There is an explicit phenomenology which can be described in terms of shapes and colors. This is clearly more naturally identified as the seeming. Thus, in order to give a unified account of seeming, he must ignore what we actually use as evidence for perceptual beliefs. Consequently, his account of intuition is either incorrect or worthless. This is why Bealer only points to the Muller-Lyer illusion as a case *analogous* to intellectual seemings.

This account of intuition can be quite vexing to the philosopher who privileges the phenomenological data and the first person perspective.[106] When one introspects, one does find a seeming which cannot be comfortably identified with a disposition. The phenomenology between the two is quite distinct. Intellectual seemings, in part, explain why we accept the philosophical beliefs we do. For it seems to one that a subject fails to know in a Gettier case and then one forms the corresponding belief.

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[106] I don't wish to imply that philosophers like Sosa are clearly recognizing this state of seeming but are implacable and dig in their heels. When Sosa introspects, he claims he can't find the intellectual seeming. I don't think he is lying. But I do think his philosophical views are influencing his introspective content (or perhaps mine are). What about this case then? Suppose you believe that P because of brain stimulation. You simply find yourself believing P; you're not sure why you believe it. This case does seem phenomenologically distinct from one where you believe that P because you find it to be true. In other words, you believe that P because it seems to you that P. In this latter case, when you are asked why you believe P, it is natural to reply "It seems true to me." You are not trying to hedge but are giving a true account of why you believe it.

What if, upon reading critics of intuition like Stephen Stich, one begins to seriously doubt the epistemic efficacy of intuitions and consequently ceases to use intuition as a source of evidence? Then clearly one could loose certain dispositions to believe but nevertheless, when considering the paradigmatic intuitive cases, one would still experience the seemings. On the other hand, I may be disposed to believe many philosophical claims because I have a spontaneous inclination to believe all things sounding philosophical. But surely there is a difference on the inside when I have this spontaneous inclination to believe and when it seems to me that the premises of a modus ponens argument entail their conclusion.[107]

There are further characteristics of Bealer's alleged intellectual seeming Sosa must accommodate for a successful reduction but fails to. The sort of mental state Bealer has in mind is open to introspective access: we are directly acquainted with each and every intellectual seeming. There can't be an intellectual seeming in the absence of the acquaintance relation. Sosa tries to accommodate this point by arguing that we can be introspectively aware of our dispositions: "Consider for comparison a case where you think: 'if he says that one more time I'll be angry,' or even: 'if he had said that one more time I would have been angry'" (1996, 154). This isolated case does not show that dispositions to believe are always accessible via introspection. Clearly, I can have dispositions of which I am not aware. But intellectual seemings force themselves on the mind. They take up conscious space and one can't help but be acquainted with their presence. Bealer exposes a different facet of this problem:

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[107] When first exposed to the demon world example, I had no intuition whether the agent in the demon world has justified beliefs. However, I did acquire the disposition to believe that she does because many philosophers found the example to be troubling for the externalist. Later on, as I began to learn more in epistemology, the platitudes of knowledge, and what is at stake in the internalist/externalist controversy, I began to have the intuition (it seemed true to me) that the agent in the demon world still has justified beliefs despite the unreliability of her cognitive equipment. I had the disposition to believe absent an intellectual seeming, and later I experienced a new mental state: it seemed true to me that the agent had justified beliefs. My initial disposition to believe was not accompanied by this mental state.

> As I am writing this, I have spontaneous inclinations to believe countless things about, say, numbers. But at this very moment I am having *no* intuition about numbers. I am trying to write, and this is about all I can do at once; my mind is full. If I am to have an intuition about numbers, then above and beyond a mere inclination, something else must happen—a sui generis cognitive episode must occur. Inclinations to believe are simply not episodic in this way. (1998a, 209)

If intuition is a disposition, then one has intuitions incessantly. But the sorts of mental states philosophers use as evidence occur episodically. To avoid this problem, one could build in to the analysis the actualization of the disposition:

> At t, S intuits that p IF AND ONLY IF (a) if at t S were merely to understand fully enough the proposition that p (absent relevant perception, memory, introspection, and reasoning), then S would believe that p; and (b) at t, S does merely understand the proposition that p (absent relevant perception, memory, introspection and reasoning). (Pust 2000, 40)

This amendment, unfortunately, introduces problems the dispositional analysis was originally designed to handle. On this view, one can't suspend judgment in the face of intuitive evidence. But clearly sophisticated philosophers learn to withhold belief in the presence of certain intuitions. The naïve comprehension axiom or any other philosophical paradox is an excellent example of how one can find certain ideas intuitive but ultimately suspend judgment because of their paradoxical results.[108]

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[108] The later Sosa abandons his dispositional account for something else with a little more phenomenological bite. On his new view, "[T]o intuit that p is to be *consciously attracted to assenting to p* when (1) you understand p well enough; (2) p is modally strong or self-presenting; (3) you attraction to judge that p does not derive from any of the usual sources of evidence…and (4) your attraction to judging that p is virtuously based (that is, based on a reliability ability to discriminate truths from falsehoods" (Lynch 2006, 228). A few remarks will suffice. First, note the externalist condition in (4). As I will argue later in more depth, externalist accounts of intuition can't begin to satisfy the philosophical desires which spark investigation into intuition in the first place. Lynch assumes an internalist account would require that one have justified beliefs about her intuitions for intuitions to have epistemic weight. This is not necessary for an internalist account. Secondly, condition (4) turns intuition into an epistemic property or state like justification or knowledge. Reliability is built in to

Another possible reductionist account of intuitions identifies them with the raising to consciousness of non-conscious background beliefs.[109] Before looking at Bealer's objections, I wish to address several of my own.

This account can't explain how philosophy instructors can get their students to rise above cultural influence and help them acquire completely new beliefs in a subject matter previously unknown to them. On this view, the students already have the philosophical beliefs lodged somewhere in their minds. But given how prone many of them are to adopt their culture's beliefs, beliefs that oftentimes are philosophically mistaken, there is no explanation of how they already have latent in the mind the beliefs good philosophical study brings about. Moreover, the analysis fits uncomfortably with the fact that philosophical instruction often introduces people to topics, ideas, and ways of thinking foreign to them. It is incredibly unlikely that people have dispositional beliefs regarding supervenience, the nature of numbers, metaphysically necessary truths, and others.[110] If one claims they do,

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having an intuition. This moves the skeptical problem from whether intuitions are reliable to whether they exist. This is a bit odd to say the least—somewhat like building into the notion of belief "virtuously grounded." Lynch notes that Sosa's skepticism that there is a state of seeming could apply equally well to his introduction of conscious attraction. (It's strange that Sosa found only a disposition before and now finds a conscious mental state. It is also strange that Lynch, in criticizing Sosa's analysis for making too narrow the possible objects of intuition, constantly appeals to what seems true to him in arguing that an intuition is present. For someone who denies the intellectual seeming account, this is misleading.)

[109] Bealer identifies this view with the philosophy of Hilary Kornblith but makes no particular reference to any of his writings. For my part, I don't find the view explicitly endorsed in Kornblith's book *Knowledge and Its Place in Nature* (2002) or his article "The Role of Intuition in Philosophical Inquiry" (1998). I find him to be somewhat cagey in his discussion of intuition. Yet the following excerpt may suggest the above account of intuition:

> First, if I am asked a question about rocks, for example, one way to answer the question is to ask myself what I believe the answer is. Although I am asked a question about rocks, I answer it by enquiring into what I believe…By looking inward, I answer a question about an external phenomenon. This, to my mind, is what we do when we consult our intuitions. (2002, 14-15)

[110] Bealer (1998a, 210) raises the following example: when students first enter a philosophy class, they do not believe that there are two readings of "Necessarily, the number of planets is greater

then her view of dispositional belief is too wide to capture an important distinction: having a dispositional belief and being disposed to believe. I am disposed to believe many things, but I don't believe them, not even in the dispositional sense, because I have not entertained the relevant proposition. If this wider account of dispositional belief which includes the disposition to believe were correct, then the number of new beliefs I acquire would be drastically reduced which smacks against what looks obvious: throughout our lives, we are incessantly adding new beliefs to our doxastic sets and not just a few new dispositions to believe.[111]

Paul K. Moser in *Knowledge and Evidence* also believes that dispositions to believe must be separated from dispositional beliefs. He writes that "[a] state of believing is dispositional

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than seven." After a while, the brighter students will come to see that there are two readings and thus will form beliefs on the matter. The beliefs don't appear out of nowhere but are grounded in an intuition that it seems that there are two readings of the statement, one of which is false while the other is true.

[111] In the context of the argument for foundationalism, Peter Klein has argued the regress of justified beliefs is not vicious because we have an infinite number of beliefs to serve as links in the justificatory chain:

> We can and do have an infinite number of justified dispositional beliefs, enough and of the right sort to allow us to have justified belief even if all justification is inferential. [Peter Klein] emphasizes that one should not insist that a chain of reasoning actually be completed for a belief to be justified. It is enough that one *is able to* justify each belief in an infinitely complex hierarchy of justification by reference to some other (dispositional) belief in the structure (but not all at once so to speak). (Fumerton 2001, 7)

I worry that this view contradicts the fact that the mind is finite. Although, if we were to live for eternity, we might continue to form beliefs so that they approach infinity (we wouldn't achieve an actual infinity because we can always add one more to the set), as finite beings, we can't truly harbor in the mind an infinite number of beliefs. We wouldn't even have an infinite number of dispositions to form an infinite number of beliefs because we wouldn't need a disposition for each and every new formed belief. Certain general dispositions would do. Thus, appeals to mathematics to explain how we have an infinite number of dispositional beliefs often fail to recognize that there is usually only one disposition giving rise to the continued addition of mathematical beliefs. When asked, we would say that $1 + 1 > 1$, that $2 + 1 > 1$, that $3 + 1 > 4$, *ad infinitum*. But each of these beliefs is spawned from a disposition to believe a certain mathematical formula. If one identifies a dispositional belief with a disposition to believe, then there is really only one disposition at work there, not an infinite number. In addition, the propositions believed would get so complicated that they would extend beyond the understanding and ken of a finite creature.

in the sense that if one is in a belief state with respect to a proposition, P, then one will assent to P in any circumstance where one sincerely and understandingly answers the question whether it is the case that P" (1989, 16). He goes on:

> *Coming to believe,* however, is not dispositional, since it is just a matter of belief *formation.* One comes to believe a proposition, P, if and only if a state of believing is formed with respect to P for one. And a state of believing is formed with respect to P for one only if one assents to P…Specifically, one's assenting to P marks the beginning of a belief state when such a state is formed. (1989, 16)

Moser is arguing that a belief state that P does not appear until one assents to P (or occurently believes that P). The believing state, which for the most part won't be occurent, is rooted in an activity of the mind: the entertaining, understanding, and assenting to a proposition. Until that occurs, one can't be said to believe that P. For how can one believe that P if one has never considered P? How can one stand in the believing state toward a proposition of which one has never been aware?

Construing dispositional beliefs too widely conflicts with the datum that we can discover quite easily and with high reliability what we believe. If a mere disposition to belief were included in dispositional beliefs, then the process would be far more difficult, for we would not know all the relevant situations that, once in, would engender a belief we thought we didn't have. The question "Do you believe P?" would at times occasion a blank stare not because one doesn't know what she thinks about P but rather because one doesn't know how her doxastic dispositions will behave in certain circumstances or when exposed to certain evidence. She would be inclined to say "I do believe that P because I have assented to P but there might be situations of which I am not aware where I have the disposition to assent to not P. Thus even though I know I believe P, it is not clear to me whether I believe not P as well." Clearly, this seems mistaken. She knows that she believes that P and that she does not believe that not P.

The distinction between dispositional beliefs and dispositions to believe explains quite nicely the datum that there are many things one has yet to believe even though when put in the right circumstances, one would assent to them thus entering the believing state, a state which need not be occurent to persist through time.

In addition, this reductionism makes unclear why intuitions have evidential import. Why would my background beliefs be connected to truth in any way? On standard accounts of intuition, intellectual seemings are the progeny of concept possession and concepts determine the nature of philosophical objects. There is then a clear route from intuition to truth. But if intuitions are merely background beliefs which are not grounded in anything truth indicative (like intellectual seemings), how do they constitute a legitimate form of evidence. Furthermore, it is unclear how background beliefs could function as evidence for belief. Introspectively speaking, one simply finds oneself believing that P. What then is supposed to indicate that P is true? Perhaps one could argue that the belief is the result of a background belief (although there appear to be some cases where one could not know this) and the existence of the background belief is evidence for the truth of the belief. But this again raises the problem of why the presence of a background belief should constitute evidence for philosophical theories. Surely there are many background beliefs I have that are evidence for nothing except as memorials to my inability to satisfy the demands of justification and exemplify the intellectual virtues. In the absence of such an account, it is difficult to treat this reduction as a viable analysis of intuition.

Bealer's arguments against the reduction of intuition to the raising of non-conscious background beliefs rehash problems that afflicted the reduction of intuition to belief. When asked whether the naïve comprehension axiom and the axioms and rules of classical logic hold, most philosophers who have considered the matter would say they don't because they previously formed the belief they don't. But this raising to consciousness of a background belief can't be an intuition, for many philosophers clearly have the intuition that they do hold. It still seems to them that they do despite seeing the paradoxes. This seeming can't be identified with the raising to consciousness of another background belief because they don't have the belief. This reductionist account would have the uncharitable implication that philosophers actually do hold explicitly contradictory beliefs. But that is not so in the case of the naïve comprehension axiom.

Let's attend to one more point before leaving our analysis of intuition. Bealer denies that intuitions are the direct apprehension of necessary truths. Elsewhere he speaks of this view as a Platonist or direct perception theory:

> According to the "direct perception" theory, intuitions are a kind of "direct perception" of abstract truths: when normal, intelligent people consider the question of whether a concept applies to an elementary hypothetical case, in most instances they just "see directly" that it applies. (1987, 343)[112]

Bealer, on the other hand, believes that intuitions count as evidence because they are necessarily reliable, and they are necessarily reliable because of the nature of concept possession (more on this later). Intuitions then are the result of some relation between the mind and concepts and consequently, are not a case where the mind reaches out and grasps a fact about the world. With intuition, the data is brought to the armchair bound philosopher. Intuition is the residue of concept possession.

Even though Bealer's account is rooted in concept possession, he is quick to point out that intuition is not confined to analytic truths:

> [C]ountless intuitions cannot be counted as analytic (on the traditional construals). For example, the intuition that phenomenal colors are incompatible, that moral and aesthetic facts supervene on

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[112] Note Bealer's free use of quotes around those terms which express our cognitive relation to the abstract truths. The idea is that directly seeing abstract truths is merely a way of trying to make a mysterious relation clear by modeling it on the perception of physical objects. This to my mind is useless. There is no metaphorical "seeing" involved here. If it indeed does hold, the relation here between the mind and these abstract truth makers is no different than the relation that holds between the mind and certain facts about the mind. In other words, if there is a direct apprehension of abstract necessary truths, the best candidate is the relation of acquaintance. This relation, according to the acquaintance theorist, is the foundation of all knowledge and thus the most fundamental epistemic component. It is not inferior to sight. Perceptual knowledge is ultimately grounded in the relation. Furthermore, past empiricists have recognized its existence thus showing that it is not some mysterious a priori faculty introduced by the rationalists to explain our knowledge of necessary truths. As I noted earlier, the important question is not whether we possess some mysterious faculty that allows us to apprehend abstract truths but rather whether the relation of acquaintance can take as a relatum abstract truths.

> the (totality of) physical and psychological facts, that a given determinate (e.g., a particular phenomenal shade) falls under its determinables (e.g., being a phenomenal shade), that the part/whole relation is transitive over the field of regions, or that congruence is a symmetric relation.
>
> Possibility intuitions are another extremely important class of intuitions which are not analytic…(E.g., the intuition that the Gettier examples are possible, etc.). (1998a, 211-212)

What worries me is that his view of the objects of intuition is too broad. He seems to include all necessary truths other than the a posteriori variety.[113] If certain necessary truths do not depend on our conceptual structures or on relations between concepts, then I don't see any reason to believe we intuit their truth rather than being acquainted with the truth makers themselves (whatever those may be). Both are equally mysterious to the naturalist. Yet, the acquaintance theorist is bound to believe we can be acquainted with certain logical relations like the entailment relation or the relation of correspondence holding between certain truth makers and truth bearers. Perhaps one can get these relations into the mind if she argues that truth bearers are mental states and the relation of entailment we apprehend also connects mental states. Nevertheless, we do seem to be acquainted with certain logical truths such as the law of non-contradiction or that modus ponens arguments are completely truth preserving.

But why think in some cases what we have is acquaintance and not intuition? Why shouldn't one think the objects of acquaintance are only contingent facts like one's being in pain? First, as I shall argue at some length later, the epistemic credentials of intuitions increase the longer they have survived the equilibrium process or the further along in that process they occur. But my justification for believing the law of non-contradiction or that 2 +2 = 4 does not increase (or does not increase in the same way). Intuitions are ultimately inferentially justified: the inference from the intuition that P to the belief that P is justified only if one is justified in believing that intuitions are necessarily reliable indicators of truth and that they are more reliable as one moves closer to equilibrium. Intuition is a middle state standing between the mind and a truth maker. This is why intuition plays a truth indicative role. My belief in the law of non-contradiction, that 2 + 2 = 4, or that an entailment relation holds between a small group of statements is non-inferentially justified.[114] I don't require anything to indicate the truth of these beliefs. They can properly serve in the foundations of my epistemic structure whereas philosophical beliefs that grow out of intuition cannot. For these reasons, I think we must be careful not to stretch the domain of intuition too far.

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[113] In Chapter 3, we will examine in some detail Bealer's arguments for thinking that scientific essentialism cannot be applied to philosophical objects thus keeping philosophy an autonomous, scientifically-independent domain of inquiry.

We now have the beginning stages of a promising account of intuition. When you have the intuition that A, it seems to you that A. This seeming is a genuine conscious episode to which you have direct introspective access. It is a sui generis, irreducible, natural (i.e. non-Cambridge-like) propositional attitude that occurs episodically. These seemings can be distinguished from other types of seeming because their content concerns ubiquitous objects which can be analyzed regardless of one's place in time or space and the content of these seemings has the modal property of metaphysical or logical truth or falsehood.

The next step is to argue that these intellectual seemings constitute philosophical evidence. But before we get there, I wish to discuss several additional characteristics of intuition and the intuitive process. They will play a supporting role when we examine the evidential status of intuitions later in the chapter.

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[114] Some might argue that the way we learn that 2 + 2 = 4 by taking two groups of objects, putting them together, and then counting the total, is an instance of inferentially justified belief. Usually we don't immediately apprehend this mathematical truth. There are, I believe, some convincing popular arguments for thinking that the process does not constitute one's justification for believing 2 + 2 = 4. The process is only a helpful heuristic. First of all, if we confirmed that 2 + 2 = 4 empirically by adding two sets of objects together, there would need to be the possibility of disconfirmation. But there is no empirical evidence one could have that would disconfirm it. Furthermore, if the process were an empirical confirmation leading ultimately to an inferentially justified belief, then the more confirmations one had of the truth of the proposition, the greater degree of justification one's belief would have. But one's justification for believing that 2 + 2 = 4 does not increase the more times one has empirically verified that it holds. Thus, the process by which many of us learn this mathematical truth plays no constitutive role in the justification of one's belief. It is only a heuristic to get one to the point where he immediately apprehends its truth.

Further Characteristics of Intuition

In his work on intuition, Bealer suggests that the intuitive process tends to involve two inputs, one of which is often overlooked. In Gettier cases, one has the intuition that the subject fails to know despite having a justified true belief, but many philosophers have the further intuition (if not always attended to) that the case used is logically or metaphysically possible.[115] This intuition clearly plays a role in philosophical analysis for if a case proposed were logically or metaphysically impossible, then the philosopher would claim that a good analysis need not capture the scenario. Consequently, those who disagree with Bealer's account of intuition because it is allegedly mysterious and wish to naturalize intuition have another, and perhaps, more difficult problem to overcome: they must explain our knowledge of modalities since they play an important role in the philosophical process.[116] This generally has been a tall order for naturalists, especially since modalities can't be treated as scientific natural kinds and evolutionary accounts of our modal beliefs fail to show how reliable modal beliefs are important to survival and reproductive success. Accordingly, it is unlikely that one can bypass intuition use in a discussion of modalities.

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[115] Usually, the difficulty students have acquiring this intuition poses one of the main stumbling blocks to their philosophical progress. After they begin to recognize that highly unusual, artificial situations are logically possible, the next hurdle is to help them understand their relevance to the analysis and to deal with the scenario given rather than mounting a revision.

[116] An exception to this would be the radical naturalism of Hilary Kornblith which seeks to turn philosophy into a species of science. On his view, there is no reason to take in metaphysically possible but nomologically impossible cases. Philosophical objects are natural kinds and we deal with natural kinds by trying to explain all actual cases, not hypothetical logically possible cases.

> [M]any imaginable cases are not genuine possibilities and need not be accounted for by our theories. We might be able to imagine a rock with a certain combination of color, hardness, malleability, and so on, and such a rock, were it to exist, might be difficult or impossible to fit in to our current taxonomy. But this raises no problem at all for our taxonomic principles if the imagined combination of properties is nomologically impossible. (Kornblith 1998, 137.)

There isn't much alternative to doing philosophical analysis that yields logically or metaphysically necessary truths without using intuition.

Intuitively known philosophic claims can be known in other ways and the same claim can occupy different levels of one's doxastic structure. It is logically possible to know philosophical truths via the testimony and authority of another. However, the conspicuous disagreement amongst philosophers makes knowledge on the basis of authority difficult to come by. One would need to succeed in the very difficult task of explaining why the authority relied on is probably correct while other authorities are mistaken. Moreover, the justification one has for believing the testimony of another to be reliable would at some point require an appeal to intuition. I don't see how one could, given the present disagreement, acquire a justified belief that a philosopher is reliable in a specific domain using empirical evidence alone. And even if one could, one's justification would ultimately piggyback on the justification the philosopher has, which will be constituted in part by intuitions (assuming for the moment that the radical naturalism of Hilary Kornblith is mistaken).

Some philosophical beliefs may be overdetermined in their justification. One may have justification for thinking P is true because of a scenario which prompted the intuition that P, and one may have further justification because another intuition that P results from a reasoning process prompting the intuition as a conclusion.[117] Similarly, when using reflective equilibrium, an intuited claim can also be the result of a sort of reflective process by which one intuits other claims which then aid in the generation of another intuition. The principle of epistemic closure is like this. The principle itself is self-evident; but one may further intuit its truth by attending to the odd implications that follow from its denial. Other considerations may be brought to bear that further prompt the intuition that the principle holds. So the belief that epistemic closure holds may justifiably appear on a lower level of one's doxastic structure (though not in the foundation, as later I will argue that all intuitive beliefs are inferentially justified) and appear higher up in a different epistemic chain.[118]

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[117] There is nothing in our specification of intuition as an intellectual seeming which would imply that intuitions can't arise in this way.

It goes without saying that intuitions are fallible and defeasible. The number of conflicting intuitions among philosophers reveals as much. Strong naturalists tend to find comfort in this fact lending further support to their high view of sensory experience. But the claim that the conflicting intuitions of philosophers shows they are fallible is a necessary truth and one known either via intuition or, more likely, acquaintance.[119] Therefore, a strong naturalist can't use disagreement as evidence for his naturalism without at the same time admitting a limited use for cognitive states he seeks to deny. Their further appeal to the agreement in our sensory outputs as evidence of their reliability again makes use of a disguised necessary truth: if our sensory impressions agree for the most part, then they are reliable. This necessary truth is either known via intuition or acquaintance.

Some might argue that the above conditional is contingent and known empirically. I suppose one could try to accomplish this feat by considering other domains where most people are in agreement and then verifying that they are correct. Throughout history however, agreement has been a poor guide to truth, since there has been at different times agreement over inconsistent claims. Perhaps present day conditions are better so that agreement has more epistemic worth; the conditions in which agreement is achieved have changed making agreement more reliable. But the only way to verify that, say, perceptual agreement indicates reliability is to verify the reliability of perception in another way. And as Fumerton has convincingly shown (1995), and as we will discuss in much depth later, one can't do this without relying on acquaintance at some point. What the naturalist/externalist will do instead is rely on perception to justify the reliability of perception, rely on memory to justify the use of memory, etc. This kind of reasoning certainly does not satisfy the philosophical mindset which compels one to consider such problems in the first place or view intuition with a critical eye. Furthermore, there is nothing to bar the naturalist/externalist from making the following question begging argument: most philosophers agree in relatively good cognitive conditions that agreement achieved in relatively good cognitive conditions is a reliable guide to truth.

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[118] Robert Audi suggests something similar in his discussion of Ross' moral philosophy:

> I believe that Ross said nothing implying that there cannot be good arguments for certain self-evident propositions, even the immediate ones. What is evident "in itself," even if immediately self-evident, need not be such that it cannot also be evident in some other way. It need not be known through premises; but this does not entail that it cannot be so known. (1993, 6)

[119] Knowledge of the law of non-contradiction and a robust law of excluded middle play a role here. And since these are paradigmatic examples of propositions known a priori, a completely empirical approach won't work in this case.

I will develop the above reasoning further when we seriously consider a skeptical stance toward intuition. I only wish now to note that the only hope for the naturalist is to argue that it is a necessary truth that agreement achieved in high quality cognitive conditions is likely to be true. And this necessary truth cannot be known via sensory experience.[120] If he takes the easy route and allows his externalism free reign so that one may use vision in justifying the reliability of vision, he opens the gate wide for the intuitionist, for she will have in her arsenal as many conditional claims: if intuition is reliable, then my intuition that intuition is reliable is likely to be true. And I am sure many philosophers could get themselves into the frame of my mind where it seems to them that their intuitions are reliable despite the disagreement of others. Indeed, they must be in this mindset, otherwise presently, they would only have justification to suspend judgment.

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[120] Michael Lynch fails to appreciate this point when he writes,

> [I]f sense perception really is no better off epistemically than intuition, then sense perception is in big trouble. Yet surely philosophical intuition isn't as reliable as sense perception! 2000 years of philosophical debate show that. Accordingly, doubts about intuition, and a desire for a non-circular demonstration of its reliability carry more force here than when it comes to sense-perception. (2006, 237)

Apparently the epistemic credentials of circular reasoning increase when it produces agreement. I am afraid to ask how this is known.

The defeasibility of intuition tends to involve the use of other intuitions. There are isolated cases where science has shown an intuition to be mistaken, but these are rare and often occur because a philosopher was too liberal in his application of intuition.[121]

There are a few cases or domains where intuitions approach infallibility. In certain limited cases where the cognitive conditions are very good and the propositions or cases are elementary, a trained philosopher's intuition may be infallible—she would not have a mistaken intuition about other similar propositions or cases. I suspect Gettier cases come close to conditions where the intuitions of the philosopher are extremely reliable. Bealer uses this point to give him some wiggle room when confronted with the fallibility of intuition and the specter of skepticism:

> despite their fallibility, intuitions…have a certain kind of strong modal tie to the truth…the tie is relativized; specifically, it is relativized to theoretical systematizations arrived at in relevantly high quality cognitive conditions. Such conditions might be beyond what human beings can achieve in isolation. It is plausible that we approximate such cognitive conditions only in sustained cooperation with others, perhaps over generations. And ever here, it is an open question whether we will ever approximate them sufficiently closely. (1998a, 202)[122]

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[121] The favored example of those suspicious of the a priori is the downfall of Euclidian geometry. Apparently, the geometry can be shown to be mistaken on empirical grounds. What was at one time thought to be a glittering instance of a priori knowledge was shown to be a pile of false beliefs. And if the a priori could lead us astray here, why not elsewhere? Yet, I think other interpretations of the conflict between Euclidian and non-Euclidian geometries are more cogent. Some have argued that Euclidian geometry is not mistaken, but rather, is a geometry for plane surfaces, and thus fails to have application to our world. The geometries aren't inconsistent, for they apply to different domains.

[122] Bealer is even so bold as to declare that "*[c]ollectively, over historical time, undertaking philosophy as a civilization-wide project,* we can obtain authoritative answers to a wide variety of central philosophical questions," (1998a, 203).

Our next feature of intuitions is often overlooked in discussions of their nature. Most assume that only intuitions about particular cases and whether a concept rightly applies in those cases constitute the entire evidential role for intuitions. Intuitions about the necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct application of a concept or more general philosophical principles are evidentially worthless or possess very little epistemic weight.[123] But as far as I can tell, if intuitions emanate from concept possession as many believe, there is no reason in principle why epistemically useful intuitions must be about particular cases. If intuitions resonate from concepts, why can't they be about the structure of those concepts as well as their application to particular cases?

Some argue that general intuitions are the byproduct of our tacit intuitions about particular cases.[124] But this seems wrong in the case of epistemic closure. The principle that knowledge is closed under known entailment is self-evident and is used to test particular case intuitions (like those of Robert Nozick).

Antony Flew's view on the philosophy of free will implies the favoring of particular case intuitions. Peter Van Inwagen summarizes his view on how we acquire a philosophical term like free will:

> We learn these phrases by watching people apply them in concrete situations in everyday life, just as we learn, for example, colour words. These concrete situations serve as *paradigms* for the application of these words: the words mean *things of that sort*.

Flew uses this bit of reasoning to eliminate hard determinism:

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[123] Bealer's claim is typical of the literature: "[I]t is intuitions about concrete cases that are accorded primary evidential weight by our standard justification procedure; theoretical intuitions are by comparison given far less evidential weight" (1998a, 205). According to Weatherson, "[I]t is almost universally assumed that intuition trumps theory" (2001, 1). And according to Edidin, "The intuitions in question are all intuitions about particular properties of particular descriptions or states. The intuition that something describes (or is) a case in which Φ is *not* an intuition of a general principle. It is intuitions about (descriptions of) *particular cases* that provide that data for philosophical hypotheses" (1985, 543).

[124] See Pust (2000, 12 especially footnote 10).

> [A]nyone who tells us that science shows or could show us that there is no such thing as acting freely, etc., is: *either* just wrong, because there certainly are cases such as our paradigms; *or* misleadingly using the key expressions in some new sense needing to be explained. (Quoted in Alter and Daw 2001, 346)

Flew's view has several unintuitive implications. First, if we inherit philosophical terms in the way he describes, it doesn't follow that the term actually picks out a kind. We might discover there is no unique set of properties shared by most instances of free will or knowledge. Kornblith recognizes this problem when he admits that on his view of reference, philosophical objects may turn out to be a gerrymandered kind, having nothing more in common than our disposition to apply the same term to each. So, one can't eliminate the possibility of hard determinism in this way. Secondly, it's a datum of good armchair philosophy that some philosophical concepts may fail to have application in the world. As noted in chapter 1, when one begins philosophical research, it is epistemically possible that there are no universals or moral properties. There may not even be physical objects. Nevertheless, these terms may be acquired in the manner described by Flew. Thus, even though Flew's view implies the authority of particular case intuitions, his view violates other datums of philosophical thought.

Pust (2000, 12) recommends the following taxonomy: particular intuitionists treat only intuitions about cases as evidence; general intuitionists use only general intuitions about philosophical principles as evidence; and global intuitionists use both kinds as evidence. Although helpful, I think this taxonomy is too restrictive. Let's define "particular intuitionists" as those who think particular intuitions have greater epistemic weight (while allowing that some general intuitions may have epistemic weight), "general intuitionists" as those who think general intuitions have greater epistemic weight (while allowing that a particular case intuition could be strong enough to trump a theoretical intuition), and "global intuitionists" as those who think each tend to have equal epistemic weight.

For instance, many epistemologists behave as particular intuitionists even though they find the principle of epistemic closure very intuitive (Richard Feldman comes to mind as an example.) Some use the principle to test the adequacy of a theory of justification or knowledge. I believe the principle of inferential justification is very intuitive apart from cases which help to buttress its intuitive plausibility. Furthermore, I am not bothered by an epistemology which implies we don't know as much as we take ourselves to know. Whether I know there is a computer in front of me at the moment does not provoke a strong intuition from me. I tend to suspend judgment until I apply my stronger intuitions about the conditions for justification to this case. Ultimately, the difference between particular intuitionism and general intuitionism is one of degree. Intuitions can be more or less particular or more or less general. The dividing line between the two is slightly fuzzy.

Cases of particular intuitionists abound. One struggles to find philosophers who clearly favor theoretical intuitions. The most conspicuous examples occur amongst utilitarians. Since utilitarianism implies counterintuitive judgments about particular cases (such as the organ transplant example or the hanging of the innocent), utilitarians often take refuge in the intuitive plausibility of general utilitarian principles. J. J. C. Smart is quite forceful on this point:

> It is also necessary to remember that we are here considering utilitarianism as a *normative* system. That fact that it has consequences which conflict with some of our particular moral judgments need not be decisive against it. In science, general principles must be tested by reference to particular facts of observation. In ethics we may well take the opposite attitude, and test our particular moral attitudes by reference to more general ones. The utilitarian can contend that since his principles rest on something so simple and natural as generalized benevolence it is more securely founded than our particular feelings. (1973, 56)[125]

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[125] J. S. Mill presages the same point: "But though in science the particular truths precede the general theory, the contrary might be expected to be the case with a practical art, such as morals or legislation...Our moral faculty supplies us only with the general principles of moral judgment…and must be looked to for the abstract doctrines of morality, not for perception of it in the concrete" (1861, 2). And in defending act consequentialism, Fumerton writes, "[A]ppeal to prephilosophical "intuition" as a guide to the construction of a philosophical account is notoriously unreliable as a method of argument. One philosopher's unacceptable consequence of a theory of rationality or morality is another philosopher's obvious conclusion" (1990, 216). I think this claim agrees with my view of intuition which I shall be defending later in this chapter: intuitions which occur at the start of

So for this kind of utilitarian, the intuition of the general moral principle known as "utilitarianism" is much stronger, more clear and distinct, than intuitions about particular cases. This is similar to a Ross's approach to ethics since his view counts as self-evident prima facie basic moral obligations. Another general principle mentioned by Pust is the supervenience of moral or epistemic properties on purely descriptive or natural ones. Many moral philosophers accept this claim despite basing much of their moral philosophy on particular case intuitions.

So, clearly there is a place for general intuitions in theory development.[126] If intuitions emanate from concepts, there is no reason in principle why those intuitions could not be about the structure of those concepts. The debate over causation looks like a case where more general intuitions play a greater role since most philosophers agree on the cases of causation (except in a few cases). The debate turns on more general intuitions about the nature of causation.

With the distinction between particularists and generalists in hand, I think we may be able to explain in part the standoff between skeptics and non-skeptics. I believe skeptics (I speak of the local variety) tend to have stronger intuitions about general principles and the conditions for justification and knowledge. Skeptics tend to work from a smaller class of particular case intuitions. The non-skeptic tends to take for granted that we know or justifiably believe much of what we take ourselves to know or justifiably believe. Thus the

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the reflective equilibrium process and the intuitions of the person on the street who is virtually a philosophical *tabula rasa* have very little epistemic weight.

[126] Here are some supporting quotes: "General principles may also be included among the propositional contents of intuitions, for example, the principle that knowledge is closed under known entailment" (Goldman and Pust 1998, 196). When speaking of intuition use in epistemology, Sosa claims that, "Any such practice gives prime importance to intuitions concerning not only hypothetical cases but also principles in their own right" (2005, 104). And John Rawls claims that "[o]ne does not count people's more particular considered judgements, say those about particular actions and institutions, as exhausting the relevant information about their moral conceptions. People have considered judgements at all levels of generality…up through broad standards and first principles to formal and abstract condition on moral conceptions" (quoted in Pust 2000, 22).

skeptic or the skeptic sympathizer must have stronger intuitions about a smaller group of particular cases and/or have strong intuitions about epistemic principles. I think both play a role. Consider the use of the principle of inferential justification in motivating skeptical worries. According to Fumerton's approach, the skeptic characterizes the best justification one could have in believing propositions about, say, the physical world, and then drives a logical wedge between that justification and truth so that the justification does not entail truths about the physical world.[127] Now one needs a reason for thinking that the justification does tend to correlate with truth. But there is no straightforward non-question begging argument which could inductively bridge this gap.

The need to have a reason for thinking that my best evidence makes probable the truth of what I believe stems from a more general principle:

> The Principle of Inferential Justification (PIJ): S is justified in believing P on the basis of E if and only if (1) S is justified in believing E and (2) S is justified in believing that E makes probable P.

In justifying PIJ, one could appeal to particular cases but these cases tend to be negative involving unjustified belief and the violation of the principle. There is a strong sense, however, in which the principle of inferential justification is highly intuitive, especially when one thinks that the goal of knowledge and justification is not the maximization of one's truth/falsity ratio but rather achieving a mental state distinctively human: being *aware* of the truth. When truth becomes a constituent of consciousness, then we have achieved something distinctly human. Therefore, racking up alleged cases of justified beliefs in the physical world will not tempt the skeptic, most likely because she is strongly motivated by PIJ which influences her intuitions about particular cases.

Externalists might agree with many of the negative cases raised by the inferential internalist but will offer a different explanation for the absence of justification. This raises another potential problem. It is logically possible and quite often the case that the set of cases for which we have positive particular intuitions have many properties in common. Obviously, much of these shared properties won't be epistemically relevant. But how do we know which commonalities are relevant to justification or knowledge? What are we to do if each and every case we come up with has many properties in common? Do we blindly say that all those properties must constitute knowledge? We don't do that with equiangular even though each instance is also equilateral. It seems we must rely on our intuitions about the content of our concepts or the semantic rules we follow to mediate between those properties that are accidentally present from the essential ones. If the logically possible were to obtain, where each and every case we examine has many properties in common, we would still be able to parse the relevant properties from the irrelevant ones. Fortunately, many cases have only a few select properties in common. But why think that just because we have found a few properties in common, we have found the essential properties? I think in these cases, we rely on more general intuitions about which properties are relevant to the analysis. We already have some handle on what justification or knowledge is.

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[127] See Fumerton (1995) chapter 2.

T*he Origin of Intuitions*

We have already examined two views on the location of philosophical objects. From what I can tell, most philosophers believe that the objects of philosophical analysis are in the mind (the mentalists) while a few believe in some cases we are inspecting extra-mental entities (extra-mentalists). We decided to focus on mentalist views. The question for the mentalist is what sort of mental entity is the object of analysis. There are two prominent options: philosophical analysis is linguistic analysis or conceptual analysis. Some philosophers have the unfortunate habit of couching their investigation in terms of meaning.

What does "knowledge" mean or "truth" mean?[128] We already looked at several reasons why philosophy is not meaning analysis, but I wish at this time to consider a few more.

Some speak of philosophical analysis as the rousing of linguistic intuitions to help identify the meaning of philosophical terms. The first problem with this analysis of analysis[129] is that philosophical theories hold necessarily. But linguistic analysis only gives us contingent truths with the following form: "knowledge" means "a, b and c." This is a contingent truth because clearly the string of symbols k n o w l e d g e could have been used to refer to another kind of thing like tables or chairs. This is not true in the case of concepts for there is no sense in asking, "What if the concept knowledge had a different content?" The answer is, "Then it wouldn't be the concept knowledge." In other words, its identity conditions include its structure. As philosophers, we are interested in discovering necessary truths and thus clearly the kinds of intuitions we have don't pertain to contingent meanings.

Perhaps the linguistic philosopher could suggest instead that we forgo conceptual analysis for linguistic analysis. But qua philosopher, the philosopher is not qualified to investigate this matter; it falls to the lot of lexicographers. Furthermore, it is very unlikely that most of us mean by "knowledge" a set of complicated necessary and sufficient conditions.[130] After discovering the right analysis of knowledge, the philosopher could change what she means by "knowledge" so that it includes the analysis just as some think we now mean by "water," H_2O. But this is only possible after the non-linguistic analysis is finished. Tacit concepts can have a complex architecture which is only revealed after painstaking analysis. But what we mean by terms is more transparent. Furthermore, the meaning of philosophical terms tends to lie on the side of synonymy. When asked what a person means by "knowledge," she is likely to reply that it means grasp, apprehend, recognize, etc. This sort of question is important to philosophical discussion if one suspect the person's use of the term is idiosyncratic. But once one verifies she uses the ordinary meaning associated with the term, the next step is to plunge deeper into the structure of the thing picked out by the term. As Sosa argues, "Semantic ascent does have a place in epistemology if only when we attempt to understand persistent disagreement by appeal to ambiguity or context-dependence. Where discussion proceeds smoothly enough, and disagreement is either explicable or recedes through discussion, there semantic ascent is unnecessary" (2005, 105).

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[128] Sometimes, philosophers use "means" when there are actually interested in the structure of philosophical concepts. I think we should give over "means" to the lexicographer so there is no confusion on this matter.

[129] It is curious that an analysis of analysis is not done at the linguistic level. One, in part, looks to the behavior of those who use analysis. To avoid an inconsistency here, the linguistic philosopher can make the distinction I made earlier between philosophical concepts and those invented to help furnish a useful taxonomy like "internalism." The question is not "What do we mean by 'x'?" but rather, "What should we mean by 'x'?"

[130] Sosa expresses similar doubts when exposing the assumptions of Stich's war on analytic epistemology: "Such reasoning requires controversial claims or assumption, however, prominent among which is (b) that the adoption of a particular meaning for a positively evaluative or normative term necessarily involves adopting so optional standards or criteria yoked by meaning to the relevant pro-attitudes. It s at best controversial that our ordinary normative or evaluative terms thus involve, by their very meaning, certain optional, substantive criteria or standards" (2005, 103-104).

Some argue that the linguistic approach to philosophy gets the phenomenology of intuition wrong. But I don't think the linguistic approach must be saddled with a specific phenomenology. Pust claims that "[i]t is as clear to me as anything…that my intuitions do not seem to me to be about the applicability of various English words. My *intuitions* seem to me not to be about *English words,* but about knowledge, justification, personal identity, meaning, just action, logical implication, etc." (2000, 48).

On one interpretation of linguistic philosophy, it is interested in knowledge itself but gets there via linguistic analysis. I can't see why it would be metaphysically or logically impossible that a growing grasp of the meaning of a term could produce intuitions non-linguistic in tone. In other words, I think Pust is relying on the following false claim: necessarily, if my intuitions are about X, then they must result from X. The linguistic philosopher wants to know the meaning of "knowledge" to discover what knowledge is. By discovering that "knowledge" means "a, b, and c," she discovers that knowledge is a, b, and

c. Our understanding of the meaning of terms could produce intuitions about the referents of those terms since the meaning helps to determine the referent (assuming the truth of linguistic philosophy). The same is true in conceptual analysis. As far as I can tell, most conceptual analysts don't argue for their view by stressing that the content of intuitions is about concepts. They realize that intuitions tend to be about the things themselves. But they also recognize that concepts could engender intuitions about the object level thus revealing the structure of the concepts.

From what I have read, most philosophers working in say, the analytic epistemology tradition, think intuitions resonate from concepts. According to Harold Brown, "(1) philosophers seek analyses of concepts that are held to exist in their minds; (2) these concepts generate intuitions that provide the basis for analysis; and (3) analysts who disagree are typically attempting to analyze the same concept" (1999, 35).

In chapter 1, I argued that those in the mentalist camp tend to view concepts as the architects of philosophical objects. If, as Goldman believes, philosophical objects don't have a prior essence or nature, then the ontological movement is from concepts to the world. This is advantageous for one can then explain in part the reliability of conceptual analysis. If concepts determine the structure of *philosophical* objects (i.e. the objects of interest to philosophers) and also produce intuitions, then it is not mysterious that intuition would track the structure of those objects. Consequently, a moral philosopher may make free appeal to intuitions about particular cases in challenging or defending a proposed analysis and at the same time rail against Ethical Intuitionism in moral philosophy, since, according to one species of Ethics Intuitionism,, intuitions somehow reach out and latch on to non-natural features of the world. (I am more likely to construe these intuitions as possible instances of acquaintance. Moore thought we were able to get a universal like goodness before the mind.)

There is a trade off however. Conceptual analysis easily assuages concerns about the mystery of intuition only to invite other potential problems over the concepts behind the intuitions. In chapter 3, we examine some of the problems that are said to plague the concepts involved in conceptual analysis. The extra-mentalist, on the other hand, invites the mystery challenge but avoids the ever growing critique of conceptual analysis. It may turn out that the extra-mentalist comes out ahead in the end.

The Evidential Status of Intuitions

We have analyzed intuitions as intellectual seemings that have as their content logically/metaphysically necessary true or false propositions. Many philosophers believe that intuitions come from possessing concepts. If this is true, then we have the beginning of a defense of the evidential status of intuitions, for one would expect that since intuitions come from concepts, they would do a pretty good job revealing conceptual structures. Bealer takes up this idea in one of his arguments for the reliability of intuitions: "[I]t is constitutive of determinate concept possession that in suitably good cognitive conditions intuitions regarding the behavior of the concept have a strong tie to the truth" (1998a, 203).

Bealer's explanation of intuition's reliability is helpful in many ways. However, I believe we will need to amend his account to observe the restraint already placed on our inquiry into intuition: we cannot beg any questions when defending intuition by assuming the reliability of intuition. Bealer's view ultimately runs afoul of this restraint. Joel Pust (2000) suggests this is the philosophical predicament in which we find ourselves, and thus, the use of intuition in discussing intuition is no more egregious than defenses of the reliability of perception which rely on perception, or defenses of the reliability of memory which rely on memory. Defenses of these, admittedly, tend to beg certain questions, for either one ends up reasoning in a circle by employing a different source of evidence for each possible evidence source until one arrives at the beginning, or one simply stops at a particular source and digs in her heels. I believe we can do better. The defense of the evidential status of intuition I propose may compel fewer philosophers and may be less elegant, but I think its advantages outweigh the costs, especially if one is deeply affected by skeptical possibilities.

My view, however, does share something in common with Bealer's. Assuming we shouldn't use a method of belief formation to justify its own legitimacy, we won't satisfy the naturalist who is looking for some track record argument to verify the reliability of intuition.[131] Access to the track record is supposed to be gained using some other source of evidence. But this is impossible if the subject matter of intuition is the metaphysically or logically necessary, as I shall shortly show. The impossibility of a track record argument gives some a reason to reject intuitions altogether. What they fail to comprehend, however, is that ultimately their track record arguments for other sources of evidence ultimately beg important questions. We will look at this problem more closely when we examine Robert Cummins' conditions for verifying the reliability of intuition.

One further note before moving on: when I speak of reliability, I don't mean long run frequency or the propensity to yield truth, since these conceptions are favored by externalists. As an internalist, I must use a broader conception. So I understand reliability to be any sort of connection to truth such as long run frequency or, as we will use later, necessarily making probable the truth of some claim. This may be unorthodox to the externalist, but I don't think internalist analyses of probability give up a connection to truth. They just don't yield the kind of connection the externalist desires.

George Bealer on the Evidential Status of Intuitions

Bealer's defense of intuition's as evidence is two pronged. At one point, he argues that denying intuition is a source of evidence leads to epistemic self-defeat. This argument is most fully expressed in his "The Incoherence of Empiricism" (1993). We will ignore this defense of intuition since it relies on our prior commitment to intuition use in much of our reasoning—what he calls our "standard justificatory procedure." This gives intuition a foothold into the discussion of evidential sources since we currently use intuition to support philosophical theories. Once intuition gains this foothold, he gives several different arguments for thinking we must continue to treat intuition as evidence. Although I believe these arguments are compelling, especially against those who tend to treat intuitions as evidence while denouncing them publicly, they rest on the contingent fact that presently, we treat intuitions as evidence for philosophical theories. We need a stronger argument, one which holds necessarily regardless of our present evidential practices. The need for this kind of argument is more pressing given the current fad of rejecting the evidential character of intuition. The account I offer in one stroke explains why intuitions are evidence and in doing so defends their evidential status.

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[131] As noted before, the externalist should not be bothered by an attempt to verify the legitimacy of a source of evidence using that very source. As long as a method of belief formation satisfies the conditions of the externalist, that method will yield justified beliefs about its own legitimacy. Yet, when turning to sources of evidence the externalist views with suspicion, like intuition, question begging reasons are no longer permitted.

So we will focus on the second prong—an explanation of why intuitions are evidential, why they are indicative of truth. Bealer makes several important distinctions which we will find useful, especially in defending intuition against those who think empirical experiments reveal its uselessness as a source of evidence. Throughout, I will be assuming an internalist theory of justification, for I am interested in showing that intuitions can be justified along internalist lines. This actually makes the justification of intuition a little more difficult since internalist theories of justification tend to make more demands of the cognizer.

Let's begin with an important distinction between sources of evidence. Sources of evidence can be divided into two kinds: basic sources and derived sources. The distinction between them depends on their connection to truth and secondarily, on how they are known to be evidence—whether other sources of evidence must be used to verify their evidential qualities or whether their evidential status can be known immediately or directly.

Note that we are presently interested in what makes something a source of evidence. We should not make the mistake of automatically equating basic sources of evidence with non-inferential justification. As I will argue later, the beliefs which basic evidence supports are inferentially justified. This is a consequence of an internalist/classical foundationalist view of justification.

That there is such a distinction between basic and derived sources is pretty obvious. Clearly, metal detectors are a less basic source of evidence for the presence of metal than phenomenal seemings. All other things being equal, seeing something for oneself is a more basic source of evidence than being told by another. In the latter case, not only does one need a reason to think observation is reliable (her experience of the person's testimony is veridical), but she needs a further reason for thinking the testimony of the person is reliable, for without it, she has no justification for trusting the testimony of that person.[132] Thus, Bealer writes,

> Depending on one's epistemic situation, calculators can serve as a source of evidence for arithmetic questions; tree rings, as evidence for the age of trees; and so forth. It is natural to say that these sources are not as basic as phenomenal experience, intuition, observation, and testimony. By the same token, it is natural to say that testimony is not as basic as observations, and likewise that observation is not as basic as phenomenal experience. Phenomenal experience, however, is as basic as evidence can get. (1998a, 235)

If we can explain why this is the case and defend intuition's status as a basic source of evidence, we occupy a more advantageous position in our analysis of intuition's evidential status. Indeed, as I shall argue, intuition must qualify as a basic source of evidence.

I have already gestured at what distinguishes basic from derived sources, but let's achieve something more precise. Bealer suggests the following:

> B1: something is a basic source of evidence iff it has an appropriate kind of reliable tie to the truth. (1998a, 215)[133]

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[132] For the reliabilist, we could say that the chain of reliability is longer. The testimony of the individual must be reliable, but then the hearing of the testimony must be reliable as well.

[133] I can't tell whether Bealer is claiming that necessarily, most of one's beliefs based on a basic source will be true, or that such evidence necessarily makes probable the beliefs it supports. Since he believes phenomenal experience has a necessary tie to truth to claims about the physical world, I lean toward thinking he means the latter. In a demon world, phenomenal experience would still yield good evidence for the truth of physical object beliefs even though most of those beliefs are

For Bealer, a strong modal tie is the appropriate kind of reliable tie to the truth—in other words, a non-contingent tie. Alternatively, he suggests several more analyses:

> B2: A source is basic iff it has its status as a source of evidence intrinsically, not by virtue of its relation to other sources of evidence.
>
> B3: A source is basic iff no other source has more authority.
>
> B4: A source is basic iff its deliverances as a class, play the role of 'regress stoppers.' (1998a, 235)

I am very comfortable with the idea that basic sources of evidence necessarily have their status as evidence making them intrinsically evidential and giving them the most authority.[134] But according to B4, intuitions can serve in the foundations of one's epistemic structure and intuitive beliefs can be non-inferentially justified. As someone who believes acquaintance is a real relation and that intuitive justification is ultimately rooted in one's acquaintance with intellectual seemings, I can't accept B4. On my view, what is non-inferentially justified is one's belief that it seems to one that P. That seeming then serves to inferentially justify the belief that p. For Bealer, the seeming alone non-inferentially justifies the belief that p. But this doesn't make much of a difference to B1 – B3. They can still be true even if B4 is false.

Given the above, phenomenal seemings might count as a basic source of evidence if they are intrinsically tied to the truth—if they are necessarily evidence for claims about the physical world. Calculators count as a derived source because they contingently make probable mathematical claims. And since calculators have a contingent tie to the truth, we must verify their reliability using other sources of evidence, like our intuitive knowledge of

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false. If he means the former, then there is a significant difference in our views. I will generally interpret him as focusing on the relation of necessarily making probable.

[134] Bealer may need to augment B3 by noting that no other source has more authority than a basic source with regard to a particular domain. So intuition, although equally basic with phenomenal experience, does not possess as much epistemic weight for the justification of observational beliefs.

mathematical truths. We must verify their reliability since things could have been otherwise: they could have failed to give reliable mathematical calculations. And since we must verify their reliability, we must use another source of evidence in doing so to avoid begging the question.

The hypothesis thus far is that basic sources of evidence not only make probable certain kinds of beliefs but necessarily make probable. Non-basic sources do not have their status as evidence necessarily; moreover, they do not need a contingent reliable tie to truth. Rather what they need to count as evidence are good reasons for thinking they are truth indicative. This helps us to avoid problems that are due to evil demon world type considerations. For instance, Bealer points out that testimony would still be a source of evidence even if it were only systematic undetectable lying. Thus for testimony, a reliable tie to truth is not a necessary condition to qualify as evidence. Nor is the reliable tie sufficient as we have learned from BonJour's cases of the clairvoyant (1985). Furthermore, on the assumption of internalism, one must have empirical reasons for thinking these sources of evidence have some connection to truth even if the empirical evidence is unknowingly misleading, such as when one is in a demon world. So let's define derived sources as follows:

> D1 Something is a derived source of evidence relative to a given subject if and only if, through the use of basic sources, one has justification for thinking the source is evidence for the truth of certain beliefs.

The key for derived sources is having a justified belief in their connection to truth based on basic sources of evidence. If I find myself in a demon world, my trustworthy friends testimony, who is also a victim of deception, would still count as evidence, for I would verify via observation that things appear to correspond to his reports on the basis of a basic source of evidence: phenomenal seemings. Even though his reports are false because he is being deceived, they still count as evidence because a significant number of his past reports corresponded to the way things appeared to me.

A basic source then is one which can be known to be truth-indicative without relying on another source of evidence. One can immediately recognize that the source necessarily makes probable certain beliefs. This is the result of a basic source's intrinsic connection to truth. If dizziness then is evidence that someone may have a disease, this is evidence only in the derived sense, for the evidential connection between dizziness and the disease is contingent. We must verify the presence of that connection to be justified in using dizziness as evidence, and to do that, we would need to rely on another source of evidence.

Why Basic Sources Must Necessarily be Tied to Truth

We can shed even more light on this distinction between basic and non-basic sources by looking at Bealer's arguments for thinking basic sources of evidence cannot have a logically contingent but nomologically necessary tie to the truth. His arguments should now be familiar to anyone acquainted with the internalist/externalist controversy in epistemology. He asks us to consider a creature with the capacity to make reliable telepathically generated guesses about necessary truths that are not easily known. There are beings on a distant planet (P1) who know these truths a priori. These beings have intellectual capacities which far exceed those who occupy the planet (P2) of the creature who can make reliable telepathically generated guesses. Those on P2 will never discover these necessary truths a priori. Finally, the creature's judgments have a nomologically necessary tie to the truth: "the creature guesses that p is true iff p is a necessary truth of the indicated kind and the creature is guessing as to whether p is true or false" (1998a, 215). The moral of this story is that the creature's telepathy does not count as a basic source of evidence since obviously guesses in this case aren't evidence. Guesses don't count as evidence. Ergo, a basic source of evidence is not one where there is a logically contingent, albeit nomologically necessary, tie to truth.

At best, Bealer has only shown that a logically contingent nomologically necessary connection to truth is not sufficient for basic sources. He believes anti-Panglossian and Swamp Man examples show it is not necessary. Ultimately, I think one may find these scenarios compelling against the logically contingent reliabilist analysis of basic sources because we must use other sources of evidence to verify the contingent reliability of the candidate source. In other words, the scenarios prompt internalist sympathies. For telepathy to serve as evidence, that is, be genuinely *truth indicative,* one needs reasons for thinking there is an evidential link.[135] Without such reasons, telepathy is evidentially mute from the standpoint of obtaining a justified belief. And if we could throw together some reasons, telepathy would cease to be a basic source, for we would be relying on another source of evidence. Thus, if intuition only made certain beliefs contingently probable, the internalist demand that we acquire good reasons for thinking intuition is linked to truth could not be satisfied while keeping the philosopher armchair bound. The truths of philosophy would need to be capable of being empirically known (or known via some other source). And if the truths of philosophy could be known in another way, intuition wouldn't need to serve as our primary form of philosophical evidence. On the other hand, we could use intuition to justify the contingent reliability of intuition, but this would hardly satisfy the skeptical concerns which prompt us to assess its reliability. Nevertheless, we must continue to keep in mind how attempts to show that intuition is not evidence tend to rely on intuition. The belief that the amount of disagreement in our intuitions makes them non-evidential relies on the intuition that if there is a lot of disagreement in our intuitions, they aren't a source of evidence.

If one finds Bealer's scenario against a logically contingent nomological tie for basic sources attractive, then most likely she thinks guessing isn't evidence because one needs to be aware of the evidential connection.[136] BonJour made a similar diagnosis when he used similar cases in his *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (1985). To avoid having to rely on other sources of evidence to recognize the existence of the contingent tie for a basic source, we need an evidential connection accessible from the armchair—one which we can immediately or directly known. Consequently, we need basic sources to have their status as evidence necessarily so that we can avoid begging any questions, such as assuming the reliability of other sources whose tie to the truth needs confirmation as well.

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[135] I can't understand how one could think something could function as evidence in the sense of being relevant for justification without being *aware*—conscious of—its truth indicative qualities. The popular paradigmatic case of evidence use—crime scene investigation—could not possibly provide good evidence unless there had been some correlation in the past between certain properties of a crime scene and certain facts. Something's functioning as input into, say, a belief–independent reliable process can't be evidence without some reason for thinking an evidential connection obtains.

Consider phenomenal experience. For our knowledge of the external world, no source of evidence is more basic than phenomenal experience—how the external world appears to us. But how is this evidence? There is no way to verify the correlation between phenomenal experience and external world facts without assuming the reliability of observation or the visual reports of others. So, if we hope to avoid begging important questions, we need it to be a necessary truth that phenomenal experience makes probable truths about the external world. This would be the sort of thing we could know without presupposing the reliability of phenomenal experience, whereas the verification of a contingent tie would rely on an appeal to phenomenal experience at some point.[137]

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[136] Bealer does not explicitly say this. His final analysis of a basic source admits of no epistemic language while his analysis of a derived source does. But I don't see how one could be bothered by his examples while believing the problem isn't epistemic. Even if the creature could achieve metaphysically necessary reliable telepathically generated guesses, the conclusion would be the same: guessing is not a source of evidence. The creature would need to recognize the existence of the modal connection for telepathy to be truth indicative.

[137] Granted, all this assumes an internalist account of justification. But I don't think the assumption inappropriate at this point. Later I defend internalism. But presently, if anything, I am stacking the deck against myself since an internalist distinction between basic and derived sources makes the argument for intuition as evidence more difficult. The reliabilist only needs a belief-independent reliable contingent connection between intuitions and intuitive beliefs. If there is a neural route from concepts in the brain to a brain state like intuition, that route may be contingently reliable. We would then call upon the aid of the cognitive scientist to pronounce a judgment on the reliability of intuition. The price however, is that one is happy to beg important questions in the process. One is content to use vision to discover the reliability of vision. For how else could one discover contingent connections from the world to the brain?

Whether there is such a probability relation is a question we will leave for later. But clearly, this is how we need basic sources to work. If we must always rely on an argument that in the past a source of evidence yielded the truth more often than not, we will not be able to escape the skeptic's quagmire.

This necessary tie to truth is bound up with an epistemic component: we must be able to verify the presence of the tie immediately or directly. In other words, we need immediate access to the evidential relation holding between intuitions and philosophical facts. Without such access, we would need to rely on another source of evidence to verify the presence of the relation and then the same need would arise again, causing us to set out on an infinite regress verifying the connection to truth of evidential sources, or we would move in a closed curve ultimately relying on a source whose reliability is still in question. A necessary evidential connection is just the sort of thing we could directly detect or recognize without relying on other sources; the relation is similar to the relation of entailment in this regard. So we should define basic sources of evidence as those whose connection to truth we can know immediately or directly without relying on other sources.

In summary, for basic sources like phenomenal experience, if we wish to avoid the clutches of skepticism, we need some way to verify the evidential tie of phenomenal experience to beliefs about the external world without relying on empirical evidence (construed narrowly as sensory evidence). The same is true of intuition. We can't use a track record argument to prove the evidential status of intuition, for then we would need to appeal to another source of evidence. And if we had access to truths intuition alone seemed to provide, then we would not need to rely on intuition.

Of course all this hinges on the assumption of internalism. If externalism were true, we would not need to verify the evidential connection for evidence to confer justification on a belief, and thus a logically contingent connection would serve just as well for a basic source.

Fumerton frames the issue in terms of what he calls "epistemic principles":

> An epistemic principle is a proposition asserting a probabilistic connection between propositions. Within a traditional internalist version of foundationalism, one can define secondary epistemic principles as those that that can be justified only inferentially. So we might be able to infer from the fact that the litmus paper turned red in a solution that the solution is acidic, but the proposition asserting a connection between its being true that the litmus paper turned red and its being true that it is acidic is a *contingent* proposition of a sort that would require inferential justification. The most obvious way to establish a connection between these phenomena is to use some sort of *inductive* argument…The internalist foundationalist should understand a *primary* epistemic principle as one that can be justified non-inferentially. (1995, 188-189)

Given the internalist requirement that one be aware of intuition's evidential connection to truth and given the impossibility of verifying that connection using some sort of inductive argument, we need intuition to be a basic source of evidence. In other words, we need a proposition asserting a probabilistic connection between intuitions and philosophical claims to be a primary epistemic principle. This should not be surprising given the fundamental character of many philosophical claims and the plausible assumption that certain logical or philosophical intuitions hold in much of our non-philosophical reasoning. The only other route is to justify the use of intuition by using intuition, but this unacceptably begs the question. Thus in a broader context, Fumerton writes, "[T]he only way for the inferential internalist to avoid *massive* (not necessarily global) skepticism is to find a relation weaker than entailment that holds between our foundations and the propositions we infer from them, a relation that we could discover non-inferentially" (1995, 190). We need an evidential relation weaker than entailment for intuitions with which we can also be acquainted for the following reasons: 1) only beliefs justified by acquaintance can rightly be non-inferentially justified, 2) intuitions don't entail philosophical truths, and 3) we must be aware of the evidential connection intuition has to truth for us to be justified in using intuitions. In the absence of such a relation, we face serious skeptical problems for the reasons already given.

The best that the internalist has to hope for is a Keynesian relation of making probable. "The relation of making probable will be very much like the relationship of entailing. Both relations are internal relations holding between propositions and both are knowable *a priori*" (Fumerton 1995, 198). In other words, they can be known via acquaintance. Acquaintance with an internal necessary relation of making probable would stop the regress of evidential sources.

As I mentioned, when worrying about evidence, we must attend to demon world type problems if we want to give an adequate analysis. This relation of necessarily making probable helps us do just that.

> Recall that most internalists shared a strong intuition that in the demon world our beliefs about physical objects are perfectly rational even if they are uniformly false…Russell argued that it is perfectly imaginable that we all came into existence a few minutes ago replete with detailed and vivid memories of a past life…we cease to exist a few minutes later. In this possible world, the vast majority of beliefs about the past based on memory are false. Memory experiences on a frequency conception of probability, will not make probable for us any truths about the past. But there is an equally strong intuition shared by many philosophers that in this possible world beliefs about the past would be perfectly rational. They would be just as rational as *our* beliefs about the past, for the evidence supporting their beliefs would be identical to the evidence at our disposal. (1995, 201)

An internal relation of making probable helps explain why we should think that the victims of a demon world, who have the same mental states as the epistemically impeccable who don't live in such a world, also have equally justified beliefs. This also helps to explain how intuitions can continue to serve as evidence even when many philosophers disagree about certain issues. If one is using a frequency conception of probability, then the frequency with which philosophers disagree would seem to make likely that many intuitions are misleading. But since intuitions can make probable philosophical claims regardless of their track record, just as the demon world showed with regard to perception, intuition can remain a source of evidence.

For those who worry that this view of probability does not connect up to truth in the right way, Fumerton points out that sophisticated externalist epistemologies also face the same problems. To avoid counterexamples, the externalist can't interpret her concept of reliability as actual frequency. Instead she must talk about long run frequency or what would happen over an indefinitely long period of time. This leaves open the possibility that the actual truth/falsity ratio of a reliable process may not be very high. So even on externalist views, it is not a necessary truth given their concept of probability that most justified beliefs will be true.

I think that Bealer is committed to something like this Keynesian notion of necessarily making probable, given the tone of his arguments. We already saw him argue that for basic sources of evidence, a nomologically reliable but contingent tie to truth is unacceptable.

Departing slightly from Bealer, let's say a source of evidence is basic if and only if it necessarily makes probable the truth of certain claims and can be known immediately or directly. A source of evidence is derived if and only if, through the use of basic sources, one has justification for believing the source is evidence for the truth of certain beliefs. This is not intended to be an analysis of basic and derived sources but is rather a proposal for how best to distinguish sources of evidence. I think the distinction exists and is needed to avoid skeptical concerns.

Note the difference between my approach to the basic/derived distinction and Bealer's. He begins by pointing to cases where there is an absence of a reliable connection but intuition tells us the source of information is still evidence. Given that sources of evidence need some tie to truth, he proposes we understand basic sources as having such a tie and defines derived sources with an explicit epistemic component: "[S]omething is a derived source of evidence relative to a given subject iff it is deemed (perhaps unreliably) to have a reliable tie to the truth by the best comprehensive theory based on the subject's basic sources of evidence" (1998a, 215). He then argues that a nomologically necessary but logically contingent tie to the truth for basic sources fails by offering his telepathy scenario. Again, we rely on our *intuitions* that in the case of the telepathic, guessing would not count as a basic source of evidence, thus leaving a modal tie as the only possibility. My approach, on the other hand, emphasizes the priority of skeptical concerns and the need for there to be a necessary tie to truth which can be known immediately to avoid begging important questions.

So where does acquaintance fit in to this picture? The purpose of evidence is to indicate whether a belief is true. Acquaintance then doesn't count as a source of evidence since it gives us direct access to the facts (truth-makers). When one is acquainted with the fact that makes one's belief true, she does not need any evidence to indicate whether her belief is true or false. The fact is not hidden from her in any way. Evidence, on the other hand, helps to reveal whether a belief does correspond to a fact.

Thus far, I have argued that to avoid begging the question against the skeptic, basic sources of evidence must necessarily make probable the claims they support. Their authority as evidence is intrinsic to them. The way the physical world appears, memory, and intuition must be intrinsically truth indicative, for we have no way of assessing their evidential status via other sources. We must be capable of being acquainted with their evidential connection to truth and thus we need a relation like entailment (although importantly different from entailment).[138] This is one reason for thinking that intuition is a basic source. Another reason is that intuition seems as basic a source of evidence as memory or physical world seemings. When you have the intellectual seeming that in a Gettier case, the subject does not know, this is epistemically similar to the visual seeming that there is computer in front of you; there is no other evidence in the situation that would be more basic or fundamental.

The Conditions under which Intuitions Count as Evidence

When is intuition tied to truth in the way previously discussed? Not just any intuition enters into a Keynesian relation of making probable. The intuition must occur in conditions of the right sort, where those conditions must be internalized—we have reason for thinking they obtain. This is a point often overlooked by detractors of intuition. They think all intuitions have the same epistemic weight. But this is not so. For instance, intuitions about elementary logical propositions tend to have more evidential weight. For intelligent persons, there are probably a class of elementary propositions where intuition for them is infallible. We have already stressed this point quite a bit: when attacking intuition, the philosopher must not overlook how often our intuitions agree with regard to a large class of elementary logical/mathematical and philosophical propositions. Nevertheless, for non-elementary propositions, intuition is not nearly as strong a source of evidence. Thus if intuition necessarily makes probable certain beliefs, I believe, and I think Bealer would agree, we must be careful to specify the conditions under which intuition, coupled with other evidential states, makes probable philosophical beliefs.

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[138] Unlike entailment, P's making probable Q does not entail that P in conjunction with anything else makes probable Q.

For anyone acquainted with the process of reflective equilibrium, I think they will easily recognize how their initial intuitions at the beginning of the process can be subject to change as they canvass more and more intuitions. What seemed obvious at first can often, after one has drawn out other intuitions, seem clearly mistaken. This shows us how volatile intuitions are which occur at the beginning of the philosophical process in isolation from the other considerations that will be brought to bear later in the process. If our initial intuitions can be so volatile and later intuitions can occur against a backdrop of more information (since we have canvassed other intuitions and kept the stronger ones), intuitions which occur later on in the philosophical process have more epistemic weight. I think it is an obvious necessary truth that the more reasons one has for thinking that intuition has survived the dialectical process, the more likely it is that the intuition is true. Indeed, this is why, as I believe, intuitive beliefs can't properly live in the foundations of a rational belief structure.

This may be similar to Bealer's view:

> For suitably good cognitive conditions, it is necessary that, if while in such conditions a subject goes through the whole procedure of *a priori* justification…then most of the propositions derivable from the resulting comprehensive theoretical systematization of the subject's intuitions would have to be true. (1996, 130)

In another place, he couches the thesis in a slightly different way:

> [A] candidate source if basic iff for cognitive conditions of some suitably high quality, necessarily, if someone in those cognitive conditions were to process theoretically the deliverances of the candidate source, the resulting theory would be true. (1998a, 219)[139]

Think of intuition like a puzzle. Early guesses about the picture on the puzzle before more than a few pieces have been put together don't have much evidential weight. But as more of the pieces are put in place, the greater weight one's guesses possess. In one way, this is analogous to intuition. For non-elementary philosophical propositions at the beginning of the philosophical process, one's intuitions about those propositions occur against a more or less blank backdrop. There isn't as much information to inform one's intuitions. But as more and more intuitions are compared and as one's later intuitions occur against the backdrop of those surviving intuitions, it seems to me to be a necessary truth that those later intuitions have greater epistemic authority, and thus the Keynesian relation of making probable becomes stronger.

Thus far, we have a more or less imprecise characterization of intuition's evidential status. There still remains the question of how best to think of the necessary truth that the longer an intuition has survived the dialectical process, the more likely it is true, given that I think we must be dealing in Keynesian probabilities to avoid skepticism. Since necessary probabilities are internal relations that hold because of the intrinsic character of the relata, it is prima facie implausible that the probability holding between an intuition and the belief it supports could become stronger as one moves through the dialectical process when the relata remain unchanged. That would be akin to saying that, on some occasions, a certain color of blue is darker than a certain color of green, and on other occasions, a much darker than relation obtains between those same colors. To avoid this problem, I can see three options open to the armchair philosopher bent on thinking we need Keynesian probabilities to avoid skepticism while preserving the truth that the longer an intuition has survived the dialectical process, the greater its probability of being true.

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[139] Both of these quotes appear to suggest the stronger view of intuition's relation to truth. Instead of thinking that intuitions bear a weaker relation of necessarily making probable to certain beliefs, he seems to think that necessarily most of one's intuitive beliefs will be true when they occur in conditions of the right sort. The weaker view does not entail any claim about the actual truth/falsity ratio of one's intuitive beliefs.

On the first option, we can say that the relation of making probable grows stronger, but this is because the relata change. Initially, a genuine intuition that p necessarily makes probable the belief that p in a weaker sense of making probable (the weakness depending on the difficulty of the proposition intuited). But as that intuition survives dialectical assault, what stands in the probability relation is not simply the intuition that p but also one's awareness that p coheres with one's other intuitions. This together with the intuition that p necessarily makes more probable the belief that p. The whole complicated proposition involving one's intellectual seeming that p along with one's having a good reason to think it mutually reinforces and supports one's other intuitions stands in a stronger probability relation to the belief that p than the initial intuition that p.

This option sounds right to me. There are conditions that necessarily affect the strength of the probability that one's intuition is tracking the truth. For instance, if one is not paying attention or faintly understands a scenario, then, necessarily, it is less likely that one's intuition is true. Necessarily, if one has good reason to believe that one is attentive, completely understands the scenario, is reflective, has considered related matters and formed intuitions about them, and one has the intuition that p, it is more probable that p is true. It sounds odd to claim that we must first come up with an inductive argument to verify that being attentive, etc., makes it more likely that one's belief is true, that the connection between these cognitive conditions and truth is a contingent one.

The second and third options try to preserve a slightly different claim: the more reason one has for thinking that an intuition has survived a sufficiently long dialectical process, the more justification one has for thinking it makes probable the belief it supports. So for the second option, the relation of making probable remains the same throughout but what increases is one's justification for believing that the relation obtains. I claimed earlier that an internalist epistemology requires that one be aware of the relation of making probable and that one must be capable of being acquainted with such relations to avoid an infinite regress. Acquaintance, however, seems to be the sort of relation that can come in degrees. One can be strongly or weakly acquainted with some fact. Compare for example a sharp pain with a dull one. In the latter case, it seems that one's acquaintance with the pain is more hazy, less clear and distinct, as if one were observing an object at a great distance. If this is the case, then perhaps one's initial acquaintance with the Keynesian probability relation holding between an intuition that p and the belief that p may be weaker than when that acquaintance is fortified by one's justification for thinking that the intuition has survived the dialectical process.

The problem with this approach is that once one strongly recognizes that a Keynesian relation of making probable holds between an intuition and a belief and recognizes that it is an internal relation, it seems that one would have strong justification for the next belief that one has supported by an intuition, even if that intuition has not yet survived the dialectical process. But this conflicts with what looks like a necessary truth: the stronger one's reasons for thinking that an intuition has survived the dialectical process, the more likely it is that the belief it supports is true. Since one realizes that there is this internal relation holding between the relata, anytime one has the relata of an intuition and a belief, one should realize that the same probability relation holds. Thus after one has acquired strong justification for thinking the relation obtains via an intuition's survival of the dialectical process, one would have as much justification for thinking the same relation holds for intuitions that have not yet been subjected to that process. This is a problem.

I believe the third and final option is as good as the first. It could be that the Keynsian relation of making probable is always the same—never grows in strength—but one does not always have equal justification for thinking that relation obtains because one does not always have equal justification for thinking one of the relata obtains—namely an intuition. If intuitions are the result of concept possession, it is not always clear that just because it seems to one that p, one knows that the seeming is engendered by the right source and thus a genuine intuition. It seems a necessary truth that intuitions engendered by concepts are more likely to correctly represent the structure of those concepts. In other words, there is a Keynesian probability relation that holds between the proposition that an intuition is engendered by a concept and the proposition that the intuition accurately reflects that concept. The only question is whether the seeming is the progeny of a concept. And the stronger one's reason for believing that the intuition has survived the dialectical process, the more justification one has for thinking it is a genuine intuition rather than the wrong sort of seeming.

Contrast this approach with Alvin Goldman's contingent reliabilism. He believes a mental state is a basic evidential source when it is a reliable indicator of the truth of its content where this reliability is understood as long run frequency. It is common to explain the reliable connection in terms of a causal route between the truth makers and basic evidential mental states. This is cashed out in terms of a counterfactual dependence. "Note that counterfactual dependences can *explain* reliable indicatorship relations. The fact that an m-state with the content p…occurs only if p is true may be explained by the fact that if any contrary state of affairs p* were true, the contrary state M(p*) would occur rather than M(p)" (Goldman and Pust 1998, 181). He goes on to say that "if there were no counterfactual dependences of the indicated sort, there would be grounds for doubting that the reliable indicatorship relation obtains" (1998, 181).

Must We Explain Intuition's Tie to Truth?

The naturalist will not be content with the analysis of intuition I have offered. Most likely she will demand an explanation of how intuition manages to be tied to the truth of philosophical propositions. "Without such an explanation," she may wonder, "why should I believe intuition somehow tracks the truth?" I believe by pointing to Keynesian probabilities, I have given an explanation, although one that is hardly likely to pacify the naturalist. But there is another sense which, on my view, no explanation is required.

Explanations must end somewhere just as the chain of verifying that something counts as a source of evidence must end somewhere. And the sorts of explanations that can serve as regress stoppers are necessary truths. Like Joel Pust, I believe that "there cannot be an explanation of why our intuitions are reliable *rather than unreliable* because the reliability of rational intuitions is not contingent but is, instead, necessary. Such necessary reliability admits of no explanation, but it surely need not admit of an explanation in order to be epistemically acceptable" (2004, 72).

I think this Keynesian account of why intuitions count as evidence is preferable to Bealer's arguments. One way he argues for the evidential status of intuition is by raising considerations about concept possession. He believes that full concept possession should be analyzed in terms of truth-tracking intuitions. He argues for this by asking his readers to consider a case where a woman introduces through use the concept "multigon." The woman determinately and fully possesses the concept even though she has not had occasion to apply it to triangles or rectangles. Next he asks us to suppose that the property of being a multigon is either the property of being a closed straight-sided plane figure or the property of being a closed straight-sided plane figure with five or more sides. He concludes that "intuitively, when the woman considers the question, she would have the intuition it *is* possible for a triangle or a rectangle to be a multigon iff the property of being a multigon = the property of being a closed straight-sided plane figure" (1998a, 223).

So Bealer tries to get us to see the connection between full concept possession and intuitions that track the truth by raising a scenario intended to elicit the intuition that the one should be analyzed in terms of the other: "[T]he modal tie invoked in the analysis of evidence is constitutive of determinate concept possession" (1996, 141 fn. 12). Goldman and Pust agree: "[A] concept tends to be manifested by intuitions that reflect or express its content." In other words, "[I]t is 'almost' a matter of definition that concepts have the indicated dispositions" (1998, 188-189). The problem is that this approach heavily relies on the very thing whose evidential status is in question—intuition. Wouldn't we already need justification for thinking intuitions give us evidence to be justified in thinking that the scenario shows that intuitions give us evidence when we possess a concept fully? I think so.

Another problem with this approach is that Bealer can't show how visual seemings make probable physical object beliefs. He believes that they necessarily do so. But he can't appeal to concept possession to explain why phenomenal seemings track the truth. Yet, one would think that the reason phenomenal seemings necessarily make probable physical object beliefs would be something akin to the reason why intuitions make probable philosophical beliefs, especially since both involve a relation of necessarily making probable.

Arguments against the Use of Intuition in Philosophy

The Problem of Disagreement

In "Reflection on Reflective Equilibrium" (1998), Robert Cummins begins his attack on intuition's evidential value by noting the parallel between the use of intuition in philosophy and observation in science:

> As a procedure, reflective equilibrium is simply a familiar kind of standard scientific method with a new name…a theory is constructed to account for a set of observations. Recalcitrant data may be rejected as noise or explained away as the effects of interference of some sort. Recalcitrant data that cannot be plausibly dismissed force emendations in theory…this sort of mutual adjustment between theory and data is a familiar feature of scientific practice. (Cummins 1998, 113)

Philosophers like Cummins wishing to attack intuition often begin in this way: they juxtapose observation and intuition, assume the epistemic credentials of observation are above reproach, and then ask whether the features of observation that promote its epistemic standing are lacking for intuition. Usually they conclude that the features that make observation a source of evidence are absent in the case of intuition, thus undermining its status as a source of evidence.

Cummins initiates his attack on intuition by pointing to a feature he thinks observation must possess to qualify as a source of evidence—namely, it must be intersubjective. Observation is intersubjective when, for the most part, we make the same observations. So it is argued that if what I observe is different from what you observe (assuming we have our eyes trained on the same thing), absent any qualifications that would explain why my observation is trustworthy and yours isn't, I should be skeptical that my observation in the present case is veridical. If, in attempting to confirm a scientific theory, my observations disagree with yours, and there are no other considerations that would assuage the conflict, then, *intuitively,* our observations in that case are evidentially mute; they cease to function as evidence for the truth of our theories.

Fortunately for the sciences, our observations tend toward agreement. Intuitions don't enjoy nearly as much agreement. Although I believe the disagreement among philosophers has been dramatically overstated, since philosophers share many intuitions that provide a shared base allowing them to disagree at the higher levels of theory construction, nevertheless, there is enough disagreement in their intuitions to make the matter disconcerting. So, the argument continues, unless we can explain intuition conflict so as to favor one set of intuitions over the other, then intuition ceases to function as a source of evidence. When it is the intuitions of accomplished and competent philosophers that are in conflict, it seems that there are no resources for explaining away the disagreement. Thus given the amount of disagreement among philosophers, the conclusion is drawn that intuition does not furnish evidence for philosophical theories.

It is important to note that in attacking intuitions in this way, one is implicitly relying on their use. For at the root of this attack is the principle that if observations or intuitions disagree and that disagreement cannot be assuaged, then they cease to be sources of evidence. But, we may ask, on what basis is this principle justified? What justification do we have for thinking that a failure of intersubjectivity undermines the evidential status of an information source? Even if one doesn't think we are intuiting the epistemic principle, we are at the very least tacitly relying on this intuition: if two propositions cannot both be true, they cannot both be evidence for the truth of the same proposition; and when pointing to disagreement, one is at least relying on intuitions about which propositions are logically incompatible.

In short, attacking intuitions by pointing to the presence of disagreement will implicitly rely on an epistemic principle, which can only be justified by using intuition. Thus when arguing against intuition in this way, one must be careful to localize her attack. She must be a local skeptic about intuition by confining that skepticism to a class of propositions. A global skepticism about the evidential status of intuitions can only lead to silence. For those who think this problem can be avoided by using a naturalistic philosophy that discovers epistemic principles using the methods of science, I argue against naturalistic approaches in the second part of chapter 3.

Often this sort of attack on intuition stems from the belief that observation is the gold standard of evidence and that if intuition is to be a source of evidence, it would need to possess characteristics similar to those of observation. For instance, most of our visual experiences agree, so it is often inferred that vision is reliable. It's not clear to me what justifies this inference in the minds of most, since clearly even when our observations agree, we could all be mistaken. So what makes us think that agreement in our observations increases their probability? If the connection is known inductively, I will be prompted to ask what source of evidence was used to verify this connection and how it was known to be evidential. Now we are off and running on an infinite regress unless we employ the solution I have given for ending an infinite regress of evidential sources: we must be acquainted with at least one source's connection to truth. We need some sort of necessary connection between the evidence and truth so that it can be the object of acquaintance. And I suspect this is what philosophers sort of have in mind when they endorse the principle that agreement in our observations makes likely their truth. This is something they take to be obvious and in no need of empirical confirmation.

Another problem with using observation as the gold standard is that it is not sensitive to the different kinds of visual experiences we can have. Many of our visual experiences are of objects sufficiently close and in good lighting; such experiences tend to agree across agents. But visual experiences in poor lighting or of objects at a great distance are more prone to disagreement and thus more prone to error. I submit that something analogous holds for intuition. Philosophers, those whose intuitions tend to function well, agree for the most part in their elementary intuitions. These intuitions are similar to visual experiences of objects nearby and in good lighting. Philosophical intuitions that tend to provoke disagreement are usually trained on more complex philosophical matters. Philosophers spend most of their time straining to see what is far off. There is an evident difference in the phenomenology of those intuitions that result from obvious self-evident truisms and those that occur in the context of non-elementary philosophical problems. Similarly, there is a marked difference in the phenomenology of those observations with greater evidential value. Many disputed philosophical intuitions are similar to visual experiences of objects poorly illuminated or far in the distance. This is why we don't allow the intuition to stand alone but try to bring it into reflective equilibrium with the rest of our intuitions.

Philosophers are attempting to make explicit tacit conceptual structures in the mind. And like observation where one can on occasion move closer to the object which was at first off in the distance (or bring the object closer through instruments), there is an analog in philosophy where one makes the concept more perspicuous the closer one gets to achieving reflective equilibrium. This is why, necessarily, intuitions which occur later on in the philosophical process are more likely to be true than intuitions that proceed from a sort of tabula rasa or little antecedent knowledge of the concept.

Ultimately, the problem of disagreement is really a problem for a frequency conception of probability or assumes a frequency conception. If one thinks that intuitions can be evidence only when they make probable in the frequency sense, then with the presence of disagreement, the track record doesn't look very good. To make this plausible, we must understand frequency as long run frequency rather than the actual track record for reasons already given. And if we have long run frequency in mind, there is a move Bealer makes that could be useful. He believes that we haven't even begun to approximate the conditions that would give intuitions greater epistemic weight. He believes that only by undertaking philosophy as a civilization wide project will intuitions begin to have the weight they could have. I also mentioned earlier that philosophers have by no means been united in their methods or projects up to this point, so some of the disagreement is misleading. It could still be the case that the long run frequency of intuitions will be quite good. This doesn't show that intuitions are evidential in the frequency sense, but it does cast doubt on the belief that we know they aren't.

However, for reasons I have already given, we can't hope to use intuitions as evidence understood in a frequency sense. The best we can hope for is that they necessarily make probable the claims they support. The actual track record is irrelevant to whether this internal probability relation obtains. Even in a demon world, visual seemings would still necessarily make probable physical object beliefs even though they would be consistently misleading. Thus, intuitions can make probable in the Keynesian sense even if there is disagreement. In other words, once one abandons the idea that evidence must make probable in the frequency sense, the problem of disagreement loses much of its bite.

Cummins' Calibration Requirement and Global Skepticism

Although disagreement in our intuitions is a point of concern for Cummins, he believes a more significant problem lies in our inability to positively assess the reliability of intuition. He claims that "an observational technique is deemed acceptable just to the extent that it can be relied upon to produce accurate representations or indicators of its targets. This is why observational procedures in general, and instruments in particular, have to be calibrated" (1998, 116). An information source is calibrated when we test its reliability by using it on an already known fact. To assess whether a newly devised telescope is giving reliable information, we should point it at an object whose properties are already known and compare the information supplied by the telescope with our antecedent knowledge. This requires that we have independent access to the test object. If we don't, we lack independent verification that the information source we are testing is reliable, which according to Cummins, destroys its epistemic status.

If this epistemic principle is correct, it creates a problem for intuition's epistemic status. Take Cummins' example for instance. He suggests that in testing someone's ability to intuit cases of fairness, we should test their intuitive faculty against several test cases of fairness and unfairness. But how do we learn the answers to the test cases? We lack independent access to whether a case is properly judged fair or unfair except through the medium of intuition; we cannot step out from behind intuition and juxtapose our intuitions with the facts themselves. Therefore, we must presuppose that someone's intuitions are reliable. Perhaps, Cummins suggests, we should only use those test cases upon which everyone is agreed. He complains that this would be pointless, for if everyone agrees, then the subject whose intuitions are being tested must already agree as well; and if she doesn't, then the test cases cease to be suitable, since they fail to evoke universal agreement.

I find Cummins' intuition here quite puzzling. He seems to suggest that the only cases we can use to test the intuitions of a particular agent are those on which there is universal agreement. But this is an intuition about what would constitute a reliable test key against which to test intuition. First, this is problematic because it demands much more than observation need satisfy. We would not give up observation as an evidential source if it turned out that there were some people who fail to see what we see (which is most likely the case). Second, his argument relies on the very source of evidence he is trying to weaken—intuition. Thus he must assume intuition has epistemic weight in some cases. If he concludes that intuition as a whole is evidentially useless, then so is his argument.

Cummins concludes that "philosophical intuition could be calibrated, but only on the assumption that there is some non-intuitive access to its targets" (1998, 117). In those cases where we do have non-intuitive access, intuition becomes superfluous. So either intuition is superfluous or evidentially useless.[140]

One must not be too quick in accepting Cummins' claim that an information source counts as a source of evidence when it has been calibrated, that is, when it has been tested on cases where we have independent access to the test subject. This demand will quickly lead to global skepticism. For if the above is a condition that an information source must satisfy for its outputs to qualify as evidence, then the information source that constitutes our independent access to the test subject must satisfy that condition as well, otherwise, its deliverances are evidentially useless. Thus to test it, we must use it on a test subject to which we have independent access via another information source which too must satisfy the above condition. And so we quickly set out on the path of an infinite regress where the only way for us deviate from that path is to move in a circle. But we fare no better in choosing this route, for if we don't already know that the outputs of some source count as evidence, then appealing to it somewhere down the line in verifying the connection to truth of another source will keep us in the dark.

Thus we are left with the same quandary that motivates the theory of foundationalism: if there is any knowledge to be had, there must be some things that are immediately or directly known. In the same way, if we are to know that some sources of information qualify as evidence, then we must immediately or directly know that the outputs of at least one data source qualify as evidence. The problem arises because we can't step out from behind a source of belief formation and verify its connection to truth by using another source without presupposing at the same time the latter's evidential status. Consequently, the justification of some belief source must be immediately given or evident.

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[140] It is not clear to me that this disjunction is correct. With respect to the telescope, we point it at an object to which we have independent access. But once the information supplied by the telescope is confirmed by another information source, we then use the telescope on objects to which we don't have independent access. So perhaps intuition could be calibrated on some cases where we have independent access to the test object but then be used on cases where we don't have independent access. I suppose Cummins thinks the disjunction follows because all philosophical issues are supposed to be alike. There aren't some cases where we can get access to a philosophical object via another route and some where we can't.

Thus we see that Cummins' project is doomed from the start, for he appears to demand that every source of evidence be calibrated. Such a demand leads irrevocably to global skepticism. Assuming for the moment that global skepticism is mistaken, there must be some source of evidence whose tie to the truth can be known immediately without relying on other sources of evidence. Given our earlier distinction between basic and derived sources, and given that intuition is as much a basic source of evidence as perceptual seemings, intuition's evidential status must be the sort of thing one can be directly aware of without relying on other sources (especially if observation is going to escape Cummins' quagmire).

Allow me to elaborate a little further on the above points for it is crucial to my case that we must take some things as given, and thus that knowledge, and in particular, philosophical knowledge, is irremediably egocentric. In his article "Epistemic Internalism, Philosophical Assurance and the Skeptical Predicament" (2006), Fumerton locates the problem of human knowledge and explains why questions or puzzles that arise when one has assumed a philosophical mindset can only be satisfied by an internalist theory of justification. He appeals to Barry Stroud's account of what a philosophically satisfying theory of human knowledge must do.[141] To satisfy our doubts and curiosities from a philosophical mindset, a mindset we assume when we are seeking the kind of assurance that cannot be achieved through our everyday methods of investigation, the kind of assurance that springs from a true awareness that one's beliefs are true, we must satisfy two important conditions. In asking the philosophical question of what we know and how we know it, we must 1) not presuppose that we know or reasonably believe any of the propositions that belong to the class of propositions currently under investigation. Thus, in showing that we know things about the external world, we cannot make use of an argument that contains propositions about the external world in the premises. To do so would be question begging, for then we would need a reason to think we have antecedent knowledge of the external world to show that we have knowledge of the external world.[142] But this kind of knowledge would also be subject to skeptical scrutiny, and thus the premises would be undermined by our original skeptical doubt. According to condition 2), we cannot assume the legitimacy of the methods we use in forming beliefs about a class of propositions when attempting to satisfy our philosophical qualms about whether we know propositions of that class.

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[141] Fumerton's point that these questions are asked from a philosophical stance is too often overlooked in epistemological controversies. As he says, "The philosophical enterprise is by its nature odd. Philosophers ask questions about that which is simply taking for granted by non-philosophers" (2006, 184). Externalist theories of justification and knowledge seem to miss the point of the philosophical enterprise; their answers are, in a sense, too easy and fail to take seriously deep philosophical curiosity—a mind unsatisfied by our unreflective beliefs about the most fundamental questions we can think about. Perhaps most telling, and a point which I shall belabor later on, is that externalist theories fail to take into account the unique position of the human mind; they offer conditions that are easily satisfied by beings incapable of the kinds of cognitive states available to human beings. I believe that there is a connection at least in the realm of epistemology between asking questions from a philosophical stance and seeking for that which is unique to human beings. Philosophical questions are asked by human beings because we are capable of unique cognitive activities.

These two conditions on a satisfactory philosophical investigation into knowledge can be applied to two different kinds of investigation into knowledge, where each kind leads to an undesirable consequence. If our investigation pertains to how and what we know with respect to a class of propositions, we must use propositions that fall outside of the class and methods not associated with that class to avoid begging the question. But this approach will produce a philosophical understanding of human knowledge only if we can satisfy our philosophical curiosity as to how and what we know with respect to the class of supporting propositions and methods. To avoid begging the question again, we must appeal to propositions of a different class and use methods foreign to the class of propositions under investigation.

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[142] Note how much knowledge we are assuming when detailing these conditions of a philosophical investigation into knowledge. We take ourselves to know, for instance, that question begging methods cannot justifiably contribute to a philosophical account of knowledge. I mention this because these conditions when applied to local skepticism ultimately lead to global skepticism. But drawing such a conclusion would be too hasty, for in arriving at global skepticism, we have, as I just pointed out, taken ourselves to know certain things. This is another instance in which global skepticism when adopted by a cognitive agent is self refuting. Yet, as I argued earlier, global skepticism as a bare philosophical thesis, that is, when it is not imputed to the mind of another, is not self refuting.

There are several ways this process could end. Perhaps it will go on forever, which is unlikely, given that there aren't an infinite number of methods that could serve to justify the use of other methods. The process could carve out a circle or a closed curve where a class of propositions and a set of methods which were formerly under scrutiny appear again to play the justifying role. But this violates the conditions that instigated this epistemic journey. It would seem that we are left with only one plausible option: the process must end with propositions and methods where the justification for these is immediately given. In other words, such propositions and methods don't require justification by appeal to other propositions or methods. The truth of the propositions is immediately evident and so is the legitimacy of the methods.

The second kind of investigation into knowledge is not a piecemeal activity; instead of directing our attention toward a class of propositions and the methods normally associated with them, we step back and take in the epistemic landscape with one glance. As Fumerton writes,

> If the epistemologist's ultimate goal is to understand *all* knowledge, knowledge *in general,* and to do so within the constraints posed by 1) and 2), it doesn't take a pessimist to see clouds on the horizon. To understand knowledge *in general* we need to satisfy ourselves that *all* of our methods of arriving at conclusions are legitimate and we would need to do so without using any of those methods! Even if we were to arrive at purely a priori knowledge of the legitimacy of epistemic principles, we would have left philosophically mysterious a priori knowledge—it would still be one source of knowledge that we haven't been able to study philosophically. (2006, 182)

Particularly stressing is that if these conditions on a philosophically interesting account of human knowledge are correct, then even God could not satisfy them. This might be taken as something of a *reductio* of these conditions for understanding knowledge. But there is an obvious compromise, for the conditions have much to recommend them, and we must be sure not to dispense with them entirely without first seeking to carve out some middle ground.

Clearly, these conditions on a philosophical understanding of human knowledge should only be applied in a piecemeal fashion, for if applied to knowledge in general, we fail to know the conditions themselves and thus possess no justification for their use. But if they are employed in a piecemeal fashion, and if there is any knowledge to be had even by God himself, their application must stop before they encompass all propositions and all methods. And the obvious place to set aside a class of propositions and methods that are immune to this type of investigation is to be found in what is immediately given. Indeed, this type of investigation is motivated by occasions when we fail to immediately apprehend the truth of a class of propositions and the legitimacy of certain methods. There is, in a sense, a certain amount of "epistemic distance" between us and the facts that make those propositions true and the facts of legitimacy. We seek to close that gap, to cover that distance, by appeal to something else that does not succumb to the same kind of philosophical curiosity. In other words, we wish to reach a point where the distance between mind and reality is exceedingly small, so small in fact that the possibility of error diminishes rapidly.[143] In short, I suspect that when we take up the philosophical point of view, we often search for a direct awareness—a direct confrontation with the facts. We look for the same thing with other kinds of everyday knowledge. We would rather see the facts or state of affairs ourselves than be told about them. Our philosophical curiosity is never entirely satisfied, especially in the face of skeptical considerations, until we get into contact with the objects themselves. Investigating an object in good light at arms length is the perceptual analogue of what we seek to achieve in a philosophical mindset.

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[143] Some classical foundationalists believe that the process should terminate with beliefs about which we cannot be mistaken. For instance, the process ought to end with those that are incorrigible for contingent beliefs. The problem is that even an externalist can demand this kind of condition while still failing to pacify our philosophical curiosity. For a reliabilist, an incorrigible belief would be one where there is a completely reliable causal connection that issues in the belief. To avoid this kind of incorrigibility, internalists must require reflective access to its presence; one must be acquainted with the fact that her belief is incorrigible. But the possibility that one might be mistaken will arise. Thus one will need to be acquainted with the fact that her acquaintance with incorrigibility is itself incorrigible. We now have set off on a vicious regress revealing that acquaintance itself is the most we can ask for.

To support my point that the best we can hope for when our concerns are epistemic is to have a direct confrontation, a direct awareness, of a fact that impinges on the truth of our belief, I appeal to Fumerton's test for deciding when we have reached something sufficient for justification, a cognitive state sufficient to satisfy our philosophical curiosity (or at least nearly so):

> What I want to suggest is that one should test the plausibility of a claim about what is genuinely sufficient for having justification by exploring the implications of that claim by moving up levels…it seems to me that reliablilists, for example, ought to have no qualms about using a way of forming a belief to justify one's belief that that way of forming beliefs is legitimate. Either the reliability of the belief-forming process is enough, by itself, to yield justified output beliefs or it is not. If it is, then it is no matter what level of belief one is interested in justifying. So if memory and induction are reliable, then through memory and induction I can justify my belief that memory is reliable…as I said before, it is striking that even many proponents of reliabilism can't quite bring themselves to argue that this is a legitimate way to justify belief that memory is reliable. To be sure, they might argue that if memory is reliable then we can form justified beliefs about the reliability of memory this way, but they feel uncomfortable simply asserting that they have justified belief about the reliability of memory formed in this way. Why? Because at some level they realize that in asserting the critical antecedent of the conditional claim they go beyond what they are in a position to assert qua philosophers trying to satisfy philosophical curiosity. (2006, 188)

Do we run into the same problems with acquaintance or direct awareness when we attempt to satisfy our skeptical proclivities with what is immediately given? The answer is "no." When we think we have a direct confrontation with the fact that makes our belief true, we usually don't feel the need, when adopting a philosophical mindset, to ascend a level to satisfy our philosophical curiosity. When the fact that makes a belief true is transparently before the mind, "[W]e are in a state that is all that it could be by way of satisfying philosophical curiosity. What more could one want as an assurance of truth than the truth maker there before one's mind?" (Fumerton 2006, 189). Furthermore, there is no temptation to ascend a level for doing so places greater distance between ourselves and the truth maker for our belief; we don't pacify our philosophical curiosity or achieve greater philosophical assurance by doing so.[144] Any problems that appear at the first level are likely to reappear at the meta-levels. Yet, we can't help but feel the need to ascend a level to assess whether in fact our belief is, say, reliably produced when dealing with an externalist epistemology. We cannot but help ask

> is my belief caused in the right way? The question is irresistible not because one in general needs second-level justification in order to have first-level justification. The question is irresistible because having a belief caused in a certain way when we don't know whether or not it is caused in that way is clearly not something that would give us assurance of truth. (Fumerton 2006, 189-190)

So, if the best we can hope for in pacifying philosophical curiosity born from our unique cognitive equipment is to achieve a direct confrontation with the fact that makes our belief true, and if it is possible for us to be mistaken in our reports of direct awareness or for our direct apprehensions to disagree with those had by others, then what are we to do? What can we do to mollify disagreement about what is immediately given to us? Well, obviously we can raise considerations that might help in causing the other person to "see" what we see. But what if all the tools of the philosopher have been brought to bear and still no agreement can be reached? What if another person claims to see the opposite of what you see, to have a direct confrontation, the content of which is at odds with your own? The hapless answer is that there is nothing to be done at least from the philosophical point of view; it is our unfortunate predicament as human beings. If all knowledge is grounded in a direct confrontation with facts, and if our direct confrontations can be inconsistent with the content of others, there is nothing we can do. But I'm hesitant to conclude that there is no justification to be had for our beliefs. If a person is intellectually virtuous and conscious of the conditions for justification and takes herself to have a direct confrontation with a fact others deny having a direct confrontation with, and she is able to achieve coherence in her beliefs while holding fast to intellectual honesty (that is, not simply modifying beliefs in order to achieve coherence), then she seems to have some justification for that belief. Are we to deny what we take to be immediately given to us by holding to an epistemic principle with which we may not be as strongly acquainted, a principle that would entail that no such basic belief ought to be formed? If direct awareness is the best we can do, is the best we can hope for given the human predicament, in assessing whether our beliefs are true, then it is likely that any epistemic principle used to argue for skepticism in this case or used to argue that such a belief is unjustified is likely to be less certain or to be accompanied by a smaller degree of assurance.[145]

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[144] Again, for those interested in incorrigibility, one must be acquainted with the fact that her belief is incorrigible in order for that incorrigibility to be of any use from the internalist's point of view. But it is then unclear why this acquaintance with incorrigibility is any better in seeking to pacify philosophical curiosity than a direct acquaintance with the truth maker alone. Any consideration that would engender doubt about our acquaintance with the truth maker for a belief would seem to apply equally to our acquaintance with incorrigibility.

Thus, we may conclude that the human predicament with respect to knowledge is irremediably egocentric. The best we can do is begin with what is given to us for, as argued above, this is the only way we can begin to pacify philosophical curiosity and achieve philosophical assurance. If others are in disagreement and the apparatus of philosophy has been brought to bear without success in achieving agreement, we are left to rest on what is given to us hoping that we are correct while others are mistaken. From the comparative point of view, we are more justified in holding fast to what we take to be given to us than abandoning it for an epistemic principle that entails that we should; our justification for believing the epistemic principle is unlikely to possess a superior epistemic standing.[146]

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[145] Disagreement over what we take to be given to us is not as prevalent as disagreement in our intuitions, which as I argued earlier, is not the same as a direct confrontation with a purported fact. Thus, we will spend more time evaluating conflicts in our intuitions and assessing what conclusions may be drawn from such conflicts. Keep in mind however, that the conclusion drawn from disagreement in what is immediately given to us, that our epistemic position is irremediably egocentric, will apply to disagreement in our intuitions.

Cummins' Skepticism on the Origins of Intuitions

Returning to Cummins, he does not end his attack on intuition with his calibration requirement but resumes the attack from a different angle. His line of argument is common to academics outside of philosophy. Non-philosophers tend to find the causal genesis of intuitions to be disquieting. The idea is that intuitions proceed from a variety of sources, concept possession being only one among several. And several of these sources destroy any positive epistemic standing intuition might have.

Cummins lists several sources of intuition (1998, 118): explicit theory, ordinary beliefs (beliefs that are the result of education, socialization, etc.), language ("the knowledge base one acquires in acquiring one's language"), concepts, and tacit theories. We shall deal with the first two since those seem to be the most problematic for intuition.

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[146] Even those who deny that acquaintance is a real relation must admit, I think, that from the philosophical point of view, acquaintance would be the best position one could occupy in verifying what she believes. If we want to know that a belief is true, to verify it's truth or achieve assurance that it is true, the best position one could adopt would be a direct awareness of the truth maker itself. Again, there is a parallel here with observation. I would rather observe something myself in satisfying my curiosity than rely on the testimony of others (all other things being equal). If I feel as confident in the testimony of another as I do in the testimony of my senses, it is because I have verified with my own senses that the person in the past has given reliable information. Similarly, acquaintance is direct verification by the individual. The fact that makes one's belief true is not mediated via some other source of information, whether it be the senses or intuition.

Cummins does not explicitly define “intuition” so we will use our notion: intuition is an intellectual seeming that has a necessary truth or falsehood in its content. Part of the problem with attempts to undermine intuition by appealing to our psychological makeup is that often intuition is never explicitly and clearly defined. Sometimes several different mental states are lumped together under the heading of intuition. Bealer raises a similar point when he complains that psychological experiments used to show the unreliability of intuition tend to lump together a variety of mental states; they fail to explicitly isolate and test intuition philosophically defined—an intellectual seeming with a necessary truth or falsehood as the content. In evaluating Cummins’ arguments, we must keep in mind that the outputs of these alleged sources of intuition may not properly qualify as an intuition in the philosophical sense.

Another problem is that those who still find conceptual analysis the most compelling metaphilosophy think of intuitions as proceeding from concept possession. To be an intuition, a mental state of seeming must come from a concept. Thus there is no sense in which intuition can have these heterogenous causes. Cummins’ problem then morphes into the following: how do we know when we have a genuine intuition given that all these diverse causes produce mental states that seem indistinguishable from intuition?

In claiming that intuition occasionally results from explicit theory, Cummins says nothing to support this claim. He instead concentrates his energy toward showing that intuitions resulting from this source are evidentially mute. Cummins makes his case as follows:

> [B]ut the judgments, or intuitions, as we have been calling them, cannot be cited as evidence for the theories that generate them. Those "intuitions" might, of course, be cited as evidence for some other theory, but their epistemological status then evidently reduces to that of the theory that generates them. They have no epistemological weight of their own. In general, intuitive judgment

> generated by explicit theory inherits whatever epistemological weight belongs to its parent. I can evidently dismiss the alleged observational status of intuitions that figure in your RE if I can show that they are generated by some explicit theory you hold. (1998, 119)

The problem with this argument is that explicit theories for philosophers often result from intuitions. And, necessarily, intuitions have more epistemic weight when one has good reason to think those intuitions occur later on in the philosophical process after one has canvassed many other intuitions. For they occur against the backdrop of more philosophical information and insight. There is a real sense in which the more intuitions one has canvassed, the clearer the structure of a concept becomes. Thus rather than undermining their epistemic status, intuitions which one has reason to think occur later on in the philosophical process have a better epistemic standing. Imagine complaining to a philosopher that her present intuition about a particular case is influenced by her other intuitions about similar cases or her intuitions about the theory itself. Such a complaint would have little merit. Since the purpose of philosophical analysis is to make clear a concept and the concept becomes clearer the more intuitions one has had recourse to in developing a theory, intuitions which occur later on this process don't have less epistemic authority. Quite the opposite seems to be the case.

The caveat is that an explicit theory that is not derived from intuitions is unlikely to engender justified intuitions, especially if that theory is inherited from an unreliable authority. But what if one's philosophical theory is inherited from a competent philosopher, a specialist in the field, whose explicit theory came about through the reflective equilibrium process? One's resulting intuitions would have some epistemic weight.

More importantly, if intuition were commonly the result of explicit theory, then philosophers would not worry that they might come across a case where the resulting intuition is in conflict with their explicit theory. Yet, an unvarying feature of philosophical investigation is the way in which our intuitions often surprise and confound us. We cannot be secure that our theory will never encounter intuitions of our own that are inconsistent with the theory. If intuitions are often theory driven, why do philosophers incessantly tinker with and revise their theories? Why isn't their work ever complete? It is because they often come across cases or arguments that issue an intuition at odds with their theory. Alas, the common plight of the philosopher is a choice among theories she finds the least problematic. Philosophers almost always accept a theory because they find that its problems are the fewest in number and significance (or some combination thereof). Rarely does a philosopher claim to possess a theory impervious to any difficulties whatsoever. This suggests that Cummins hasn't really identified a problem for intuition.

Also, recall the distinction between intuitions about particular cases and general intuitions about the necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct application of a concept. Beliefs about such conditions constitute much of our philosophical theory. We saw that there is no reason in principle why our intuitions can't have as their content these conditions (the theory).[147] In such cases, intuitions are not the result of explicit theory but are of the theory. And one can have justified particular case intuitions when they are influenced by one's general intuitions.

Next Cummins argues that many of our intuitions are nothing more than ordinary beliefs: "[A] lot of our so-called intuitions about fairness are beliefs of exactly this kind…they are part of the 'values' we picked up in our families, schools and playgroups, our reading and TV watching" (1998, 119). I mentioned before that we must exercise caution in evaluating arguments against intuition for it may be that the object of attack is not intuition philosophically defined. Not every mental state that results from such influences can rightly be called an "intuition." If these aren't intuitions, then his arguments don't undermine intuition's epistemic status. Instead we must be careful to rely on intuitions when supporting philosophical theories rather than culturally influenced beliefs.

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[147] According to Weinberg, Nichols, and Stich, "[S]ome strategies for discovering or testing epistemic norms also take intuitions about general epistemic or inferential principles as input" (2001, 429).

A similar problem is that, in the quote above, Cummins appears to identify intuition with ordinary beliefs. We have already observed several reasons why we shouldn't identify intuitions with beliefs, especially since intuitions are a possible source of evidence and beliefs can't be evidence for themselves. They are the things evidence supports. Also, it is common for people to hold fast to these beliefs even in the face of intuitions that suggest such beliefs are false. They are impervious to the reflective equilibrium process suggesting further that these aren't intuitions.

Moreover, this objection to the evidential status of intuitions applies more to the person on the street than to philosophers. Philosophical training or a sound education should help one acquire a greater ability to rise above such influences. Philosophers who deserve the name are ones who can to some degree transcend their early biases or indoctrinations and attend to the evidence; they are more inclined to listen to reason and to follow wherever it may lead. In other words, they are in an evidential state that gives them good reason to think they have acquired certain intellectual virtues. That is not to say they are completely immune to the intellectual vices of the average person, but they will exhibit the intellectual virtues more often. If Cummins is identifying intuition with ordinary beliefs, we may safely disregard his argument; if he thinks intuition often originates from ordinary beliefs, then his argument undermines the evidential status of intuitions for only certain kinds of people—those easily influenced by things other than evidence.[148] This is why we can't indiscriminately evaluate intuitions. Often a relevant question is "whose intuitions?"

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[148] This argument gives a preview as to the route I will take in addressing Stich's arguments against the reliability of intuition. To justifiably assess the reliability of an information source, one must do so with respect to the proper reference class. An unqualified attack is relatively useless; it is about as helpful as telling an inveterate smoker and drinker that he is likely to live until the age of 75 since the average male dies at that age. Given these further characteristics of the person, we can provide more accurate and useful information of how long he is likely to live. As I will argue, experiments that show that the intuitions of the average person are unreliable or in conflict are philosophically uninteresting, for it could still be the case that the intuitions of the philosopher, one who has submitted to rigorous philosophical training, are evidentially useful.

Note how this argument of Cummins could be equally applied to any source of belief formation. Scientific, historical, and mathematical beliefs can be heavily influenced by one's culture. For the most part, we believe what our culture, family, friends and the TV tells us to believe with respect to these matters. But it doesn't follow that everyone's beliefs in these areas are equal in their epistemic standing. And even though a person of average intelligence may misuse the scientific method, that method is not thereby suspect. Thus even if the object of Cummins attack are intuitions so called, the same moves open to the scientist, mathematician, and historian in defending their sources of data are open to the armchair philosopher.

In concluding this discussion of the influence of cultures and others on intuition, I wish to point out two further notable problems with this line of attack. First, it relies on intuiting an epistemic principle. Apparently, if intuitions are primarily the byproduct of one's environment, there is no reason to think that they reliably track the truth. But, and here is where the intuition comes in, if there is no reason to think they reliably track the truth, they do not qualify as a source of evidence. If it is indeed true that knowledge of this epistemic principle relies on intuition, then the attack is self refuting unless the detractor can argue that only intuitions of certain classes of propositions are prone to this kind of influence. But I don't think Cummins has any interest in doing so.

Cummins anticipates this reply to his argument by making the following claim in a footnote:

> I have heard the following *tu quoque*: 'Your arguments against appeal to intuition in philosophy are themselves grounded in intuition.' I do not think so; I think they are grounded in psychology and successful scientific practice. But here is a *tu quoque* back: If you believe in intuition, and think my premises and logic are intuitive, you should accept my conclusion. If you do that, you have a reductio against intuition on your hands. (1998, 127 fn. 8)

There are several things wrong with this reply. Although he may rely on psychology and scientific practice to garner evidence about the structure of our concepts, the influence of cultures, etc., the epistemic principles upon which he implicitly relies especially in proffering his calibration requirement are not the result of scientific or psychological investigation: they are the result of intuitive processes; and if not, we may safely demand an account of how he has come to know them.

He claims that those who support intuition have a *reductio* on their hands, for by supporting intuition, by taking intuition to be evidential, one is led to the conclusion that it is not. But the primary role for intuitions in this argument are intuitions of the epistemic principles and inferential connections holding between empirical premises, epistemic principles, and the conclusion. And surely he must not be so bold as to include our intuitions of inferential connections and epistemic principles in the argument against intuition, for then he would have nothing upon which to base his argument; he would have no material out of which to construct the dialectic. This shows then that just as the global skeptic can't offer an argument to support her view without committing herself to the contrary hypothesis, so too, Cummins can't argue against intuitions in their entirety without implicitly taking some to be immune to his attack. (And there is nothing wrong with singling out certain kinds of intuition for attack. We can argue against the evidential status of belief formed from perceptions in poor conditions without thereby undermining perception entirely as an evidential source.)

Furthermore, how does he know that a *reductio* is a problem for a possible source of data? One doesn’t need to confirm empirically that a *reductio* is a problem and I don’t know what such a confirmation would look like. But then in knowing that the *reductio* leads to a genuine problem, he must rely on the source of belief formation he is trying to undercut. Thus he must remain silent about whether the *reductio* is a legitimate problem if he wants to avoid one himself.

One final problem with Cummins line of attack which tries to undermine an information source by pointing to its susceptibility to defeating influences: it seems nothing could escape this sort of incredulity with respect to the cause of one's belief. For the same complaint can be raised about other sources of belief formation. It will thus lead to global skepticism unless we can carve up the epistemic landscape so that we have good reason to think that we can be immune to such influences. In claiming our intuitions proceed from our upbringing or the surrounding culture, we would need reasons for thinking that they do where those reasons retain their evidential status because they are not influenced by our upbringing or the surrounding culture. But how can we know that they aren't so influenced, especially when one's introspective reports about the origins of her intuitions are not accorded much epistemic weight? Wouldn't there be a concern of unreliability that introspecting the origin of many of one's other beliefs is unreliable, especially those beliefs that play an important role in attacking intuition? One could argue that a good bit of what we believe is prone to the same influences as intuition, even the methods of reasoning and inference used by those attacking intuition. The methods of the psychologists are influenced by their intellectual upbringing—their education in the methods of psychology. But why doesn't the psychologist think that her methods of investigation are as much influenced by the psychological community and thus fail to achieve objectivity? We don't learn anything in a vacuum. And why not think that not only her methods but her beliefs themselves are subject to the same influence? Cultural influence or influence in any form that would undermine the epistemic value of an information source is supposed to be blinding and quite difficult to detect. So how do we know when we are not subject to it? How do we know when we have perched ourselves on the objective point of view, when we have finally found a source of information that is unaffected by such influences? We learn through training or some naturally possess the skill of how to use sources of data well, to attend to the evidence, to reason well and satisfy the conditions for rational belief, to crowd out unwarranted influences that destroy the quality of the evidence. This is true of any discipline and any search for knowledge. But because philosophers address issues that are often taken up by your average person, issues in ethics and politics for example, it is not surprising that the methods of philosophy are distorted and misused. It does not follow, however, that there isn't a legitimate source of evidence still available to the competent philosopher if used rightly.

Stich and Others: An Empirical Attack on Intuition

According to some philosophers, there is an important assumption lurking in the background when philosophers practice their trade: philosophers and non-philosophers largely agree in the content of their philosophical intuitions. If this assumption turned out to be false, they argue, then intuition would cease to be a source of evidence. Thus philosophers should care a great deal whether their intuitions are largely shared. If they found that their intuitions consistently conflicted with the intuitions of others, then apparently their predicament would be similar to a scientist whose observations consistently disagree with those around her.[149] Such a scientist would have very little reason to trust her sensory experiences; in short, her perceptual faculties would no longer furnish evidence.

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[149] Often it goes unstated that if there were a sufficient amount of agreement among our intuitions, then intuitions would count as a source of evidence. But why should we accept this as a criterion or as evidence that an information source is evidential? Have we in the past been able to verify in a non-question begging way that a sufficient amount of agreement increases the likelihood of believing what is true? Were we able to juxtapose, say, our uniform beliefs and the facts to which they correspond and thus verify that agreement increases the likelihood that we are correct? I don't believe we have or at least I don't believe we've done so in a way that would satisfy the critical eye of the skeptic. Why think that agreement in our intuitions suggests that they are more likely to approximate the truth? Couldn't we all be mistaken, and if so, what reason do we have for thinking that is less likely to be the case as opposed to our being correct? I suspect that the claim "The greater the agreement there is with respect to a class of propositions, the more likely it is that our beliefs

If the armchair philosopher is attentive, he will deny that he harbors this assumption when doing philosophy or that the assumption must be true to make the armchair enterprise legitimate. This is because the only way to verify this assumption is to leave the armchair which would then make genuine armchair-bound philosophy impossible. He must be careful not to grant too much weight to the idea that our intuitions are legitimate only if widely shared. We have already seen how the armchair philosopher can avoid worrying about whether others agree with his intuitions thus requiring that he leave the armchair and empirically discover the intuitions of others. The key is to think of intuition's connection to truth in terms of Keynesian probabilities where there is an internal relation of necessarily making probable between intuitions and philosophical claims. Since this kind of connection to truth does not depend on actual or long run frequency, the track record of intuition loses much of its significance when assessing intuition's epistemic status. *A fortiori* the track record of others and comparisons between one's intuitions and other's lose much of their significance.

In "Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions" (2001), Jonathan Weinberg, Shaun Nichols, and Stephen Stich (henceforth, "WNS") hold the belief in the unity of our intuitions up to the fire of scientific experiment. They think the results help to undermine intuition as a source of evidence. Even though I think their project does not bear on the legitimacy of armchair philosophy, I think there are other important defects that plague their attempt to undercut traditional philosophy. Explaining why their experiment fails to affect

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with respect to that class are correct" is probably taken as a necessary truth and thus not known through an inductive procedure. But if that proposition has the status of a necessary truth, then I'm inclined to think the following is a necessary truth as well: if one has good reason to believe that her intuition is in reflective equilibrium with here other intuitions, then most likely it is correct. The likelihood spoken of in both claims is obviously not one of frequency. What we must be dealing with here are Keynesian probabilities, that is, necessary probabilities.

the epistemic status of intuition helps to reveal some of its important epistemic properties.[150]

As we will see in chapter 3 as well, Stich (1991) doubts whether the methods of analytic epistemologists, which rely heavily on intuition, can yield knowledge or justified beliefs of epistemic principles and legitimate patterns of reasoning. The problem, according to him, is that there could be others who generate different intuitive outputs which sanction different epistemic principles and different reasoning processes. If this happens to be the case, then intuitions cease to qualify as a source of evidence. He also thinks there would be no explanation available that would allow us to prefer our intuitions over the intuitions of others.

From the above and from the present article of WNS, we can glean that they rely on the following epistemic principle:

> EP: If our intuitions tend to disagree, they cease to qualify as evidence, absent any explanation. 151

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[150] WNS gets off to an inauspicious start by erecting something of a strawman. When discussing intuitions about epistemic matters, they claim that "an epistemic intuition is simply a spontaneous judgment about the epistemic properties of some specific case" (2001, 432). Note here the identity between intuition and a spontaneous judgment. We have already learned from Bealer why such an account is too superficial. Moreover, it does not distinguish intuition from other forms of spontaneous judgment—spontaneous judgments that by no means proceed from concept possession or any other commonly understood source of intuition. I might spontaneously judge that there are 50 marbles in the jar but that does not constitute an intuition. I am not being pedantic here or too demanding for my arguments against Stich might plausibly find their source in his inadequate portrayal of intuition.

[151] We must add further information to this epistemic principle if it is to be of any use. We need a specification of how much disagreement there must be to undermine intuition. We must know whose intuitions are relevant (although WNS seems to think that any normal cognizers intuitions qualify—a point I will dispute later). Unfortunately, I am not sure what WNS would say here. So I propose to leave the principle vague for the time being. Perhaps an attempt to eliminate the vagueness would reveal problems with the principle. My concern, however, pertains to their knowledge of it.

I am unsure how they could know the above epistemic principle without appealing at some point to intuition to gain that knowledge. Nor do I think most philosophers would take seriously the claim that not until one has verified the principle empirically does one have justification for believing it. The principle, if true, does not look like a contingent truth but rather appears to have the status of necessity.

Another intuition the principle relies on is that inconsistent propositions cannot both be true. And those who appeal to a truth-table definition of inconsistency to avoid intuition use must account for their knowledge of how the truth table should be filled out; they must explain how they know that for each atomic proposition, it is true or false and not both true and false.[152]

WNS also doesn't spend any time showing that most people agree with the principle. I'm not sure what the consensus of the philosophical community would be, but if they think there is a bit of important empirical evidence relevant to the armchair philosopher which would require that the philosopher leave the armchair, then they must be willing to put in the same work and verify whether most agree with this principle. Absent any survey showing this, their arguments against intuition remain in doubt by their own lights.

Let's ignore this problem for the moment and assume that WNS's project is not self-defeating. They do have a point when they argue that claims about the uniformity of intuitions across agents are contingent. The only way to verify the claim is through an empirical investigation. If it turns out that philosophers have been laboring under a false assumption that their intuitions are widely shared, this fact would at least be disquieting. Thus WNS write,

> There might be a group of people who reason and form beliefs in ways that are significantly different from the way we do. Moreover,

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[152] Laurence BonJour makes a similar point when arguing that our knowledge of logical truths cannot be accounted for by appealing to a truth table as a test for the presence of that logical property (1999, 44).

> these people might also have epistemic intuitions that are significantly different from ours. More specifically, they might have epistemic intuitions which, when plugged into your favorite Intuition-Driven Romantic black box, yield the conclusion that *their* strategies of reasoning and belief formation lead to epistemic states that are rational…If this is right, then it looks like the Intuition-Driven Romantic strategy for answering normative epistemic questions might sanction any of a wide variety of regulative and valuational norms. And that sounds like bad news for an advocate of the Intuition-Driven Romantic strategy since…It doesn't tell us how we should go about the business of forming and revising our beliefs. (2001, 435)

To show that this is a real problem, WNS presented a series of epistemic cases to undergraduates at Rutgers University. They believe the experiment proves the following hypotheses: 1) epistemic intuitions vary from culture to culture; 2) epistemic intuitions vary from one socioeconomic group to another. Here is one of the cases they used:

> Bob has a friend, Jill, who has driven a Buick for many years. Bob therefore thinks that Jill drives an American car. He is not aware, however, that her Buick has recently been stolen, and he is also not aware that Jill has replaced it with a Pontiac, which is a different kind of American car. Does Bob really know that Jill drives an American car, or does he only believe it? (2001, 443)[153]

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[153] One initial problem with this case is that the possibility of suspending judgment is not revealed as a possibility. Most people don't realize that judgment suspension is a viable option in many cases. Given the propensity of people to form beliefs on the basis of inadequate evidence instead of suspending judgment, I doubt it would occur to many of the test subjects that they could refuse to answer. The case is presented so that they are expected to have the relevant epistemic intuition. Furthermore, the strength of the intuition is not recorded either which could show that there isn't as much disparity between the test subjects (East Asians and Westerners). If for instance, 10% of Westerners have a strong intuition that Bob does not know and 10% of East Asians have a strong intuition that he does know, but 60% of Westerners have a weak intuition that he does not know (strong enough to elicit a negative judgment) while 60% of East Asians have a weak intuition that he does know, the two groups would be closer than the data initially reveals. Another possible defect with their presentation of the cases (one which I believe is a defect of most responses to Gettier cases) is that the only possible response is that he knows or only believes. The possibility of degrees of knowledge is not entertained. If one option were "Knows that x is probable" or "knows that x is more probable than not" than perhaps there would be more agreement. Indeed, I believe one way to handle some of the Gettier cases is to argue that they show our knowledge claims often assert more than we are in a position to claim. Instead of saying simply that we know (where sometimes this means that we can't be mistaken), we should say that we know that it is probable or perhaps we probably know.

For Westerners, about 75% judged that Bob does not know while 25% claimed that he does. But among East Asians, about 57% claimed that he does know while 43% denied that he knows.

WNS believe that this case helps to confirm a theory of Norenzayan and Nisbett, a theory which posits differences in the cognitive mechanisms at work in East Asians and Westerners:

> As Norenzayan and Nisbett have shown, EAs are more inclined than Ws to make categorical judgments on the basis of similarity. Ws, on the other hand, are more disposed to focus on causation in describing the world and classifying things. In a large class of Gettier cases, the evidence that *causes* the target to from a belief turns out to be false. This suggests that EAs might be much less inclined than Ws to withhold the attribution of knowledge in Gettier cases. And, indeed, they are. (2001, 443)

I think a better interpretation is that Westerners have a better grasp of how knowledge is non-accidentally getting true belief (although they may have a weaker grasp on other facets of knowledge). For relative to his evidence, the subject in the Gettier case just happens to be right. For all he knows, he could just as easily be incorrect. The cause of the belief is not as important, for as we have seen in clairvoyance type cases, even if the causal connection is impeccable, that doesn't secure knowledge.

In testing Westerners and those from the Indian subcontinent, they discovered even more startling results. The two groups exhibit greater disparity in their epistemic intuitions leading WNS to conclude that "what counts as knowledge on the banks of the Ganges does not count as knowledge on the banks of the Mississippi" (2001, 444).[154]

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[154] The two cases that produced significant differences were the Gettier case presented above and a version of Dretske's zebra case. Here is the zebra case:

> Mike is a young man visiting the zoo with his son, and when they come to the zebra cage, Mike points to the animal and says, "that's a zebra." Mike is right—it is a zebra. However, as the older people in his community know, there are lots of ways that people can be tricked into believing things that aren't true. Indeed the older people in the community know that it's possible that zoo authorities could cleverly disguise mules to look just like zebras, and people viewing the animals would not be able to tell the

So WNS believe they have obtained important evidence to help confirm their first hypothesis: epistemic intuitions vary from culture to culture.

They also believe their tests help to confirm their second hypothesis: epistemic intuitions vary from one socioeconomic group to another. Socioeconomic status was determined by years of education. Those with at least one year of college were classified as having a high socioeconomic status. Apparently, their epistemic intuitions differed enough with those from a lower socioeconomic status to cast doubt on intuition driven philosophy. With respect to the Zebra case and a cancer conspiracy case, those with a low socioeconomic status were more inclined to say that the agent has knowledge. WNS suggest that those from a high socioeconomic status accept weaker knowledge defeaters.

So, according to WNS, the philosopher who uses intuition as the principle source of data for philosophic reflection faces a serious problem. If we were to discover that sight tends to produce different sensory perceptions and we had no reason to favor one group's perceptions over another, we would seem to have no justification for our observation reports, which would in turn undermine many of our scientific theories. Fortunately, our senses give us the same data and this makes us confident that the information supplied by the senses is reliable. (Although, from a skeptical mindset, one must ask how we know that if most people agree in their observations, then sensory perception is reliable. One can't use sense perception to verify the epistemic principle since that would be question begging. So again, WNS's investigation may be driven by an implicit assumption which could only be justified via a method their study attempts to cast doubt on—intuition.) If philosophical intuitions give us conflicting data, then apparently we must have a reason for privileging some intuitions over others, or the intuitions of certain groups over others. It is here that the traditional philosopher can begin her attack on WNS's study.

> difference. If the animal that Mike called a zebra had really been such a cleverly painted mule, Mike still would have thought that it was a zebra. (2001, 445)

Against Experimental Philosophy

The first problem that plagues WNS's study is their belief about the nature of intuition. Since they believe we can test the reliability of intuition by considering cases in isolation where one only need to be sufficiently attentive and exhibit a modicum of reflection, for them, intuition is much like seeing an object at arms length. One is primarily passive; intuitions are foisted on the agent.

But the problem with this study is that the intuitions tested emerge in isolation from other intuitions and apart from a genuine epistemological discussion where one moves from the most basic considerations to the less basic. First, there are certain epistemological platitudes as well as other obvious epistemic points that help to shape our thoughts about the relevant cases. One cannot be expected to generate uniform intuitions unless she has been exposed to these. For instance, many of my students begin my classes believing that the following conditional holds: If x is true then we know that x is true. After exposing them to several trite observations about truth and knowledge, they quickly abandon that claim. However, if I were to test their intuitions about knowledge or truth before exposing them to some basic platitudes about the relation between them, I am sure their intuitions would be incorrect for the most part. One can't expect to generate reliable intuitions in isolation from the platitudes of epistemology and the basic truths that drive the discipline. Speaking in my own case, the demon world case used to disprove externalist theories of justification did not arouse any intuitions in me at first. It was not clear to me how it was at all relevant to the issue of justification. But as I grew in my understanding of epistemology and the tools relevant to the subject, learned what was at stake, where certain judgments would lead, and the platitudes that a good theory should take into account, I began to see the evidential value of the demon world example.[155]

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[155] WNS remark that the intuitions of the student begin to change as she takes philosophy courses. But instead of thinking that students are acquiring more skill in intuition use (such as keeping in mind previous intuitions about important cases and using those cases as guides in the less

I have argued that intuitions in isolation have less epistemic weight where by "isolation" I mean without prior knowledge of a subject matter's platitudes and apart from a genuine discussion of that subject matter, where one moves from the most basic considerations to the less basic, and where one's intuitions about different cases and principles are juxtaposed and tested for consistency and coherence. WNS's cases are ones that should be addressed only after several more basic issues in epistemology have been cleared away. For instance, it seems that those who make the wrong judgment in the Gettier case have yet to grasp the distinction between accidentally true belief and justified true belief.

As any philosopher will tell you, we can elicit more uniform intuitions by testing one's intuitions against a variety of basic cases, addressing what those cases have in common, and then moving on to the more difficult test cases. Even for those who don't have the same initial intuition, we can usually find another case where they have the intuition we have and we can use that case as our Archimedean point for discussing further cases and showing that some of their intuitions are inconsistent with the case on which we both agree.

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clear cases) and are achieving greater clarity about the structure of their concepts, they suggest another explanation: "[W]e have often suspected that we and our colleagues were, in effect, teaching neophyte philosophers to have intuitions that are in line with those of more senior members of the profession. Or perhaps we are not modifying intuitions at all but simply weeding out students whose intuitions are not mainstream" (2001, 438). But there are other explanations that are more plausible. In a philosophy class, we bring many of their intuitions into the light of day and reveal various inconsistencies in their intuitive judgments. Knowing that inconsistent intuitions cannot be true (which itself is an intuition), students are forced to make a choice. Skilled students are those who can hold many cases before their mind, canvass the resulting intuitions, keep those intuitions that are stronger, and modify the weaker ones. The problem is that the less skilled students have to proceed in a piecemeal fashion thus making it improbable that they will achieve consistent intuitive judgments. Intuition reform is a skill and a difficult one at that. Indeed, one could argue that a philosophical education focuses primarily on developing one's skills in intuition use. This is why skilled philosophers are able to draw out uniform intuitions from their students. It is not because they are good at manipulating people but they are skilled at raising relevant considerations and pointing to the pertinent cases. They think of things which, if we had thought of, would have informed our initial intuitive judgments.

In a sense, WNS is asking people to make comments about a discussion they just walked in on.[156]

I think WNS's conclusion about the influence of socioeconomic status help to confirm this proposal. Essentially, they compare the responses of the educated and uneducated. Now instead of drawing the conclusion that the intuitions of the uneducated have less epistemic weight, which seems to be the most natural conclusion, they think the evidential status of the intuitions of the educated suffer. We shouldn't be surprised that the intuitions of the educated are in greater agreement with the experts—philosophers. My hypothesis about intuitions, and how they work and what must be the case for them to work well, explains quite well why they have differing intuitions and preserves the intuition that the judgments of the more educated tend to have greater epistemic weight. With an education, one may come across, if only indirectly, platitudes about knowledge, or one at least imbibes some basic epistemic principles, since an important part of education is learning how to think, weigh evidence, etc.

Another way to think of this issue is in terms of our knowledge of mathematical truths. For some mathematicians, the answer to a complicated addition problem (adding 5 columns of numbers perhaps) can be self-evident to them. Instead of having to add each column, carry the one, etc., they simply "see" what the answer is. For someone like myself, I must construct an argument for getting a justified belief about the solution. My belief in what the numbers add to can only be inferentially justified given my cognitive limitations. We can think of philosophical cases in the same way. If you were to walk someone through a Gettier case and explain for them (construct an argument) for why they should think the subject in that case fails to know, I suspect they would be more likely to have the correct intuition. The Gettier case is complicated enough that we shouldn't expect everyone to immediately "see" the right answer. For the average person, they need more inferential justification for securing a genuine justified belief about a Gettier case. This is why some knowledge of epistemology is salutary since knowledge of more basic epistemic truths helps one to see the correct answer to Gettier cases.

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[156] This is why when teaching an epistemology class, one does not simply begin with Gettier cases. Basic platitudes of knowledge must be addressed first and the JTB analysis of knowledge must be sufficiently explained.

All I have said thus far agrees with my earlier claims about the epistemic weight of intuitions. I have argued that the more reason one has for thinking that an intuition has survived the dialectical process, the more justification the belief supported by the intuition has. Furthermore, intuitions which occur further along in this dialectical process—occur against a background of more information and other intuitions—have an initial greater epistemic standing than uninformed intuitions that occur at the beginning of the philosophical process. WNS's experiments are compatible with this hypothesis and thus instead of undermining intuition, they help to bolster the epistemic status of the intuitions of experts. For just as in math and logic, if the intuitions of the average person disagree with the overwhelming consensus of the experts, we shouldn't take those intuitions seriously. And the overwhelming view of the experts for Gettier cases is that the subject fails to know. Thus at best, WNS have only shown that the intuitions of the average person don't possess much weight. I have tried to explain why this is the case.

Think of it in this way: if you know that someone is sufficiently obtuse, you will accord less weight to his intuitions in mathematics and logic. Not everyone's intuitions have equal epistemic standing. Thus, WNS isn't showing us anything new. We have known for some time that there are hordes of people who have unreliable mathematical and logical intuitions. For elementary mathematical claims, their intuitions possess some epistemic weight. But the more complex the mathematical proposition, the more drastically the weight of their intuitions decrease. But this doesn't bother us because there is a substantial amount of agreement among mathematicians. Thus the real problem is not that average people with no philosophical training or little philosophical aptitude have conflicting intuitions. What is distressing is that even the experts can find cases where their intuitions diverge. But given the massive amount of agreement amongst philosophers in their elementary philosophical intuitions, the problem is obviously due in part to the complexity and difficulty of the cases.

Consequently, WNS's evaluation of intuitions is similar to a judgment of how long I am likely to live based solely on the information that I am a male. Such a judgment ignores important information that would alter the judgment, and WNS ignore important information as well—namely, whether the persons being queried are conceptually competent. They seem to assume that anyone is equally qualified in the use of intuitions. But the use of intuition is a skill; it is not the analog of viewing medium-sized objects at arms length and in good light. Using intuition is more akin to using a complicated microscope. One has to be able to focus it, know where to point it, and so forth. In short, it is a skill one acquires; it is not an ability one naturally acquires in the flower of his youth such as the ability to identify medium-sized objects in the right conditions.

Let's cast another critical eye on the empirical testing of intuitions and look at results already known. A collection of logical fallacies have been identified and named because the average person is prone to use them. For instance, in a beginning logic class, when students are presented with the argument form "affirming the consequent," they tend to find the argument valid. Not until one constructs obviously invalid substitution instances of the argument form do they have the correct intuition. But if WNS's empirical approach yields legitimate results, then we should doubt whether we have knowledge of many logical propositions. The intuitions of the average person have the same epistemic weight as those of the philosopher. But this is absurd. If WNS's conclusions are correct, then we can't identify the informal fallacies as fallacies. For all we know, they might be outstanding specimens of reasoning.

WNS are wise to limit their attack on intuition to those which are epistemic. By exclusively focusing on epistemic intuitions, they leave out significant data pertaining to intuitions in general. What about our basic logical and mathematical intuitions? There is much agreement there. Moreover, the agreement with respect to these latter intuitions can help to explain the disagreement in epistemic intuitions. Basic math and logic intuitions are of propositions that are practically self-evident in the strong sense: once one understands the proposition one cannot help but see that it is true. So intuitive disagreement is often correlated with the simplicity of the cases for those untrained in intuitive judgments. But Gettier cases are less simple, and thus the initial intuitive outputs possess less epistemic worth. They are simple for the philosopher since she has already acquired a level of philosophical sophistication that makes them similar to basic logical intuitions. Furthermore, what if the philosophical community were to find that most non-philosophers could not see that a modus ponens argument is formally valid (perhaps because they struggle with the notion of logical impossibility where an argument is invalid if and only if it is logically impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion false)? Would we give up believing in the validity of modus ponens? Surely not.

If the intuitive process is more complicated than seeing an object at arm's length, then the intuitions of the philosopher should furnish most of the data for the epistemic weight of intuitions. First, the intuitions of the philosopher are more informed. Unlike the intuitions of the average person, the philosopher's intuitions proceed from knowledge of the most trite and obvious considerations pertaining to a philosophical topic. She has also been exposed to a variety of cases and theories and thus can take in more of the philosophical landscape in one glance. This is why our intuitions change the more philosophy we do for we attend to a wider array of considerations and keep them before the mind while making intuitive judgments about particular cases. The intuitions of the person on the street are in one sense unmoved movers; they are ill-informed and often occur against a paucity of philosophical insight. If intuitions help to make a tacit concept more explicit, then the more intuitions one has canvassed and the more facility one has in thinking philosophically, the more that concept will be brought into the light of day thus helping to ensure that further intuitions are more likely to be true.

An analogy might be helpful at this point. I think WNS's experiment is akin to showing someone a few minutes of a movie starting half-way through and then asking them to identify the killer. The intuition does not emerge from an informed mind. Consider this as well. There are good reasons for not running this experiment on children although one wonders why WNS doesn't given their rather shallow view of what intuition is. But the reasons for not using children in this experiment occur to a lesser degree in their subjects: there is not sufficient understanding or conceptual competency on the part of the test subjects to make the experiment worthwhile.

Thus WNS's argument against the epistemic status of intuitions is of little value. They succeed in revealing what philosophers already knew: those without training in philosophy often have bizarre initial intuitions.

As you can see, my diagnosis of what's wrong with WNS's experiment dovetails quite nicely with my earlier defense of the evidential status of intuitions: the epistemic credentials of intuitions increase (they are more likely to be true) the more evidence one has for thinking she has canvassed other intuitions and is close to achieving equilibrium. The explanation is that as one canvasses more intuitions, one's later intuitions become more informed by intuitions about the most basic cases, which then help to engender further intuitions, and the surviving intuitions can serve in the production of future intuitions. Even when the philosopher is exposed to arguments in an area of philosophy with which he is not familiar, his initial intuitive outputs are more trustworthy, since when exposed to particular cases, he is likely to quickly assess the implications of his intuitive judgment to see if it leads to counterintuitive consequences.

Harold Brown mentions that experts in a field often know much more about the characteristic features of an object than non-experts (1999, 45). Scientists often know much more about the objects of their investigation and thus their scientific intuitions (as Brown calls them) are likely to differ from ours and, I might add, be more reliable. The reason is quite obvious: scientists have access to the objects of scientific investigation or investigate those objects far more thoroughly than we do. They also have developed skills in scientific investigation and understand the methods of science and their application. Thus their classificatory judgments are more likely to be correct because they have more information about their respective objects. But the same could be said about the intuitions of the philosopher. By thinking philosophically, philosophers make some progress toward exposing the structure of a philosophical object; some of its features become more apparent. Why then shouldn't the philosopher's judgments when compared with the non-philosopher be comparable to a scientist's judgments when compared with a non-scientist? In both cases, the expert's judgments have greater epistemic weight.

Another parallel between these two cases is that scientific training enhances one's abilities to discover the essential characteristics of objects just as philosophical training does. As Edidin observes, scientists "gather data by observing and recognizing states of affairs of various kinds. Hypotheses are proposed to account for the data. These hypotheses are evaluated by reference to their success in accounting for the data and their coherence with data and other well-supported hypotheses" (1985, 538-539). But he goes on to say that the recognition required in gathering data ranges from cases which do not require scientific training to those that do. I suggest philosophical intuitions are usually like the latter cases. There are intuitions that don't require philosophical training—intuiting the law of non-contradiction or that 2+2=4—and those that do. The problem with the views of Stich and others like him is that they treat all intuitions as being on a par with intuiting the basic laws of logic. Indeed, why else would they think the intuitive outputs of the philosophically benighted constitute evidence for or against the evidential status of philosophical intuition?

A precursor to my argument for the epistemic superiority of a philosopher's intuitions can be found in the writings of W. D. Ross and Robert Audi. In "Ethical Reflectioism" (1993), Audi tries to dispel certain myths about the nature of intuitive moral knowledge.[157] He thinks philosophers err in their understanding of ethical intuitions because they compare them to the intuitions of basic logical or mathematical principles. Audi provides the following quotes from Ross as an opening salvo to his argument:

> That an act qua fulfilling a promise, or qua effecting a just distribution of good…is prima facie right, is self evident; not in the sense that it is evident from the beginning of our lives or as soon as we attend to the proposition for the first time, but in the sense that when we have reached sufficient mental maturity and have given sufficient attention to the proposition it is evident without any need of proof, or of evidence beyond itself. (1993, 167)

Ross goes on to make the same argument in those cases where the intuitions of the moral pluralist conflict with those who take moral properties to be reducible. He says that if someone challenges

> our view that there is a special obligatoriness attaching to the keeping of promises because it is self-evident that the only duty is to produce as much good as possible, we have to ask ourselves whether we really, when we reflect, are convinced that this is self-evident…it seems self-evident that a promise simply as such, is something that prima facie ought to be kept…the moral convictions of thoughtful and well-educated are the data of ethics, just as sense-perceptions are the data of a natural science. Just as some of the latter have to be rejected as illusory, so have some of the former; but as the latter are rejected only when they conflict with other more accurate sense-perceptions, the former are rejected only when they conflict with convictions which stand better the test of reflection.

Perhaps WNS could initially agree with Ross' claim. They could argue that they performed their test, not on children, but on mature agents who possess the requisite cognitive maturity. Audi, however, extends Ross' notion so that it becomes more perspicuous what sort of intuitions are germane.

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[157] Audi may be arguing for intuition in the sense of an a priori insight into synthetic necessary truths since he addresses the intuiting of irreducible basic moral principles (moral pluralism). Our discussion of intuition has focused on cases where concepts engender intuitions rather than the mind reaching out through a priori insight to apprehend synthetic necessary truths. It is the difference between these two that explains why some philosophers are willing to appeal to intuition in ethics (in the process of a conceptual analysis of moral rightness for instance) but reject ethical intuitionism. Nevertheless, what Audi has to say about the intuition of basic moral principles applies equally well to our notion of intuition.

Audi argues that Ross' comparison of moral intuition with logical and mathematical intuition is infelicitous. Basic math and logical intuitions are rather easy to produce. Cognitive agents with varying intellectual abilities substantially agree about their truth. But intuiting the truth of philosophical propositions is more difficult. They are usually not immediately self-evident in the way modus ponens is (at least to those without a philosophical education). Instead, they are what Audi calls "mediately self-evident." Philosophical intuitions are usually the result of reflection rather than an impetuous impulse to believe or a mere seeming foisted on the agent. To show that there is a sense in which intuition is the result of rational inquiry or reflection, Audi gives the following illustration:

> Consider listening to one person complain about a report done by another. Suppose the complaint—by Marshall, say—is impersonal, plausible, and professionally documented. One might conclude, from the credible list of deficiencies, that the report—by Wilma—needs revision. Now imagine that one is asked whether there might be some bias in the critique. One might now think back over the details, and from a global, "intuitive" sense of Marshall' intonations, word choices, selection of deficiencies, and omission of certain merits, one might conclude that he is jealous of her. Let us call the first judgment—that the report needs revision—a conclusion of inference: it is premised on propositions one has noted as evidence. Call the second judgment a conclusion of reflection. It emerges from thinking about the overall problem, but not from one or more evidential premises. Instead, I respond to a pattern: I notice an emotional tone; I hear him compare her report to one he once did; and so forth. (1993, 302)

Audi is quick to point out that this process is not inferential. It is akin to forming perceptual beliefs on the basis of visual impressions where one does not articulate those grounds. Furthermore, unlike our ordinary conception of self-evidence where upon understanding a proposition, one can't help but believe it (one does not require a truth-indicator to apprehend the proposition), Audi suggests a category of self-evidence called "mediately self-evident": "We may distinguish, then, those self-evident propositions that are readily understood by normal adults and those understood by them only through reflection on the sorts of cases they concern. Call the first immediately self-evident and the second mediately self-evident, since their truth can be grasped only through the mediation of reflection—as opposed to inference" (1993, 303).[158] This helps to explain why philosophers are more loath to call philosophical propositions "self-evident" since the intuitions that occur in the context of such areas as epistemology or ethics are not similar enough with our basic logical and mathematical intuitions to warrant the appellation.

Another important feature of Audi's account of intuitions (although his aim is moral intuition in particular) is that they are not by definition prima facie justified. He thinks there is a reason to consider them prima facie justified when they are grounded in, rather than merely formed in the light of, an understanding of their propositional object. The point here is that one acquainted with the reflective process, one with more facility in generating intuitions is more likely to have prima facie justified intuitions. Thus not everyone's intuitions are epistemically equivalent.

I contend then that intuitions are bound to possess greater epistemic weight when they proceed from the kind of implicit reflective process Audi mentions above. A philosopher's initial intuitive outputs where he is not far along in the equilibrium process have more epistemic weight because they proceed from a background of considerations, platitudes, and skills that although not usually made explicit in the intuitive process, aid in engendering intuitions with more epistemic weight. I believe this offers an equally plausible explanation of why there have been many uniform intuitions about famous cases like the Gettier cases. The fact that philosophers disagree at such high levels of theory construction causes us to forget that there is much agreement about the lower levels of theory construction.

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[158] In a footnote, Audi makes a further point which is pertinent to our argument:

> On the assumption that one cannot reflect in the relevant way on the concepts in question without some kind of understanding of them, I take it that there is a level of understanding of mediately self-evident propositions, or at least of parts of them, not by itself sufficient for justification but capable of leading to that as the understanding develops by reflection. (1993, 314 fn. 13)

This supports my claim that the intuitions of the philosopher are the only relevant data for the evidential status of intuition since philosophers are those who have achieved a greater understanding of philosophical concepts through reflection and are more skilled at the ratiocinative processes that implicitly occur in the genesis of intuitions.

CHAPTER 3
ARMCHAIR PHILOSOPHY AND CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

We have seen how some philosophers attack the legitimacy of armchair philosophy by casting doubt on the data or evidence appealed to. The philosopher must have data, information, or evidence to construct her theories. Historically, philosophers thought that their data could mostly be gleaned from the use of pure reason and reflection. But those who see armchair philosophy as a philosophical disease seriously doubt whether intuitions can yield the kind of data one needs to answer philosophical questions.

There is, however, another problem the armchair philosopher qua conceptual analyst must attend to. Although our data currier can be questioned, the source may be questioned as well. Those who think that mentalism provides the path to philosophical enlightenment usually think of mental concepts as the objects of analysis and the progenitors of intuition. But if the concepts can't be trusted to yield the kind of knowledge the philosopher is looking for, then we have a deeper problem, one that moves past the legitimacy of intuitions and flies straight to the source.

In this chapter, we will scrutinize the best arguments against the legitimacy of conceptual analysis, arguments that focus on the concepts themselves. Some philosophers believe our concepts vary thus making legitimate debate unlikely. Intuitions only serve as evidence of the structure of one's concept and don't provide much shared evidence when doing analysis. When doing conceptual analysis, most philosophers assume others share their concepts and thus expect their counterexamples or other arguments to provoke the same intuitions. The philosopher is often dismayed when another fails to recognize the force of a counterexample when many others seem to. In such cases, that person's eccentric intuition appears to have less weight since that intuition is supposed to reveal the structure of a common concept.

The alleged moral to be drawn is that if we don't possess the same concepts, conceptual analysis as a species of armchair philosophy becomes futile: philosophical debate becomes chimerical and intuitions cease to give general evidence for such things as knowledge or fee-will. The only evidence they yield is autobiographical. Extra mentalism sidesteps this issue since the objects of analysis exist outside the mind, like abstract concepts for instance.

Some believe that the direction of determination between concepts and the world is reversed. The world of properties such as knowledge, truth, and goodness should determine our concepts of them. These things have natures independently of our conceptual structures. Philosophy then should not begin with inward reflection; rather we should begin outward by using empirical methods of research. We should model our philosophical musings on the search for kinds of rock, for example. We should search for knowledge or moral goodness in the way we search for natural kinds since philosophical objects belong to this category. By plying causal theories of reference, philosophers like Hilary Kornblith believe that they can pick out items of knowledge and investigate them empirically.

If any of the above arguments against conceptual analysis are sound, the armchair philosopher may need to retool and accept the kind of extra-mentalism that would keep her sedentary. But, as we shall see, I'm not convinced the armchair philosopher has a sufficient reason to stand up just yet.

Conceptual Analysis and Conceptual Change

> Now I firmly believe that "conceptual analysis", taken as the search for necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of terms, or as a search for criteria for application by reference to which a term has the *meaning* it has, is a confused program, a philosophical chimera, a squaring of the circle, the misconceived child of a mistaken view of the nature of language and thought. (Millikan 1989, 291)[159]

The above quote nicely summarizes the growing attitude of many philosophers toward conceptual analysis. But, just as philosophers who criticize the use of intuitions can often be found to make prodigious use of them, so many philosophers spurn conceptual analysis only to slip back into using it. Nevertheless, this attitude should be alarming to the armchair philosopher since his opponents wonder whether the most basic and perennial question of philosophy—the "What is F?" question—should be shoved aside or entirely recast. Not only is armchair philosophy at stake but also the emphasis of the philosopher to move from the most basic questions to the less basic.

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[159] According to Karen Neander, "Conceptual analysis has also often been associated with a search for necessary and sufficient conditions, and the idea that such conditions are required has long been disreputable" (1991, 171).

Why do attacks on conceptual analysis which also deny the possibility of armchair extra-mentalism undermine the foundational character of philosophy? If the most basic questions about our world, questions we presuppose answers to in looking for other kinds of knowledge, address objects which don't have a shared nature because of conceptual variation, then some argue that we should only care about answers to questions like "What is truth?", "What is knowledge?", "What is the good?", when searching for definitions of concepts that will serve our interests.[160] The same is true, they argue, if our concepts don't exhibit a classical structure thus leaving philosophical objects without a distinct nature. There is no fact of the matter over and above our choices of how best to think of such things. Do the theoretical sciences give us knowledge of the world? "I don't know," the answer might go, "but they give us theories that work, and thus shouldn't we identify knowledge in the theoretical sciences with these pragmatic consequences?" Stephen Stich (1991) and Richard Miller (2000), both fans of conceptual variation, suggest that this is what philosophical reasoning should look like.

This new attitude toward philosophy could also be influenced by externalist theories of justification where the so-called knowledge achieved satisfying externalist standards need not build from the most basic questions upward. There is a certain faith in our cognitive and sensory faculties that allows one to skirt question begging problems and use vision to confirm the reliability of vision. For if reliable belief-forming mechanisms yield justified belief and knowledge, then one could use them to confirm their own reliability. Alvin Plantinga shrewdly puts this view to work when he argues that belief in God can be properly basic, an idea some externalists find appalling.[161]

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[160] This isn't the case for so-called naturalist theories of philosophy. They would still believe that philosophical objects have a nature. But this of course won't palliate the armchair philosopher. The "What is F?" question may look the same but the search would be undertaken by scientists, or as Kornblith would have us believe, philosophers who could count as their close colleagues biologists and chemists. Another important difference is that we could not analyze things even if they fail to be instantiated. We could not discover what free-will is unless we act freely. We could not discover the nature of knowledge unless we know quite a bit. But this isn't necessarily true for the armchair philosopher.

This implication is quite vexing to the traditional armchair philosopher for philosophy is often born from discontent. The philosopher dislikes presupposing answers to the most basic questions for she sees how answers to them can entail many changes in the higher levels of one's belief structure. Nor is the philosopher completely satisfied with the testimony of others. She wants to see the correct answer for herself. We often find ourselves in such situations. We are told by someone that X exists or has occurred but we often feel epistemically better when we can perceive X for ourselves. Similarly, philosophical curiosity is a wish to know for ourselves. But then we shouldn't be happy relying on the *testimony* of the senses to confirm their own reliability. We wish to get closer to the truth of the matter by using reasoning that doesn't completely rely on faith in the testimony of others or other things. Well, at least philosophers used to.

So, there is much at stake here—in particular, the spirit and origin of philosophy, and the desires which spark one's foray into philosophy and keeps one returning for more. As an armchair philosopher who can't be intellectually satisfied, nor I would argue, epistemically justified to a sufficient degree, without moving from the most basic to the less basic questions, this issue is profoundly important to me. This is not just an internal squabble amongst philosophers but has implications for the rest of our knowledge of the world.

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[161] I owe this last point to discussions with Professor Fumerton.

The Thesis of Conceptual Variation

> Since conceptual analysis is aimed at discovering the criteria of application that people have in mind, and since these can and often do change over time, conceptual truths will always be relative to a linguistic community at a given time. (Neander 1991, 177)

The most intriguing objection to the way we do conceptual analysis focuses on the acquisition of concepts and their stability over time. The idea is that we don't possess the same philosophical concepts, and even if we did, these concepts would not be intergenerational.

Alasdair MacIntyre in *After Virtue* (2002) suggests that important writers in the history of thought have used different conceptions of virtue:

> One response to the history which I have narrated so far might well be to suggest that even within the relatively coherent tradition of thought which I have sketched there are just too many different and incompatible conceptions of a virtue for there to be any real unity to the concept or indeed to the history. Homer, Sophocles, Aristotle, the New Testament and medieval thinkers differ from each other in too many ways. They offer us different and incompatible lists of the virtues; they give a different rank order of importance to different virtues; and they have different and incompatible theories of the virtues…and if we extended our enquiry to Japanese, say, or American Indian cultures, the difference would become greater still. (189)

He does however go on to argue that we can identify a conceptual core—an underlying unity—common to the seemingly disparate notions of virtue.

According to Goldman and Pust,

> It must be acknowledged…that people might have markedly different contents associated with one and the same predicate. In that case, philosophical analysis must be satisfied with using intuitions to get at each person's distinct concept…However, there are notable philosophical examples, such as the Gettier examples, which evoke the same intuitive responses from virtually all hearers who understand them…This strongly suggests that at least some predicates of philosophical interest have robust contents that span a wide spectrum of the linguistic community. (1998, 199)

Richard Fumerton vents his frustration with externalist analyses of justification when he writes that "[m]any internalists are convinced that externalists are simply re-defining epistemic terms in such a way that they lose the kind of meaning that the philosopher wants them to have in order to ask the kind of penetrating philosophical questions that are the peculiar product of a kind of philosophical curiosity" (2005b). William Alston recommends that epistemologists immediately give up the illusion that they are usually talking about the same thing:

> [T]he widespread supposition that 'justified' picks out an objective feature of belief that is of central epistemic importance is a thoroughly misguided one. I shall argue that the perennial quest for what it is for a belief to be justified, and what are the necessary and/or sufficient conditions for such a status, is quixotic, of the same order as the search for the Fountain of Youth. The best assessment of the situation is that no such objective property of belief has been identified and that controversies over what it takes for a belief to be justified are no more than a vain beating of the air. (2005, 11)[162]

And finally, Richard Miller offers this piece of pessimism on his way toward arguing for a philosophy sans intuitions:

> As Nietzsche pointed out, the Homeric concept of a good man (Achilles) is quite different from the Judeo-Christian concept of a good man…Nor have our notions of knowledge and opinion remained immutable from Plato's time to the present…The linguistic dispositions which we have now are as complex as the rich history of our culture. Small wonder that it is impossible to harmonize them into coherent definitions.

This is only a brief glimpse into the philosophical trend of questioning whether philosophers have their sights trained on the same thing. This thesis, the thesis of conceptual variation (TCV), could quite possibly illuminate many of the puzzles associated with the outcomes of philosophical analysis, especially the entrenched disagreement which persists to this day.

Obviously, the history of philosophy has for the most part assumed the unlikelihood of TCV. Philosophers have assumed for some time that they have been looking into a common subject since the very first philosophical musings. They are tethered to Plato or

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[162] Torin Alter and Russell Daw point to two other instances of this idea: "Ted Honderich argues that there is no universally shared, complete concept of freedom, and [Richard] Double argues that our concept of free action is inconsistent" (2001, 354).

Descartes because they have shared a common project. Plato didn't talk about knowledge while we, unbeknownst to ourselves, are talking about schmowledge, which resembles knowledge enough to dissemble our conceptual variation. Not only did Plato worry about knowledge but we as well can worry, talk, or debate about the same thing.

If we have been talking about the same thing for centuries, then philosophy takes on a transcendent character. For one's philosophical output is neither temporally nor culturally bound but is of interest to anyone who goes by the name "philosopher."

Unfortunately, as I lamented in the Introduction, philosophers have not been very philosophic about philosophy. The philosophic disposition is a general frustration and discontentment with assuming answers to the most basic questions of human existence—questions we presuppose answers to while searching for other kinds of knowledge. But somehow philosophers have been quite content to presuppose we have, throughout history and even today, been talking about the same things. We shall call this the thesis of shared concepts (TSC): philosophers, for the most part, have been analyzing the same concepts since the inauguration of philosophy. There are reasons however why the armchair philosopher should not be keen to think that TSC is important to her work. Her failure to confirm TSC might actually be completely justified.

If we wish now to question whether TSC is true, what should the process look like? Is the philosopher positioned to discover the answer from the armchair? Those who see philosophy as foundational to all other sciences should hope so.[163] Otherwise, philosophy will depend on an answer to an empirical question which can't be answered philosophically and will involve modes of information gathering, like the use of perception, whose legitimacy the philosopher wishes to discover without begging any questions. But this will lead to reasoning in a circle if philosophical analysis can't yield justified belief about sources of information until one uses those sources to defend the legitimacy of the philosophical enterprise.

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[163] I count myself among their number though the number can probably be counted on one hand.

Initially TSC does not have the earmarks of a philosophical question. The thesis does not look necessary in the logical or metaphysical sense. I suppose one could analyze her concept of concepts and discover when talking about knowledge we must be analyzing the same concept. But this would leave open whether we instantiate her conception of concepts. For many objects of analysis, the existential question may still remain open (think of atheists who accept divine command theory for instance). And to discover whether we do instantiate this conception, we may need to leave the armchair. This then gives the armchair philosopher a good reason to deny the importance of TSC to her work.

Could TSC be metaphysically necessary? I am not averse to this possibility, especially since metaphysical necessities often don't look self-evident; we tend to discover them through argument from more basic metaphysical necessities. One could, to take one example, argue that God's existence is metaphysically necessary using the Kalam argument, try to get some of God's attributes from the necessity of a creator and the nature of the world, and then argue that God would not allow an evolutionary development where we end up with radically different concepts; he would ensure we have the same concepts of knowledge or the good. Whether one finds this plausible, this is a possible route for confirming the truth of TSC.

Let's suppose for now that TSC is an empirical thesis—one which can only be confirmed by empirical evidence. Philosophers often fail to verify the truth of TSC before starting the business of philosophy. The important question is whether they need to. Those who attack conceptual analysis suggest that they should, that the analysis of concepts is essentially the analysis of common concepts. Thus if TCV turns out to be true they argue, a pillar of conceptual analysis crumbles.

There isn't a complete lack of confirmation on the part of philosophers. They constantly dialogue with others in the profession to see if their intuitions are shared. And they don't often have the impression that they are talking past one another. They continue to debate suggesting that they think there is one correct answer to philosophical questions. And some invest quite a bit emotionally as well as intellectually. They feel quite passionate about their views, and this would be quite out of place if they felt philosophy were mere autobiography. So the philosopher has implicit empirical evidence in support of TSC.

Frank Jackson makes a similar point:

> I am sometimes asked—in a tone that suggests that the question is a major objection—why, if conceptual analysis is concerned to elucidate what governs our classificatory practice, don't I advocate doing serious opinion polls on people's responses to various cases. My answer is that I do—when it is necessary. Everyone who presents the Gettier cases to a class of students is doing their own bit of fieldwork, and we all know the answer they get in the vast majority of cases. But it is also true that often we know that our own case is typical and so can generalize from it to others. It was surely not a surprise to Gettier that so many people agreed about his cases. (1998, 36-37)

One must be careful here. If students can't see the right answer to Gettier cases, this should hardly bother the philosopher just as the student's propensity to use affirming the consequent, *tu quoque*, or fail to immediately see the validity of *modus tollens* should not bother him as well. If these students carried on in philosophy gaining competence with philosophical issues and still could not see the truth of Gettier counterexamples, this would be a cause for worry. So I'm not sure one can appeal to students to help confirm TSC since opinion polls like Weinberg's, Nichols', and Stich's don't undermine the reliability of intuition (or TSC) as argued in the previous chapter. Alas, one could just as easily argue that in a philosophy class the professor is influencing the student's epistemic beliefs which then help to shape her concept in a certain direction. There is only the barest outline of a concept there which the philosopher helps to mature.

The most significant form of third person evidence for the philosopher is the intuitions of other philosophers. And I think there are enough shared intuitions to give philosophers prima facie reasons for thinking that they are discussing the same thing. Conceptual analysis is a skill just as intuition use is. The replies of the average person should not move us much, just as in the case of physics, where studies show that after taking an introductory physics class, many students still have a pre-Newtonian conception of nature.

Consequently, I reject the following conclusion of Goldman's: "Philosophers sometimes assume great uniformity in epistemic judgments. The assumption may stem from the fact that it is mostly the judgments of philosophers themselves that have been reported, and they are members of a fairly homogeneous subculture. A wider 'pool' of subjects might reveal a much lower degree of uniformity" (quoted in Brown 1999, 52). As argued at length in the previous chapter, philosophy is a skill and the reliability of intuition can only be obtained by satisfying the conditions philosophers tend to realize.[164] Only if one denies this could one think that the philosophical output of the average person is useful both to the empirical investigation of intuition and TSC.

I believe that those philosophers who think TCV somehow bears on the legitimacy of conceptual analysis confuse what is essential to armchair philosophy. If TSC is a contingent truth requiring empirical confirmation, then the attentive armchair philosopher should argue that her analysis in no way assumes TSC or requires that it hold for a correct analysis.[165] If the correct analysis of knowledge can be had from the armchair, then a statement of the necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct application of the concept must not imply anything about *our* concept of knowledge, for that would require that the philosopher leave the armchair to discover the correct analysis. She would need to empirically confirm that we do possess the same epistemic concepts. In addition, I already argued that this would put the cart before the horse for then one must assume that we have empirical knowledge to confirm TSC before discovering what knowledge is and whether we know anything about the external physical world.

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[164] To refresh your memory, intuitions that emerge from intuitive isolation or naiveté don't have much evidential value. They must be informed by the appropriate philosophical considerations, by platitudes about the nature of the philosophical objects under investigation, or other scenarios that inform future intuitions. Intuitions which act like unmoved movers possess very little value.

[165] Thanks to Professor Fumerton for helping me see this point.

Consequently, the armchair philosopher can't think that the legitimacy of conceptual analysis depends on TSC, for then armchair philosophy would be impossible. This means that one can't argue against armchair philosophy by attacking TSC since the enterprise does not depend on the truth of that thesis. One could argue instead that the armchair philosopher ought to care about TSC, but this is similar to arguing that a human should care that he is not a number as though failing to be a number is somehow a failing qua human being. So instead one must attack the very philosophy of armchair thinking arguing that such an egocentric undertaking possesses little value. Stich takes this approach charging the analytic epistemologist with epistemic xenophobia. But as we shall see, his arguments tend to be self-refuting or lack much evidential support.

Fumerton gives a thought experiment intended to show that armchair philosophy has always been first and foremost egocentric analysis—an analysis of one's own concepts and not an attempt to discover the structure of everyone's concepts.

> [C]oncern with other people's linguistic habits is not an *essential* part of the methods of philosophical analysis…Imagine that tomorrow you suddenly came to the conclusion that the existence of other people replete with their linguistic habits was all a massive illusion…Now ask yourself whether, if this were to happen, it would affect in the least either the correctness of your earlier attempts at philosophical analysis or your ability to engage in new efforts to discover philosophical truths of the sort we call analyses. It seems obvious to me that it would not. (1983, 487)

So there are two ways of defending conceptual analysis. One is to point out that even supposing that TCV is true, that does not affect the legitimacy of armchair philosophy as conceptual analysis. The armchair philosopher could never rightly believe that his methods require TSC. Even though he hopes others do share his concepts and believes he has evidence for thinking they do, his analyses should never imply that he's giving the necessary and sufficient conditions for *our* concept of knowledge or that the truth of his analysis requires that he capture the structure of everyone's concept of knowledge.

Otherwise his position as an armchair philosopher would be undercut. Or one could further argue that the attacks on TSC fail to show that the thesis is false. We have already pointed to the former. We now turn to the latter.

What Weight Should We Accord Disagreement in Philosophy?

The strongest piece of evidence against TSC is the disagreement that persists further along in the development of a theory.[166] This suggests that philosophers may possess concepts that differ to varying degrees. Yet, we can retain TSC by pinning the blame for disagreement on the failure of philosophers to arrive at the correct analysis. We then need an explanation why otherwise brilliant people fail to converge in their analyses. As you will see, I think the most plausible explanation for intractable disagreement pertains to the very nature of philosophical problems.

Perhaps there is something peculiar to philosophical problems where the objects must remain irremediably foggy given the limitations of our cognitive equipment. This suggestion is usually met with a scoff. But as an armchair philosopher, I am keen to point out that scientific and mathematical theories presuppose answers to philosophical questions and that these questions still remain contentious to this day. Philosophical questions are more fundamental. The truth and justification of scientific theories depends on certain answers to such issues as the nature of truth, knowledge, justified belief, the legitimacy of inductive reasoning, inference to the best explanation (whether simplicity is truth conducive, for example), the uniformity of nature, the existence of the material world, the reliability of perception, the nature of probability, and others. Mathematical theories also depend on a correct account of truth, knowledge, the possibility of a priori justification, the nature of necessity, the realm of numbers and how we can possibly get into contact with them, whether math is simply a useful fiction or yields truths, and others.

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[166] I think we must be careful when focusing on philosophical disagreement that we keep in mind the astounding amount of agreement amongst philosophers. Sometimes when reading those who attack conceptual analysis, one gets the impression of chaos within the discipline. But this belies the amount of agreement that allows philosophers to arrive at the point where they can disagree further along in the development of their theories.

My detractors might argue that progress in science or math does not hinge in any way on answering such questions. In other words, if the theories continue to work as they have, that confirms the legitimacy of scientific and mathematical reasoning and the existence of scientific and mathematical truths. But this conditional is a philosophical thesis and one that is a bone of contention in the philosophy of science. Do theories that work make more probable their being true? Is the connection between working and truth contingent or necessary? Can one confirm this thesis using science without begging important questions? I don't see how anyone can escape from this quagmire introduced by the foundational character of philosophical questions without grabbing hold of a philosophical truth to pull them out, unless they argue that the quagmire is an invention. But to do this, they often dig in their heels and refuse to think that the answers to philosophical questions are anything but obvious. Philosophy is simply the result of a select group that has too much time on its hands. Apparently, Socrates is nothing more than a minor irritant in the history of thought.

Thus, if both disciplines rest on an edifice of philosophical questions which still conjure up contentious dispute, the progress doesn't reach all the way down. There is still an elephant in the room we need to talk about. If the coherence theory of truth or justification is correct, then science should look quite different. If inference to the best explanation is really a species of inductive argument as Fumerton argues, then we should question whether we have adequate justification for believing many of the theoretical posits of the sciences. If skepticism is a legitimate concern, then how can one even speak of progress in the sciences? All of science and mathematics rests on questions we would rather stick a pin in and then forget about altogether. So the existence of disagreement in philosophy spreads like a virus to science and math as well.

I pointed out in an earlier chapter that the failure of philosophers to agree on many issues is, in some cases, a red herring. This is because philosophers are not always united in their methods, the objects of analysis, and the questions they deem important. Richard Kirkham argues that, because of their differing ends, many philosophers devoted to the philosophy of truth have been talking past one another. "Surprisingly…very few writers on *truth* show any awareness that the philosophers with whom they disagree may have had a different conception of the philosophical problem in mind" (2001, 1). The crucial question then is why philosophers have not agreed on the methods and ends of philosophy.

Part of this is explained by different desires and interests. Also one's stance toward crucial philosophical questions will influence her preference for a certain kind of philosophy. If one doubts the existence of a priori knowledge, she will be pushing a scientific philosophy. But how do philosophers arrive at such doubt? Some stand on the evidence of science and find the possibility of a priori knowledge or significant a priori knowledge difficult to accommodate within a scientific view of the world. But we should then ask, "Why trust the sciences?" This question will be answered in several ways but I suspect the answer will not give much credence to skeptical issues in epistemology. And all the while one will be assuming that we know the law of non-contradiction holds, that various laws of logic and inferences are fully truth preserving, that inconsistent propositions cannot both be true, that there is a mind-independent physical world, that science may confirm the epistemic legitimacy of scientific reasoning, and so forth.

So we often don't secure agreement about methods because we disagree on the proper starting points of knowledge and philosophical inquiry in general. Let's say a proposition is a starting point for a philosopher when she believes the proposition to be self-evident, given, obvious, or common sense and when she is exceedingly unlikely to give up the proposition during the philosophic process.[167] Propositional starting points are more immune to criticism than beliefs which emanate there from. I try to begin with what is given to me, with what I'm acquainted. Others begin with what they call "common sense," like the belief there is a mind independent physical world and that others have minds. This leads us to the skeptical predicament. We must start somewhere and take something for granted. We can't prove everything for either the proof would go on forever or move in a closed curve.

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[167] I must register my complaint against appeals to common sense in philosophy. I still don't have a clue what philosophers could mean by "common sense." As a foundationalist, one is naturally skeptical of whether common sense beliefs should find their way into the foundation's of one's epistemic structure. Do they meet the demands for non-inferential justification? If so, then why not call them non-inferentially justified beliefs? If not, then isn't there a story to be told on how

As I mentioned in chapter 1, some epistemologists are happy to begin with the belief that local kinds of skepticism are certainly mistaken. I think we should press downward until we reach a point where we cannot go any further, where we have a direct confrontation with facts and truth-bearers. For instance, I am acquainted with my own existence. To doubt one's existence is self-referentially absurd. One might as well believe he doesn't have any beliefs. How do I know this? I am immediately acquainted with this fact. Will this convince many philosophers that acquaintance is a real relation for instance? Probably not. I can try to convince them by using other strategies but ultimately, if they can't *see* what I *see*, we must part ways.[168]

We have now arrived at the ultimate explanation of why philosophers can't agree. Philosophy deals with the most basic questions one can logically think about, questions we presuppose answers to in trying to acquire other kinds of knowledge. On the other hand, science does not. We discovered the rotation of the earth around the sun long before we

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they accrue their inferential justification? Reference to common sense makes the above discussion more opaque.

[168] Some might have little patience for my use of "see" in this context calling my use "metaphorical." Apparently, the only true seeing occurs via vision and all other uses of the term inadequately capture the epistemic situation of true seeing. I tend to disagree with this view. I don't think vision is the standard of coming into contact, of recognizing, or being aware of some object. Vision is inferior to acquaintance with objects themselves (unless we can be acquainted via vision). Acquaintance is clearly the ideal epistemic situation for discovering truths. And when I speak of starting points, I speak of what one is acquainted with (even though others would avoid using this term). What one directly sees or apprehends is generally used by philosophers as their starting points.

had ultimate scientific hypotheses like string theory. Philosophers can't afford such a luxury because philosophy begins by asking the most ultimate questions of human existence.

Thus, given the foundational character of philosophical questions, if philosophical disagreement goes all the way down to the starting points, to the very foundations, then there is not much for us to do. Suppose you point out an antique table to a friend who honestly claims he can't see the table. You have him walk up to the table and touch it, run into it, knock on it, perhaps taste it. But each time, your friend truthfully claims not to see, hear, or feel anything. Worried about your friend, you take him to a neurologist who claims his brain is working fine. The neurologist consequently is skeptical whether yours is. You get a second opinion. This neurologist looks at the same scan and claims to see something wrong. Now not sure what to believe, you take your friend to every neurologist under the sun, and they are divided on whether the scan indicates something wrong. Reports begin to crop up of people claiming not see the antique table in the store. Half say they do; half say they don't. We could continue this story until we find ourselves in the situation where we have no way whatsoever of discovering whose right about the table (absent supernatural explanations). But this is similar to the predicament of philosophical knowledge. Philosophy begins with the foundations. But if some philosophers can't be made to intellectually see the same things, there is very little hope of ultimate agreement amongst them.

Math and science are fortunate for we are hardwired to have the same visual experiences, a boon for science, and we tend to apprehend the same basic mathematical truths. But the most basic questions of all—"Can we know anything?", "What is truth?", or "Why does anything at all exist?"—do not share the same simplicity. I can't stress this point enough. The most basic questions in philosophy have the difficulty of advanced scientific and mathematical questions. The philosopher cannot boast of the same simplicity for the most basic questions. This is why the graduate student in philosophy will find that many of the issues he discusses are the same as those he learned about as an undergraduate. The questions don't change much but the level of discussion does.

Since philosophical agreement tends to require agreement at our most basic starting points, our most basic items of knowledge, and since we unfortunately don't always see the same things at the most basic levels, we will disagree. If this is true, then the solution is not to recast the methods or abandon them altogether. I think our epistemic predicament, cognitive limitations, and the nature of the questions involved don't give us much hope for ultimate agreement. Thus one can continue to do philosophy knowing this or leave the profession and take up residence in the hallowed halls of the sciences.

At this point, those down on philosophy may think I have done more to help their position. But they can only think this if they take for granted the legitimacy of philosophical inquiry. For the very attack against philosophy which points to disagreement presupposes the truth of several philosophical items: the coherence theory of truth is mistaken (otherwise inconsistency across theories would not be troubling); others exist and have minds; there is such a thing as knowledge and justified belief since the philosophical detractor believes they know or justifiably believe that conceptual analysis is a lost cause; certain philosophical beliefs cannot be true together; induction is a legitimate form of inference and certain probabilities exist; the law of non-contradiction holds; agreement with others makes more likely the truth of one's philosophical beliefs. They also claim to know that other domains have made quite a bit of progress. In saying this, they commit themselves to thinking that they know the answers to the philosophical presuppositions of science listed before. Change those presuppositions slightly and the face of science could dramatically change. But if this is possible, one should have justified answers to these issues, otherwise one can't justifiably claim to have scientific knowledge or at least one's degree of justification is weakened enough to be worrisome.

Two points can be gleaned from the above: everyone else better hope that one can have justified philosophical beliefs given the foundational character of philosophical questions. Granted, others might disagree with me about the epistemic priority of these questions, but this dispute will be a philosophical one. And thus they can't hope to show I am mistaken if they have been casting doubt on philosophy. They could take for granted that I am mistaken on these points. "We don't need to discover what truth is, whether we know anything, whether we have justification for believing that perception is reliable or that inference to the best explanation is truth conducive. This is obvious and a matter of common sense," they will say to me. We will debate about whether they are correct, and that debate will involve appeals to things known which can't be verified directly via sense experience and ultimately will come down to certain propositions I claim to see as true and they see as false. We can continue to debate and offer arguments, but if I still see x as true and the others sees ~x, there is not much else we can do. But this isn't something peculiar to philosophy. This is the predicament of knowledge for fallible beings. If some beliefs can be non-inferentially justified, we can only hope that we have non-inferential justification for believing the same things. Sometimes we don't. And since philosophy deals with the most basic questions of human existence, and these questions are difficult (they are nothing like the obvious starting points in some domains), then philosophers can't hope to make the same kind of progress found in science and math.

Secondly, there is no analogue for alleviating well entrenched problems in science and math. In science, old problems may be solved with the advancement of technology and the tools the scientist uses to cull evidence. Moreover, as certain discoveries are made, they occasionally have implications for other lingering problems thus making more probable the discovery of a solution. Or scientific investigation will more often lead to the discovery of a scientific fact the scientist may not have been searching for in the first place. The same is true in mathematics. Discoveries more often give way to new ones than in philosophy. And mathematics is primarily the discovery of relations holding between numbers. There isn't much disagreement about the numbers themselves (although there is much philosophical disagreement over their nature).

Philosophical disagreement, on the other hand, goes all the way to the core. If most philosophical discovery depends on an account of truth and knowledge, and philosophers don't even agree on these sometimes, why should we expect philosophical progress to keep up with science and math? In fact, the comparison to the empirical sciences is an infelicitous one, for the nature of the discipline is entirely different from philosophy. Philosophy is more like mathematics than the sciences: they both discover truths in the realm of non-nomological necessity and both rely on a priori ways of knowing. But if mathematicians can secure agreement from the bottom upwards, then there is a shared base upon which they make other mathematical discoveries. Notice how, as one advances in math, one begins to leave old problems behind. Philosophers can't boast of the same for there are very few philosophic propositions that share the simplicity of problems of lower order math. In other words, not much comes easy when doing philosophy. So why should we think the failure of philosophy to keep up with others is indeed a failure?[169]

Harold Brown's Attack on the Thesis of Shared Concepts

Harold Brown would most likely disagree with the above arguing that TCV (the thesis of conceptual variation) better explains persistent disagreement.[170] He believes the debate over causation helps the case for TCV:

> Philosophers disagree (among other issues) on whether it is conceptually possible for a cause to follow or be simultaneous with

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[169] I suspect many philosophers have become quite taken with the sciences and long for philosophy to look more like a science. This encourages a comparison between the two which, to my mind, is like comparing philosophy to the progress cooks have made since the first cooked meal. The comparison often looks like this: science is the only search for truths that yields genuine knowledge of the world (forget all that stuff about the problems of perception, knowledge, truth, etc). Philosophy doesn't yield knowledge. Thus, philosophy should become an empirical science. But the disanalogies between them are often ignored—disanalogies that undermine the legitimacy of the comparison. We shall explore some of these shortly.

[170] Keep in mind, once again, that I don't wish to give the impression of philosophical chaos imparted by some who write on this matter. There is quite a lot philosophers agree on. When I speak of disagreement, I primarily refer to the kind that occurs further along in the development of a theory. This is more prevalent in philosophy.

> its effect…whether the relation is asymmetric or nonsymmetric…and whether it is transitive…whether the concept of a cause includes (in some important sense) a necessary condition, a sufficient condition, both, or neither….what the proper causal relata are…and what relations (if any) hold between causality and determinism…Reflection on such disagreements has led [Jaegwon] Kim to question whether there is "a unitary concept of causation that can be captured in an enlightening philosophical analysis." (Brown 1999, 39)

The same sorts of concerns have been raised by epistemic internalists. When externalism first appeared in Goldman's writings, some internalists wondered aloud whether Goldman and others were speaking about the same thing. Externalism looked so foreign to the history of epistemology and issued a completely radical and novel theory of justification and knowledge. Perhaps most importantly, the theory, although recognizing that skepticism could be true, proposed that we disprove skepticism in a way that brushed off the sorts of worries that ignite skeptical concerns in the first place.

Brown's main argument is that TCV better explains the persistent disagreement amongst philosophers. This casts philosophers in a better light since we need not wonder why very intelligent people can't agree. They are not incompetent philosophers; there is instead a subtle difference in their objects of analysis. Let's assume there is a certain amount of overlap or resemblance among our epistemic concepts or causal concepts.[171] This would explain why philosophers can't overcome the feeling that they are analyzing the same things because in part they are. This seems more probable when analyzing concepts like truth or causation where we agree for the most part on their extensions. But at the same time, it would explain why *verbal* disagreement remains. Real or genuine disagreement is illusory for they're not speaking of the same things. Now, different theories which looked mutually exclusive can both be correct. Maybe there isn't a failure on the part of the philosophical community to get at the correct analysis of certain concepts. Philosophers have been correctly analyzing concepts for some time, but they did not realize that their failure to converge on an analysis isn't a failing.

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[171] I'm not so sure theories of causation are correctly classified as conceptual analyses for our knowledge of the relation is different than our knowledge of truth. We in some loose sense see and feel instances of causation. Picking out instances of causation is not that difficult. The question remains as to what we are actually 'observing.' This looks more to me like a kind of metaphysics where one argues that certain things exist (e.g. God, universals) or that certain properties attach to a thing. This explains why debates about causation don't usually falter because we can't agree on the instances of causation. But when discussing justified belief, the externalists can't take for granted that an internalist will automatically agree that physical object beliefs, memorial beliefs, or beliefs about the future are justified.

To further verify this explanation, we would need to do some sociology or psychology and find out why different philosophers have these different concepts. We must further explain why certain debates occur along very clear cut lines and why so many philosophers seem to fall naturally into well defined camps. Since we seem to acquire many of these concepts in the way we acquire our color concepts—we hear people use the term in many different contexts and we begin to get a feel for when the concept is correctly deployed—one might expect many more different strands in epistemology. And it would be a mystery why a child raised in the home of an adamant internalist could grow up to have externalist intuitions, though this situation is surely possible. Furthermore, there is a prima facie problem of explaining how we could have such highly complicated epistemic concepts given the way we acquire them. One can't appeal to their innateness like Chomsky can when speaking of our grammatical rules, for that would be an objection to TCV.

One thing we must keep in mind when assessing Brown's arguments is that he may need to argue that we have the same concept of inference to the best explanation, since he makes prodigious use of it. But this is a problem given his conclusions. He can merely point out that he is using a form of reasoning that yields epistemically justified beliefs relative to his concept of justification. But now we have a problem. Whose conception of epistemic justification should we use? If one has a more demanding theory of epistemic justification which is critical of the idea that several explanatory virtues are connected to truth (like simplicity for instance), then Brown will need to show that she is mistaken. But TCV eliminates this possibility. Perhaps then Brown must hold on to TSC while arguing for TCV.

The thesis of conceptual resemblance has an advantage over thinking that concepts differ in radical ways. One could argue that our failure to recognize we are analyzing different concepts stems from our inattention to matters metaphilosophical. Just like scientists, philosophers specialize in the business of doing philosophy and don't often seriously attend to metaphilosophical questions, like giving a detailed account of their objects of thought. This trades one incompetency—the inability to arrive at a consensus—with another—a failure to work out the nuts and bolts of philosophy. But in positing the best explanation for disagreement, we should attend to the principle of charity. This requirement is not simply in the interest of intellectual virtue but makes more likely our arrival at the truth. For philosophers aren't obtuse buffoons. They tend to be quite intelligent chaps (indeed, my bias leads me to say, "the most intelligent").

Thus the thesis of conceptual resemblance coupled with TCV explains, at least in part, why philosophers can't shake the feeling they are trying to expose the structure of the same thing, while charitably explaining why they can't secure one kind of agreement at the end of the day. If there is a certain amount of overlap or resemblance, then the concepts would often come close to extensional equivalence; we would share many of the same intuitions. Philosophers approximate the structure of their concepts. Alleged disagreement results from the non-overlapping portions of their conceptual structures.

Hence, Brown writes:

> My proposal, then, is that philosophers who are debating the analysis of a concept often have in mind concepts that are very similar, but not identical. Sometimes intuitions clash only when discussion turns to extreme or unusual situations. If these intuitions are generated by the underlying concepts, then we have a strong reason for suspecting that the concepts in question are not identical. Still, the overlaps in proposed analysis and paradigm instances provide the basis for discussion. (1999, 43)

As we continue to analyze this hypothesis, we should keep in mind a sibling hypothesis which may be an explanatory equal: the concepts of philosophy are open textured; their boundary conditions may be somewhat fluid and imprecise or philosophical theories often outstrip their content. If this is true, philosophers may want to give armchair extra-mentalism a second look because they do have strong intuitions which run deep into the recesses of their theories, and if concepts don't explain these intuitions, perhaps there is a property or object which exists independently of our conceptual structures and which the mind faintly grasps. This might explain why we have trouble taking nihilisms in epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics seriously.

At this point, I don't believe Brown has given a better explanation for continued disagreement than the one I have given. There is something intuitively eye catching in the idea that our philosophical concepts are prone to be shaped by surrounding influences making likely TCV. But I believe the rather peculiar nature of philosophical questions is an explanatory equal at this point. Brown must do something to set his view apart. Regrettably, the further reasons he gives for preferring TCV make a mistake common to many attacks on armchair philosophy.

Brown gives further evidence for TCV, focusing for the most part on cases outside philosophy. He believes those who have studied relativity in physics have two time concepts: an everyday time concept and a relativist one they use in different contexts. He also points out that our concepts of conifers and deciduous trees tend to be incomplete.

> Until quite recently, I considered conifers and deciduous trees to be mutually exclusive classes and I did have a principled basis for this distinction…However, I recently discovered that my classification does not match that used by botanists since their classification scheme includes deciduous conifers such as the larch. In other words, the concepts I associated with the expressions "conifer" and "deciduous tree" are not the same as the concepts that botanists associate with these words. This discovery led to a small revision in my botanical concepts. (1999, 45)[172]

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[172] He also mentions the case of jade where, unknown to most of us, we classify two different minerals using the term. Our concept of a liquid excludes glass whereas the scientist's concept does not. And our concepts of diamond and graphite imply that they're quite different, but for the scientist, they are of the same kind: different allotropes of carbon.

Other cases abound. In the nineteenth century, Dalton believed that weight was one of the individuating characteristics of the elements. This belief became an essential feature of the scientist's concept of the elements. Later, when isotopes were better understood, scientists dropped this necessary condition from their concept. Their concept of the elements and their essential features changed.[173] Brown also points to revisions in our concepts due to the progress of technology. The concept of a mother must now be made more precise because a woman can give birth to a child when she is not the genetic mother, as in the case of a surrogate.[174] And plumbers and carpenters often classify tools differently than we do. Even though many of us think a wrench should be rigid, plumbers include the non-rigid plumber's chain wrench in the category.

None of this should surprise us. Those working more closely with objects have more information for their classifications into natural kinds. Thus one should expect non-professionals to have different concepts and find that these concepts may fail to pick out natural kinds. The key here is that in these cases, we have some way of fixing and not losing the referent over conceptual change. The goal then, according to Brown, is to form concepts "that are instantiated in the actual world" (1999, 47). One must be willing to amend and emend one's representational structure.

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[173] I'm not sure whether Brown means to imply that their concept changed or that they adopted a completely new concept of an element. I struggle to see how one could drop a necessary condition from a concept and still retain the same concept. Thus talk of dropping or adding conditions to one's concept may perhaps be better understood along the lines of a change in concept altogether. Not much hinges on the matter for our purposes though.

[174] I don't want to let this one pass by without noting that there doesn't seem to be two concepts of a mother here. Given our concept of a mother, I can't see why one would think the surrogate falls into the class of mothers. We may call her the "birth mother," but the "mother" being used barely resembles our ordinary concept of a mother. The case of adoption or the case where a woman contributes her eggs to help out two people trying to conceive raises difficult problems. My intuitions suggest that the mother is the one who fulfills a certain function—either excellently or poorly. And the function of a mother is not necessarily to give birth to the child as witnessed in adoption cases. It seems right to say "I may have given birth to her, but I am not her mother. Her mother is the one who has spent countless hours caring for her, nurturing, loving, disciplining, worrying, etc." It does seem a conceptual truth that one has a prima facie obligation to listen to his mother. But I don't see why that would extend to the birth mother in the case of adoption. This functional analysis thus leads me to disagree with the scientific definitions of a mother.

With these cases, I suspect that Brown is trying to show the prevalence of conceptual variation thus making philosophical conceptual variation unexceptional. The idea of conceptual variation is not odd; we see many instances around us. So we shouldn't be surprised if TCV applies to philosophy as well. Indeed, given the frequency of conceptual variation, we shouldn't expect that philosophy has somehow remained insulated.

However, I don't think these cases provide much support for the application of TCV to the philosophical realm. Brown uses an implicit argument from analogy, and when one starts comparing science with philosophy, one is bound to get into trouble. First off, we must note that Brown's beliefs about the appropriate application of "correct" and "incorrect" to our concepts and how much content our concepts do have are contentious points. He freely speaks of our changing our concepts with new scientific discoveries and packing in to those concepts the characteristics essential to the kind the concept represents. Thus we find him writing that "early chemists may have had an incorrect concept of water, but they had a concept nonetheless. The project of discovering the essence of a natural kind amounts to seeking a concept that accurately describes that essence."[175]

Whether early chemists actually had an incorrect concept of water or instead had incorrect beliefs about the underlying structure of water is a distinction Brown does not attend to. He feels comfortable speaking of our concepts as being incorrect when they don't pick out natural kinds. Perhaps a better question to ask is whether one's concepts find application in the world but Brown seems to suggest something more in his use of "correct concept." The problem however could still be in our beliefs and not the concepts.

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[175] Ibid., 35.

Moreover, there is the further problem of whether our concepts do pack in as much information as Brown thinks they do, and thus whether the progress of science has caused as much conceptual change as he believes. Perhaps our concept of water is "that which has the same underlying structure as the stuff found in lakes, rivers, and that falls from the skies." If so, our concept of water isn't changing over time unlike our beliefs about water. Thus talk about our having incorrect concepts or significant conceptual change in the sciences may be mistaken.

But even if we grant, for the sake of argument, that scientific progress has forced quite a bit of conceptual change, like in our concept of water for example (whether that means abandoning concepts for new ones or modifying them), I don't believe this supports the thesis of conceptual variation in philosophy. As already explained, the job of the scientist is to acquire representations that most naturally divide up the world. I like to call these concepts "artifact concepts" because they depend on us for their content and are subject to revision depending on our experience. We change them or abandon them altogether as we gain more empirical knowledge. This is possible because we can usually pick out the objects of discussion via direct reference or at least by directly referring to their effects. This allows us to keep hold of the referent while changing our representations of the thing. But in philosophy, many think our concepts determine the ontology of the philosophical world. Thus one can't latch hold of the referent while changing one's conceptual representation, for that would indeed change the referent.

Unlike science, when one attributes knowledge to a person, one can't automatically assume he is in the presence of some physical object, let alone knowledge. To warrant that starting point, he must first argue for physicalism which is a metaphysical thesis and can only be justified with the resources of philosophy. If one tries to argue for physicalism using inference to the best explanation, he must further philosophically justify why the virtues imputed to the best explanation make the result more probable. With these essential philosophical components, one has less justification for comparing scientific and philosophical concepts since the method of discovery and the nature of the objects involved could be quite different. To assume otherwise would be question begging. This doesn't disprove TCV but I think it's an important enough disanalogy to reduce the strength of Brown's argument.

Secondly, those who spend more time examining scientific objects tend to have more complete or more accurate representations of the world's structure. Their concepts more closely correspond to natural divisions while ours may fail to because of our tendency to build into our representations unwarranted information or to leave out relevant features. This is because scientific questions aren't ubiquitous: one can't answer them regardless of one's place in time or space. One must have privileged access to the object to compose a reliable representation. We then depend on the work of those with this access to tell us what the physical world is like so that we too may represent the world "correctly." Thus the point of scientific concepts is to continue to revise in the face of new evidence until one achieves correspondence to the natural divisions.

Contrary to the objects of science, philosophical objects are ubiquitous. Granted, philosophers may have more justification for their beliefs, but this is because they spend more time thinking about philosophical issues. They don't occupy a better position in space (although being around colleagues makes more likely the acquisition of justified beliefs); they don't have privileged access to the objects. So the goal need not be revision in the face of more privileged access. The goal, rather, is the discovery of an implicit representation where the direction of ontological determination is from the mind to the world.[176] Indeed, one does not find philosophers making up as many new concepts as the scientist, except of course to make up more distinctions for ways of thinking about time worn issues. The philosopher does not discover nearly as many new entities. The sorts of concepts appropriate to philosophical investigation tend to be more static. This suggests once again that the philosopher's direction of discovery is from the mind to the world, and if so, then the reasons for conceptual variation in the sciences need not apply to philosophy.

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[176] I wonder if this has any implications for how we acquire philosophical concepts. For instance, one usually acquires the concept "knowledge" by its being used in non-remarkable situations. Someone claims to know the temperature outside, where a friend's house is located, whether they have milk in the fridge, etc. For someone like myself who takes skepticism about the external world seriously, it seems that my concept must largely be influenced by other contexts. Otherwise, wouldn't I find knowledge of the external world agreeable? And as someone who thinks a good account of knowledge will have as an implication that we don't know nearly as much as we think we know, doesn't this suggest that the non-remarkable cases of external world knowledge aren't doing much to shape my concept? If this is so, can we explain how I acquired the concept so

Lastly, the goal for scientific representation—carving the world at the joints—cannot always be the goal of the philosopher. This is because for some or perhaps many attempts at analyses, the existential question has not been settled at the outset. But if the existential question hasn't been settled, then surely the job of the philosopher can't be conceptual revision for there may be no object that can stand as the target of revision.

The above replies should forge a strong enough cleavage between science and philosophy to expect that the features of scientific concepts may not hold for philosophical ones. Given the purpose of scientific concepts (conceptual revision), the nature of the investigation and reference fixing, the attitude toward the existential question, the locations of scientific objects, etc., I can't see how the properties that hold for them help to support TCV in philosophy. The difference between them is too great.[177]

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that I have these various epistemic views? It does seem strange to me to think our concept is acquired via ordinary contexts given the number of classical foundationalists and internalists through history. Perhaps we have been investigating something extra-mental all along.

[177] Brown mentions an alternative view which takes concepts to be abstract entities. He thinks this doesn't raise any problems for TCV since the images in our psyches allegedly engender intuitions. But if the abstract concept account is correct, then my earlier explanation better explains philosophical disagreement than TCV, for on my view, the peculiar character of philosophical questions makes agreement difficult. If the objects are abstract, that would further explain why. TCV is supposed to be a problem because ultimately philosophers aren't talking about the same things. But the abstract concept account admits they are and preserves the legitimacy of conceptual analysis.

Karen Neander's Attack on the Thesis of Shared Concepts

Karen Neander in "Functions as Selected Effects: The Conceptual Analyst's Defense" (1991), argues that there is a place for conceptual analysis in defending an etiological view of proper function. But the place she gives to conceptual analysis will hardly placate conceptual analysts. Indeed the limited role she saves for conceptual analysis in the analysis of functions stems from a firm belief that our concepts vary thus making the aims of ordinary conceptual analysis chimerical.

On her view, a proper function is an effect for which a trait was selected by natural selection. Some conceptual analysts demur since this definition suggests that when Harvey announced the function of the heart in 1616, he must have had something like Darwinianism in mind. But clearly he didn't. Thus the etiological view must be mistaken.[178]

One reply she gives is to argue that conceptual analysis as the search for necessary and sufficient conditions "has long been disreputable." She goes on:

> The criteria of application that the relevant linguistic community generally has in mind might be better expressed in terms of a family

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[178] I'm not sure this is a very good objection to the etiological view of proper function. The conceptual analyst will admit that we can discover instances of a thing before finishing the analytical enterprise. This is how the analysis gets off the ground in many cases. So Harvey could have discovered the function of the heart even when he had not done the analysis and even if he had the wrong analysis in mind. Also, even though he had no idea of evolutionary theory, the idea nevertheless was a conceptual possibility. And we may find with the advancement of knowledge that we failed to attend to a relevant possibility when analyzing a concept. One might as well argue that people knew that they themselves exist long before we knew anything about the brain and the causal processes implicated in the formation of a belief. Thus epistemic externalism cannot be true. Even though we may properly apply a concept to several cases, we may find that we really have no idea how to specify the nature of the thing. Recall that conceptual structures are tacit in the mind. Yet, this may lead to a different objection against the etiological theory: if conceptual structures result from familial or cultural influence, then how could Dalton's concept of function contain as a constituent Darwinian notions when they were unheard of at the time? If this objection has weight, then a larger indictment against conceptual analysis remains: if concepts result from surrounding influences, and if those influences tend to be different based on the present state of knowledge at the time, then why wouldn't our concepts differ from those of the ancient Greeks? Presently, we acquire concepts under the influence of Darwinian modes of thinking, with a greater collage of ideas to combine to form new concepts, and while trying to accommodate concepts with continued developments in the world. In short, if the conceptual analysis attack on the etiological theory is justified, then it may be cannibalizing.

> resemblance, similarity to prototypes, or Minskian frames. Indeed, necessary and sufficient conditions are probably more likely to be found for theoretical definitions (consider those given for "water" and "gold"). Admittedly, the criteria of application that people actually use are often vague, shifting, highly context-sensitive, highly variable between individuals, and often involve perceptual data of a kind that is inaccessible at least to philosophical methods. (1991, 171)[179]

The first part of the above quote implicitly relies on psychological research into the nature of concepts. This research tends to make an assumption that Neander incorporates into the second half of the above quote. Many assume that we tend to reliably apply our concepts. This is necessary in order to take the empirical data Neander points to seriously. For if this is not true, then pointing to context sensitivity, vagueness, shifts in what we take the criteria of application to be, etc., only shows that many don't competently apply their concepts. They often struggle in certain contexts to truly apply their concepts. But even though circumstances influence our beliefs about capital punishment or abortion, this does not show that our concept of rightness shifts or that individuals have different moral concepts. The most relevant empirical data on the structure of our concepts must be gleaned from those competent in making conceptual judgments. So because many people when placed in certain circumstances are sensitive to and influenced by the circumstances themselves, we shouldn't think that their verbal output is a reliable indicator of the structure of their concepts. Philosophers know that it's quite common for one's verbal behavior to belie the true structure of her concepts.

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[179] One consequence she doesn't note is that claims using proper function must be elliptical. We don't talk about proper function *per se* but speak of a proper function for community C and a proper function for community D. Also, if the psychological experiments which have been performed to assess the structure of our concepts prove we don't have necessary and sufficient conditions for their application, then the tests prove too much. For instance, one common example is that we classify birds by storing in our mind a paradigmatic bird and then seeing if another object bears enough resemblance to warrant the classification. But if any concepts have necessary and sufficient conditions for their applications, zoological concepts do. We know that membership in the class of birds requires the satisfaction of certain conditions. So perhaps those experiments don't show as much about the structure of our concepts as they do about how we tend to apply our concepts. Just because we apply concepts in a certain way, we shouldn't think that the concept must correspond to our method of application. This would give us all sorts of reasons for thinking people really do believe you can know what is false or that *tu quoque* really is a good form of reasoning. But that makes the theory less plausible. We must be careful what weight we assign to our outputs when arriving at a theory of conceptual structure.

Thus, exposing the structure of one's concept is a skill. For as conceptual analysts have known for some time, one can make many errs in the application of a concept until one actually does the philosophical work. This is often overlooked by experimental studies on the reliability of intuition or philosophical concepts.

Neander admits that in communities where there are specialists, factors such as vagueness, context sensitivity, and individual variation are greatly reduced for those concepts suited for specialists. But why not think this is so for the philosopher. She is the specialist. Unfortunately, the philosopher is rarely appealed to. Thus we shouldn't be surprised to find that our use of philosophical concepts tends to be effected by these factors unlike our concept of water. You may point out that this only moves the problem to another location: why do philosophers disagree in their analyses then? To answer this, I make free appeal to my earlier discussion of the difference between philosophical questions and questions in math and the sciences.

Later on in her article, I believe Neander's treatment of an earlier objection alluded to is quite telling. She makes a mistake similar to Brown's:

> [I]t is unproblematic if Harvey's notion of a "proper function", before the Darwinian Revolution, was different from the closely related notion used by biologists today, after the Darwinian Revolution. *Scientific notions are not static.* Harvey obviously did not have natural selection in mind when he proclaimed the function of the heart but that does not show that modern biologists do not have this in mind. (1991, 176 emphasis added)

I warned earlier that we should not feel comfortable sliding between talk of the characteristics of the objects of scientific study and the objects of philosophical study. Philosophy is too dissimilar to warrant the quick move from the properties of scientific concepts to the concepts of philosophy of most interest to philosophers. In the above quote, Neander makes a mistake which I believe is at the heart of the desire to compare scientific with philosophic issues. In arguing against the conceptual analyst who believes that the etiological theory can't be correct because we discovered proper functions long before we knew anything of evolutionary theory, she appeals to the capricious nature of our scientific concepts. But how is this appeal relevant when discussing a philosophical concept like proper function which is supposed to determine the ontology of proper function? It's relevant only if she assumes the notion of proper function is not a philosophical one but better suited for scientific study—one where the goal is to fashion the concept to pick out a certain kind of natural kind. But this begs the question against the conceptual analyst. Furthermore, it does nothing to disparage the pretensions of conceptual analysis. It only moves the question of proper function out of its domain.

She also fails to distinguish what we consciously have in mind when applying a concept and the tacit structure of our concepts. Even if I have conditions x, y, z in mind when I apply the concept of knowledge, it need not be even probable that my concept is constituted by those conditions. As we learn very early in philosophy classes, we aren't able to fashion our philosophical concepts, for even when we do, we find ourselves with contrary intuitions that require emendments to the analysis. She would point out that she is only referring to what Harvey or modern biologists implicitly have in mind when they apply a concept. Even still, what I implicitly have in mind is not the same as a tacit concept. I may implicitly have conditions x, y, and z in mind when I apply the concept knowledge because in the past I came to the conclusion that knowledge is x, y, and z. It does not then follow that my concept has x, y, and z while yours may have a, b, and c. Perhaps it makes it more probable. But given my earlier arguments on the nature of philosophical questions and concepts, I don't think the probability is enough to warrant the conclusion that Harvey and modern biologists have different concepts in mind.

If we assume, however, that proper function is a scientific notion, then none of her reasoning bears on the legitimacy of the conceptual analyst's arguments against the etiological view of proper functions. She must first argue that proper functions fall into the domain of scientific inquiry. If so, then the conceptual analyst has stumbled in through the wrong door.

If we continue with this idea that "proper function" is a scientific notion, we encounter other problems. For scientific objects, we can often fix the referent via direct reference, indirect reference through their effects, or through some reference fixing definite description. But one wonders whether proper function can be referred to in this way. We could fix the referent of water by pointing or through the description "that which falls from the skies, fills lakes, and we drink when clear." But I struggle to think of a relevant description for proper function that would not be in some sense question begging. "That which helps us survive and reproduce" would, for example, be question begging.

How do we directly refer to knowledge? Even if we could in cases of self-knowledge or knowledge of one's own mental states, I'm not sure how we could for garden variety physical world knowledge. We need some reference fixing definite description. But what sort of description could we give that would keep us from begging important questions about the nature of knowledge. We don't want to say "that which allows organisms to successfully navigate their environment" since that would beg the question against internalists. We need something specific enough to circumscribe the number of objects in the field of reference. One would then need to do the prior work of showing that only a naturalist account can be adequate. Furthermore, one would implicitly be relying on her concept of knowledge to engender the definite description. But doesn't this suggest that we should follow through with the conceptual analysis?

These are questions we will return to in the latter part of the chapter. I only now note how this discussion presupposes answers to them. Her view assumes an externalist theory of reference for we need some way of keeping hold of the referent as our concept of say "proper function" changes over time.

Terrance Ball's Attack on the Thesis of Shared Concepts

Terrance Ball expresses his agreement with the thesis of conceptual variation in a different way. He thinks one generation can act justly toward another only if they share the same concept of justice. This makes intergenerational justice quite elusive because our concept of justice shifts over time:

> [T]he concepts constitutive of moral and political discourse have historically mutable meanings. 'Justice' is just such a concept. The meaning of justice—not only what the word means but what it means to act justly, the criteria used to identify and appraise (un)just actions, etc.—changes from one age and generation to another. Plato's understanding of justice for example, is not ours…our concepts are made meaningful and intelligible by virtue of being embedded in conceptual schemes, frameworks or theories that are themselves subject to criticism, revision, or outright replacement, in light of alternative theories. (1985, 322)[180]

One striking consequence of his view is that we can't fault slave owners for acting the way they did in the *ante bellum* South, since their actions were in accord with their conception of justice. To me, this looks like a counterexample to his theory.[181] Clearly they did something wrong, and it makes sense to blame them. If they were living now, we would be right to hold them accountable for their actions. But it would be wrong to do so on Ball's account if their concept of justice at the time differed from ours. How can we hold someone responsible for acting according to their concept of justice when there isn't just one concept of justice? Thus, if Ball is correct, slavery was a conceptual problem rather than a moral failing on the part of Americans.

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[180] Again, I must point out that we could just as easily interpret the history of the discussion of justice as a failure of people to get true beliefs about what justice is. They didn't have different concepts of justice but rather were often confused or mistaken about what justice is. Unless we assume the verbal output of most people reliably tracks the structure of their concepts, the evidence for conceptual variation dwindles dramatically. Also, Ball is likely using holism about meaning. He thinks that concepts get their meaning from the larger frameworks in which they are embedded. Thus the fact that slave owners may have been willing to draw certain inferences about the justice of slavery that fit into their overall scheme suggests that their concept of justice embedded in that scheme is different than ours. My arguments don't depend on this issue however.

[181] This also may be an unwarranted interpretation of the slave owner mindset. There are other explanations of why they acted as they did. They had mistaken scientific beliefs for instance, and they may not have applied their moral theory correctly as well. At least some of the owners looked to the Bible for justification. But most, if not all those who subscribe to divine command theory, would disagree with their application of the theory. So there are other ways to explain why they thought their actions were justified without imputing to them a different conception of justice.

Continuing the *reductio* then, don't the slave owners deserve our pity more than our condemnation? They were simply unfortunate enough to be living in a culture that had a concept of justice according to which slavery was just. To act against that concept would have been unjust, since for any theory of justice, it is wrong to do what is unjust. So relative to their concept, they were quite right to practice slavery. The fact that we loathe them is really a matter of insensitivity and dogmatism. We are simply imposing our conceptual scheme on them when there is no objective moral reason to prefer that scheme over another.[182]

One problem with these kinds of relativistic claims is that they end up appealing to something objective and fixed, like our responsibility not to blame or judge the slave owners. However, if our concept of justice implies that it is just to blame those who have a different concept of justice, we are doing what is just.

Ball fails to recognize this point since on his view, it is incoherent to judge other generations as just or unjust. This is not so as long as our concept of justice makes it coherent to do so: it is just to assess others who have a different conception of justice. Also, he'd better hope in writing his article that others share his concept of rationality or coherence. And if we do share his concept, instead of giving up on evaluating different generations as just or unjust, why not change our view of whether incoherence is a good thing?

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[182] At this point I am rehashing the old arguments given by most cultural relativists. This is a form of meta-ethical rather than normative cultural relativism though. On the normative view, an act is right when the majority of the culture approves of it. Rightness has a determinate nature; it's identical to being approved by the majority. Rightness doesn't change across cultures, but what is right does. But on the meta-ethical view, rightness itself changes depending on the culture. So in one culture, rightness could be producing the best consequences, while in another, rightness could be doing what God commands.

These kinds of counterexamples to Ball's view are made stronger when looking at present moral behavior. On his view, we could easily argue that we cannot condemn or blame those involved in the 9/11 attacks because they were acting according to their concept of justice. I suspect many moral philosophers would consider this a counterexample to the thesis of conceptual variation.

But in the end, I don't think Ball is willing to follow all the way through with his conceptual relativity. Near the end of his article, he makes the following claim about intergenerational justice:

> [F]rom the fact we are unable to treat them justly by *their* lights it does *not* follow that we are entitled to treat future generations in ways that are unfair or unjust by *our* lights…That we are presently acting unjustly toward future generations seems to me beyond doubt or dispute. If we were to treat presently existing people as we now treat future ones—by, for example, planting toxic time bombs in their midst—we would no doubt be termed terrorists, and righty condemned for our injustice. (1985, 336)

Strangely, Ball seems to appeal to an implicit objective moral principle: we shouldn't treat future generations unjustly by our lights. But whether this is true will depend on our concept of rightness. Rather, he should argue that given our current concept of rightness, we shouldn't treat future generations as unjust by our lights. But if there is a future generation that has a different concept of rightness (again, whatever that could mean) then perhaps they should treat future generations as unjust by their lights. This sounds strange to be sure, but if there is no essential core to justice or rightness, the peculiarity falls away.

I wonder why he is so confident that we are treating future generations unjustly, for this would require being confident that we all share the same concept of justice. Since this view of conceptual variation tends to treat our judgments about justice, good, free will, etc. as tracking the truth more often than the traditional view of conceptual analysis, I think that there are people whose concept does imply that we are not acting unjustly or who have a normative conceptual scheme where justice isn't a strong enough motivating reason to curb our present behavior. It is more right for us to continue to pursue our present desires. You can get people to give this up or persuade them that our current behavior is unjust. But why see this as revealing the true structure of their concept rather than a modification to their concept as the result of a change to their present desires? Given these alternative hypotheses, I don't think Ball is justified in his confidence that we are treating future generations unjustly.

Also, I struggle to see why many of us should be moved to act *justly* on the conceptual variation view. If our concepts are to a certain extent capricious and mercurial, then why should I care about justice itself? I should only care about achieving my desires, and if some of those desires happen to fall under the heading "justice," then I should try to achieve justice. But then I don't pursue justice. Rather I pursue my desires and some of those happen to be labeled "just." This too looks like a counterexample to Ball's view. For justice is worth pursuing. Granted, this argument won't convince the subjectivist, but I think it could give a large number of moral philosophers a reason to reject the thesis of conceptual variation.

Ball and others who endorse the thesis of conceptual variation often speak of having different philosophical concepts of the same thing—different conceptions of the good, justice, or free will. But if as some mentalists claim, our concepts determine the structure of the philosophical world, that philosophical objects don't have a prior essence, I don't think it makes much sense to speak of having different conceptions of the same thing. There is no one thing of which we can have different conceptions.[183] Only if extra-mentalism is true and philosophical objects have a nature independently of our concepts does the locution make sense. Thus, to speak in this way, one must be willing to become an extra-mentalist—a move those congenial to the natural kinds approach are willing to make—or give up talking about our having different conceptions of the same thing. We simply have different concepts associated with the same predicate. This raises an intriguing problem when speaking about agents with different languages, especially if we think of conceptual analysis as meaning analysis.

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[183] I suppose at this point they may instead examine the concepts themselves and appeal to a family resemblance between them. But then there aren't different concepts of justice but rather different concepts of justices (excuse the neologism). The term "justice" suggests one thing, not many. But on the family resemblance view, there isn't just one thing we are really talking about because our concepts determine different but related referents. So this would require a modification in the way we speak as well. We should refrain from talking about different concepts of justice if mentalism is true.

Again, as pointed out several times, Ball better hope we share the same concept of "concepts" or "sameness," for if we don't, his talk of having different concepts of justice may only be true for him. Alas, once he throws his support to the thesis of conceptual variation, he seems to make any comparison with others incoherent since they could have different concepts. Ascending higher levels does not allow him to talk about this problem from the God's eye point of view, since whether his writing is true will depend on the content of the concepts involved. But if others could have different concepts, then for them his claims could be mistaken. So in taking up such a point of view, one can do nothing more than preach to the choir.

Ultimately, one struggles in vain to find any arguments in the article for Ball's belief in the truth of conceptual variation. Perhaps he thinks it has been elevated to the status of orthodoxy. Lurking in the background though are alternative explanations for the persistent philosophical disagreements through history. Perhaps some generations have been better than others at discovering the nature of justice. Earlier generations were prone to so many mistakes in science and other forms of reasoning; we shouldn't be surprised to find they weren't adroit in doing conceptual analysis.[184] He does suggest the following conditional, however, which strikes at the heart of the matter:

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[184] When discussing Harold Brown's work, I mentioned that one appealing feature of the thesis of conceptual variation is that philosophers have been correctly analyzing their concepts. The concepts still overlap quite a bit explaining why they can't shake the feeling that they're discussing the

> If moral and political theories—including theories of justice—are more or less systematic articulations of the presuppositions and justifications of historically parochial practices, aims, and aspirations, it follows that the intuitively appealing idea that one generation has a duty to act justly toward distant future generations is itself incoherent. (Ball 1985, 337)

If we acquire our concepts through surrounding influences, if their architecture is determined by contingent features of our environment, and if these contingent features change over time, then most likely our concepts are not identical. This may be true not only across generations but across contemporaneous cultures.

Stephen Stich's Attack on Thesis of Shared Concepts

This is precisely the line of thinking Stephen Stich uses to undermine the efforts and projects of analytic epistemology. He pulls no punches when speaking of his disdain for the aim of analytic epistemology. Just a few pages into his book *The Fragmentation of Reason* (1991), one finds this:

> On the few occasions when I have taught the "analysis of knowledge" literature to undergraduates, it has been painfully clear that most of my students were clever enough to play fill-in-the-blank with 'S knows that p if and only…But they could not, for the life of them, see why anybody would want to do this. It was a source of ill-concealed amazement to these students that grown men and women would indulge in this exercise and think it important—and of still greater amazement that others would pay them to do it! This sort of discontent was all the more disquieting because deep down I agreed with my students. Surely something had gone very wrong somewhere when clever philosophers, the heirs to the tradition of Hume and Kant, devoted their time to constructing baroque counterexamples about the weird ways in which a man might fail to own a ford, or about strange lands that abound in trompe l'oeil barns…I began to see with increasing clarity what it was that made

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same thing. Yet, I don't think this explanation best explains disagreement through time. For our position is better than Plato's or Descartes'. We have been exposed to more arguments, and we have more ideas and strategies at our disposal; we have a more complete map of the different philosophical areas. This explains the disagreement over time just as well. But if we think of ourselves living at or close to the pinnacle of philosophical reasoning, then present disagreement is more difficult to explain without positing conceptual variation. Have we then come close to that pinnacle? George Bealer thinks we haven't and I am inclined to agree with him.

> the project of analyzing epistemic terms seem so wrongheaded. (1991, 3)[185]

For Stich, the project is wrongheaded because he endorses the thesis of conceptual variation. He charges the analytic epistemologist with epistemic xenophobia. Let's see how he gets there.

He begins by asking, "What is it that makes one system of cognitive processes better than another, and how are we to tell which system or systems are best?" (1991, 76). He considers a Goodmanian/Rawlsian approach to justifying, say, rules of inference and inferences used. We should justify how we reason by bringing into equilibrium judgments about principles of reasoning with actual inferences. This reflective equilibrium (RE) approach, which we discussed in the prior chapter, can be interpreted in several different ways. And I think Stich gains some mileage in his attack on analytic epistemology by erecting a straw man. According to Stich, most likely Goodman believed that getting rules and inferences into equilibrium *constitutes* their justification. In other words, being in reflective equilibrium alone is constitutive of the justification for inferential rules and inferential practices. This is a coherentist view of justification. Stich's quote of Goodman clearly reveals the coherentist bent:

> This looks flagrantly circular. I have said that deductive inferences are justified by their conformity to valid general rules, and that general rules are justified by their conformity to valid inferences. But this circle is a virtuous one. The point is that rules and particular inferences alike are justified by being brought into agreement with each other. A rule is amended if it yields an inference we are unwilling to accept; an inference is rejected if it violates a rule we are unwilling to amend. (1991, 77)[186]

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[185] One wonders if his dislike for analytic epistemology colored his presentation of the analyses of knowledge. Perhaps his students couldn't see why one would worry about an analysis of knowledge because of his discontent with analytic epistemology. In the hands of a different analytic epistemologist, the students may have come to recognize the importance. Furthermore, students feel that way about many topics that philosophers take to be important. Judging importance on the basis of student interest therefore is a bit unwise.

[186] The problems with this are, alas, extensive. What does Goodman have in mind when he speaks of our unwillingness to give something up? Is any reason for our unwillingness justified? If I was raised to use the gambler's fallacy, would my obstinacy in giving up the rule be justified? If my

Seeing RE, on the other hand, as evidence for believing that an analysis of justified inference is probably correct, an analysis of what constitutes justified reasoning, is more common and I believe correct. RE is evidentially important for systemizing intuitions which make up a crucial form of data for the armchair philosopher. The closer one is to RE, the more probable that one's surviving intuitions are true.[187] RE of this kind is ultimately rooted in foundational beliefs where one either regards intuitive beliefs as foundational—you don't know there is a sheep in that field when you happen to be looking at a cleverly disguised wolf and there happens to be sheep standing in another part of the field—or thinks that beliefs about intellectual seemings (if only implicit) play the foundational role (the view endorsed in chapter 2).

Thus, in entertaining the idea that RE is constitutive of justified reasoning or even justified belief, Stich erects a straw man against analytic epistemology by targeting an implausible theory. He seems to be saying this: an inference is justified if and only if it is in reflective equilibrium with one's rules of inference. To his credit, he does mention that RE can be used as evidence for the correct analysis of what makes an inference justified for instance. RE is not constitutive of justification but constitutes, when done well, the best evidence we have that a certain analysis is correct. But he goes on: "I will simply stipulate that the constitutive reading is the one I'm stalking" (1991, 78). This unfortunately gives him an occasion to raise objections to RE that are best ignored.[188]

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magic eight ball told me that a rule is a good one, would that make my unwillingness justified? Without intuitions as the inputs, intuitions which ultimately owe their justification to a foundational edifice, one can raise all the same problems that afflicts coherentisim in epistemology. One last point: how does he know the inferences he's using in arguing for the view of RE are the good ones? The only evidence that they are is that they are in RE with his rules. But isn't this question begging? This is the problem of epistemic circularity that afflicts many views but which we have been solicitous to avoid by rooting justified belief in the relation of acquaintance.

[187] See my argument in chapter 2 for why this is the case.

[188] You might wonder then why I deal with his arguments against RE in the next couple pages. For one, they give us a chance to talk about problems that might crop up for the more

In asking whether RE is a good test for what constitutes justification or a valid inference, he asks us to consider what sorts of inferential rules the approach could license. He says that if RE could license "irrational or unjustified inferential rules or practices" (1991, 83) then most likely the RE account of justification fails.[189] He continues:

> [P]atently unacceptable rules of inference would pass the reflective equilibrium test for many people. For example, it appears likely that many people infer in accordance with some version of the gambler's fallacy when dealing with games of chance…there is every reason to think that the principle underlying their inference is in reflective equilibrium for them. (1991, 83)[190]

I am skeptical of his last claim. Philosophers know that it's all too common for a person to avow some claim or use an inference which is at odds with some other member of his belief set. Capable philosophers tend to be quite good at showing how we have yet to achieve RE. If one were to probe a person's other intuitions or beliefs, it is highly unlikely that the gambler's fallacy would be in reflective equilibrium for them.

Nonetheless, the ability of non-philosophers to get strange inferences into equilibrium is little evidence against the possibility of justifying rules using RE. Why? Well, first, philosophers know that non-philosophers sometimes have very strange intuitions that

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plausible account of RE as an indication that one has found the correct analysis. Furthermore, Stich takes himself to be showing something significant, and I wish to point out why I think he isn't.

[189] Knowing ahead of time that Stich believes we possess different concepts of justification, I wonder what justifies him in using the present method. He will certainly appeal to intuitions at this point in assessing RE. But how can those intuitions have any epistemic weight given that he thinks analytic epistemology is a lost cause? In other words, he appears to be doing analytic epistemology on RE when we know that further along he disparages the use of analytic epistemology altogether. Perhaps he is assuming the view for the sake of argument. But one doesn't get that impression from his writing. He seems to find the gambler's fallacy genuinely problematic as a mode of inference. By appealing to intuitions in this way, he is in essence using RE on RE.

[190] To reiterate, Stich appeals to intuitions about which rules of inference are justified which his considered view does not allow. He seems to find the beliefs he uses to refute RE highly intuitive. But, according to his reasoning, if intuitions proceed from different culturally influenced concepts, we shouldn't care about them. They don't give us the kind of data we need to refute Goodman, for perhaps he is dealing with a different conception of justification. On Stich's view, intuitions are only important to those who suffer from epistemic xenophobia. Thus there seems to be an internal tension here between the way Stich is arguing and his overall conclusions.

contradict the intuitions of most philosophers.[191] If the philosopher found that her intuitions contradicted most philosophers, that might give her a good reason for suspending judgment about the veracity of those intuitions.[192] This is because the intuitions of the philosopher tend to have more weight. Thus if Stich at least allows on his constitutive view of RE that intuitions can play the role of inputs and that these intuitions can have varying degrees of justification (hastily formed intuitions without complete understanding of the situation surely have less justification), then the ability of those who tend to have unreliable intuitions to achieve RE is not evidence against his version of RE.

What about the evidential conception of RE? If we take RE as evidence of what constitutes a legitimate rule, the RE achievements of the non-philosopher will not bear much weight. The ability of others to get strange inferences into equilibrium is no more a problem for justifying rules of inference than the ability of non-scientists to get strange scientific views into equilibrium. Surely, given Stich's favoritism for science, he will argue that this does not undermine the use of RE in the sciences. This is because he would be using the evidential view of RE for scientific reasoning. But then why weigh down the philosopher with the constitutive conception?

The problem he ultimately raises is a problem that not only afflicts the constitutive/coherentist view of RE, but arises to a lesser degree for the foundationalists/evidential use of RE. We already discussed that since all reasoning ultimately ends in appeals to what is given to us, and that what a person thinks is given to him may contradict what another thinks is given to her, one could justifiably end up with some strange rules. But this isn't just a problem for the given, but for perception, memory, and other legitimate modes of belief formation.

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[191] For example, I was shocked to learn from my students that they don't think it would be irrational or imprudent for them to drive to school if there were a 10% chance they would be killed in a car wreck. I raised another scenario where I asked them to imagine that they are in the final round of a game show. Ten doors stand in front of them. Behind 9 of them is $2,000,000. Behind one of them is a group of people who will be shot and killed if they happen to choose that door. To my astonishment, they said it would be morally permissible to play the last round.

[192] I speak here of a view that I suspect many philosophers would accept about the nature of disagreement. I am not quite sure that disagreement amongst philosophers who are epistemic peers should occasion revision in the strength of one's belief or suspension of judgment altogether. Presently, I am inclined to say that what justifies a belief does not depend on contingent features external to the agent such as whether others agree or disagree. The very possibility that someone of equal intelligence might draw the opposite conclusion is enough to warrant consideration. Thus skepticism still remains a problem, for instance, even if there are no skeptics to speak of.

Stich must continue to equivocate between the use of RE in philosophy and science when he points out that this problem for the coherentist/constitutive RE need not depend on actual people getting intuitively unjustified inferential principles into equilibrium: "[T]he issue need not turn on whether this empirical hunch is correct. For even the *possibility* that the facts will turn out as I suspect they will poses a serious problem for the Goodmanian story. It is surely not an a priori fact that strange inferential principles will always fail the reflective equilibrium test for all subjects" (1991, 84).[193] But doesn't this possibility equally hamper the use of RE in the sciences as well? There is always the possibility that one could get strange theories into equilibrium with strange beliefs about the external world. But he would take this to be unlikely and thus not significant enough to tear down the legitimacy of RE in finding justified scientific theories and beliefs.[194] Thus clearly he must unjustifiably equivocate in his characterization of RE for philosophy and science.

Here is another way his objection extends further than he would like. Suppose all experiences up to this point seem to have been veridical. The skeptic replies, "That doesn't matter, for the very possibility that one can have those experiences and still have false beliefs is enough to undermine our knowledge of the world via sensory experience." In other words, using the method of sense experience doesn't guarantee that the results will always be correct. If the coherence/constitutive theory of justification is correct, this is a problem, for the person convinced she should believe the opposite of our usual empirical beliefs could get these beliefs into coherence thus making them justified. This gives Stich, a proponent of the sciences, every reason to deny the coherentist/constitutive interpretation of RE.

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[193] Stich considers the point I raised earlier on how the achievement of RE has value only when achieved by those competent to philosophize. He thinks the very possibility of an expert getting strange rules into RE is enough to undermine this point. But this follows only on the constitutive/coherentist RE.

[194] This is especially worrisome for a person like Stich who seems to think only science gives us genuine knowledge of the world.

Now consider the application of this problem to the usual conception of RE. The possibility that one could have the same intuitions and yet those intuitions be mistaken is no possibility at all. By hypothesis, they're correct. But then they can't be incorrect like the senses can since intuitions take as their targets necessary truths. There is another possibility, however. Someone who has achieved a point where their intuitions carry great epistemic weight (which I spoke of earlier in Chapter 2) can still find themselves with intuitions that conflict with other philosophers and still have good reasons for thinking they are nonetheless correct. Thus intuition use does not guarantee true belief. The best we can get via intuition is the high probability that our philosophical beliefs are true. But how do we verify this probability? We don't have non-intuitive access to the philosophical facts. Therefore, we can't verify any contingent probable connection. The best we can hope for is that intuition use (in certain circumstances and when used by certain kinds of people) necessarily makes probable philosophical beliefs. This is what I have previously argued.

The above presupposes the principle of inferential justification, that in order to have justified philosophical beliefs on the basis of intuitions, one must be justified in believing that intuitions make probable those beliefs. Externalists deny this part of the principle. But it's hard to see how any philosopher could be satisfied with the conditional that if intuition is reliable, then we are justified in our intuitive beliefs, unless we had some reason for believing the antecedent that is not question begging. Philosophy is the demand for more when it comes to knowledge and justified belief about philosophical problems, not less. Indeed when externalists argue for externalism, they tend to do so by trying to get more by way of evidence than externalism demands. We may also note that externalists tend to be skeptical that intuition has any worth, and an appeal to intuition to allay this doubt will not appease them. But if externalism is true and intuition is reliable, there is no reason why we can't use intuition to justify its use.

This beckons another philosophical problem. We think the use of RE helps to impart justification to our beliefs about what constitutes justified belief. Getting one's intuitions into RE makes more probable that one is correct in her analyses of epistemic concepts. But when discovering what justification is, aren't we begging the question by assuming RE will yield justified beliefs about the nature of justification? This is why we should prefer the acquaintance solution to the problem of showing intuition to be reliable. Unless we can be directly aware of the truth that the longer one's intuitions survive the RE process (when done correctly in certain conditions), necessarily, those intuitions are probably true, we will be begging the question. If we don't think we apprehend this truth, then we should be skeptics about the possibility of intuitive philosophical knowledge. We could gather partners in crime and point out that epistemic circularity does not bother us when we verify the reliability of sense experience, but then we must toss aside the intuition which constantly pricks our philosophical conscience: question begging reasoning is unjustified.

One could further argue that Stich is implicitly using RE in assessing RE. He is appealing to particular cases to challenge the RE analysis of justified inference and using those cases to support more general beliefs. He is also relying on general principles of reasoning or certain logical laws (like the law of non-contradiction) which he is using to judge the adequacy of possible results for RE.

Stich eventually turns to his main attack on analytic epistemology as conceptual analysis. He thinks he can show the poverty of analytic epistemology by calling our attention to an old epistemic problem: "[I]f there are lots of different ways in which the human mind/brain can go about ordering and reordering it cognitive states, if different cultures could or do go about the business of reasoning in very different ways, *which of these ways should we use?* Which cognitive processes are the *good* ones?" (1998, 96-97).

According to standard analytic epistemology, we discover the answer to this question by discovering the nature of justified belief or good reasoning. We discover the criteria a belief or rule of inference must satisfy in order to count as justified. And to do this, Sich believes analytic epistemology engages in the business of conceptual analysis. We search for the necessary and sufficient condition for one to know or justifiably believe some claim. In short, we assess whether these epistemic concepts truly apply to cases or even more general principles.

While endorsing conceptual analysis, Alvin Goldman (1986) does admit that our epistemic concepts may suffer from vagueness. Thus there may not be a uniquely correct answer to some epistemic questions, perhaps those questions which demand more from our concepts than they can yield. But he does note that there is a common core to our epistemic concepts thus enriching the pretensions of analytic epistemology. Analytic epistemology is not mere autobiography, for others possess the same epistemic concepts. Stich, on the other hand, challenges this assumption:

> Yet surely the evaluative epistemic concepts embedded in everyday thought and language are every bit as likely as the cognitive processes they evaluate to be culturally acquired and to vary from culture to culture. Moreover, the analytic epistemologist offers us no reason whatever to think that the notions of evaluation prevailing in our own language and culture are any better than the alternative evaluative notions that might or do prevail in other cultures…why should we care one wit whether the cognitive processes we use are sanctioned by those evaluative concepts? How can the fact that our cognitive processes are approved by the evaluative notions embraced in our culture alleviate the worry that our cognitive processes are no better than those of exotic folk, if we have no reason to believe that our evalutive notions are any better than alternative evaluative notions?[195]

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[195] One reason analytic epistemologists haven't offered any reason to think our epistemic concepts should be preferred to other cultures is that analytic epistemologists don't think the concepts vary. So I wonder why Stich thinks the absence of an argument here on behalf of analytic epistemology is telling.

So, to evaluate different ways of reasoning, especially culturally influenced reasoning, we apply our epistemic concepts. But those concepts are culturally constructed thus yielding the possibility and likelihood that we will correctly identify a reasoning process as unjustified while another culture will correctly identify the same process as justified. If the only recourse we have in disputing our different epistemic judgments is culturally different epistemic concepts, then we find ourselves with no reason for thinking our epistemic judgments track the truth while other cultures err.

One then wonders whether the following would be an apt reply to Stich: if there is no reason for calling one form of reasoning better than another, then why should we think that the reasoning you're using to arrive at this conclusion is better than a form of reasoning that would lead to the opposite conclusion but would be judged by us to be invalid or unjustified? For on your view, we don't have any justification for preferring one over the other.

If one expects Stich to prove his most important premise, that cultures differ in their epistemic concepts, she is likely to be disappointed. In a footnote, Stich admits the evidence is difficult to come by. He thinks a study of the Yoruba, a West African people, suggests they have different epistemic concepts. Apparently the Yoruba don't distinguish knowledge from mere true belief. Instead they divide beliefs into those for which one has an eyewitness account and those which do not.

I doubt this even constitutes a bit of evidence for Stich's conceptual variation belief. Stich makes a mistake common to most analyses of our conceptual structures. He assumes that the way we initially act or speak is the best evidence for our epistemic concepts. But then how do we get students to quickly change their epistemic beliefs? We can get them to realize that they can't know what is false, that there can be truth without knowledge, that one can know things without appealing to the five senses, and correct other simple mistakes they're prone to. If we took the way people behave as the principle evidence of their conceptual structures, then we should think that for some, their concept involves knowing what is false. But we know that upon philosophical reflection, their concept doesn't. The best way to evaluate the content of one's concept is to do philosophy, for one will find that many of her practices or assertions at first contradict a deeper understanding of what she thinks knowledge or justified belief is.[196] In short, the behavior of a person absent philosophical reasoning and reflection does not provide much evidence of her conceptual structures. When one is exposed to epistemology and the cases and questions epistemologists ask, one begins to get a clearer picture of what she really thinks knowledge and justified belief are.[197]

Put differently, we have two options open to us when we observe disagreement over the epistemic characteristics of a belief or principles of inference. Either concepts vary from person to person or the application varies from person to person. With the bit of evidence Stich gives us for thinking that concepts vary, he fails to consider this second possibility: the applications of concepts, and not the concepts themselves, vary from culture to culture. Culture's could influence how we apply our epistemic concepts just as culture's influence how we reason. This hypothesis presently explains the data equally well thus making unjustified Stich's quick move from the cultural influence exerted on our reasoning to "surely the evaluative epistemic concepts embedded in everyday thought and language are every bit as likely as the cognitive processes they evaluate to be culturally acquired and to vary from culture to culture" (1991, 92).[198]

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[196] I discovered that Brian Weatherson (2003) gives a similar argument. When speaking of convincing someone to think of the Gettier cases differently, he remarks, "I will have thereby corrected a *mistake* in your usage. But, an objector may argue, it is much more plausible to say that in doing so I simply changed the meaning of 'knows'…in your idiolect. The meaning of your words is constituted by your responses to cases like Gettier…This objection relies on a faulty theory of meaning, one that equates meaning with use…it would imply infallibilism about knowledge ascriptions" (10).

[197] In fact, given Stich's rather strong view of the influence our surrounding culture bears in the construction of our concepts, I wonder how he expects most of us to understand his book unless he wrongly assumes that we come from a fairly homogenous culture. Also, he must think that the culling of informal fallacies is the practice of a select few trying to impose their concept of good reasoning on the majority.

Another problem is that Stich seems to be applying an objective evaluative notion at a higher level. Basically, he is arguing that evaluative notions are relative, and thus we shouldn't care whether our cognitive processes fall under the extension of our evaluative concepts. The thesis of conceptual variation implies we have no reason whatsoever to prefer our ways of forming beliefs over others. Consequently, there is something subpar or substandard in doing so.[199] But this is a normative claim and one Stich seems to treat as objective. If he doesn't, then one could simply reply that according to my evaluative concepts, acquiring beliefs to which my evaluative concepts apply is a good thing. But Stich thinks we shouldn't care about such things. Therefore, he is appealing to an evaluative notion that somehow escaped unscathed by cultural influence. Somehow we can ascend above this cultural/conceptual mess and make objective normative judgments about what our attitudes should be given the thesis of conceptual variation. But how do any of the concepts he uses to argue against analytic epistemology escape the very objections he is raising? I suspect he hopes that not only Americans but other epistemologists throughout the world find his arguments attractive. But then he must assume that they will be employing the same concepts of evaluation when evaluating his arguments, and whether we should value forming beliefs that fall within the extension of our epistemic concepts. But given his previous argument for the thesis of conceptual variation, what makes him so sanguine that we would find his arguments compelling? Why not think all of this is just kicking against the goads just as it would be, according to him, if an analytic epistemologist debated with a philosopher from another culture about the superiority of her evaluative concepts.

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[198] Thanks to David Alexander for helping me see this point more clearly.

[199] One could take the relativist route here and argue that we should care about beliefs that fall within the extension of our epistemic terms because when they do, there is something good about them. Since justification is a term of evaluation, achieving epistemically justified beliefs is a good thing. And we should care about pursuing what is good. We must not make sure to slide to some sort of epistemic nihilism: beliefs don't have any good or bad properties. If nihilism is true, then one would rightly wonder why we should care. But if conceptual relativism is true, beliefs can have good characteristics and given our understanding of the nature of good, we ought to pursue it. But then why not pursue good making properties that other cultures recognize? It's because they aren't truly good for us. In other words, according to the relativist, Stich is ultimately asking why we shouldn't pursue other bad making properties.

If Stich is correct, then there is nothing wrong with the sort of reasoning which justified or still justifies racism or the oppression of women. We can't say our forms of reasoning are better than the racist or the misogynist. But does Stich really want to accept this result? Furthermore, suppose an ardent racist and slave owner becomes convinced through the arguments of another that his reasoning for justifying his practices is fallacious. Perhaps he uses several informal fallacies and other invalid or weak inferences. In this situation, it is possible that he has adopted a new or modified epistemic concept of what constitutes good reasoning via the influence of the people around him. Therefore, he was reasoning quite well before and afterward is still reasoning quite well. But this surely seems mistaken.

When he critiques any preference for our epistemic notions, he seems to think he's offering objective reasons we should attend to:

> For many people—certainly for me—the fact that a cognitive process is sanctioned by the venerable standards embedded in our language of epistemic evaluation, or that it is sanctioned by the equally venerable standards embedded in some quite different language, is no more reason to value it than the fact that it is sanctioned by the standards of a religious tradition or an ancient text, unless, of course, it can be shown that those standards correlate with something more generally valued or obviously valuable. Unless one is inclined toward chauvinism or xenophobia in matters epistemic, it is hard to see why one would much care that a cognitive process…accords with the set of evaluative notions that prevail in the society into which one happened to be born. (1991, 94)

Stich starts out well by appealing to what he or others care about, but he then shifts to a more objective mode of evaluation by calling the conceptual analyst a "chauvinist" or "xenophobic," for both of these have normative content. There is no suggestion that chauvinism or xenophobia are culturally acquired normative concepts, for if he did argue this, then one could run the same argument against him: why should we care that we are chauvinists or xenophobics, since these concepts vary from culture to culture. Why should we care not to instantiate the kinds of states to which these concepts truly apply?

Stich also seems to assume that we can compare our epistemic concepts with the epistemic concepts of other cultures. But what makes all these epistemic concepts?[200] Perhaps there is a family resemblance between them. But in order to keep the family resemblance from stretching so far that anything can count as a justified cognitive process, like believing and only believing every fifth proposition one considers, there will need to be some constraints on what constitutes an epistemic concept. And those constraints will come from our epistemic concepts. But if this is the case, there will not be as many differing epistemic concepts as Stich suggests. If a culture applies epistemic justification to things like questions or commands, then we should not consider that concept a competitor. Furthermore, essential to our concept of epistemic justification is the notion of an epistemic reason, the kind of reason that makes probable the truth of what one believes. Pragmatic, moral, or even legal reasons play no role in epistemic discourse. Therefore, epistemology by its very nature is a concern for truth—either maximizing one's truth/falsity ratio, being aware of what is true, having evidence for truth, satisfying one's obligations with respect to truth, etc. But if a culture's so-called epistemology has no concern for truth, perhaps they only care about survival and reproductive success, then how can we say they are doing epistemology given that essential to our concept is the pursuit of truth? Indeed, why even think of these as different epistemic concepts instead of just different concepts? Alas, how can we think of them as different epistemic concepts given the essential core all epistemologists take for granted? And if they're not different epistemic concepts, why should we care they have these concepts?

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[200] Stich also better hope that we have the same concept of 'concept'. For his discussion presupposes some sort of common ground or mutual understanding from which he can talk about variation among concepts. Otherwise, we have no reason to care about his thesis using parity of reasoning. This is similar to an objection raised against moral relativism. Relativists think only their view is correct. In other words, they deny relativism at a higher level of moral theorizing. But one wonders what entitles them to do so. How can they seal off relativism from infecting higher meta-ethical forms of reasoning? The same question seems pertinent to Stich's arguments.

Here is another way to put the matter. Our concept of murder is wrongful killing. There is not much room here for conceptual variation among cultures for us to rightly say they have a different concept of murder than we do. If another culture applied the concept to your attacking someone who is attacking your family and then not killing the attacker, we would have more evidence for thinking this isn't a different concept of murder but a different concept altogether.

The above leads to the following conclusion: Stich should confine his appeals to the culture of philosophy for, given his thesis of conceptual variation, he can't stray far from our understanding of epistemology which includes as an essential part the importance of epistemic reasons and their relation to truth. So why not instead argue that Goldman has a different concept of justification than Fumerton or Feldman? The reason seems pretty clear. Philosophers seem to do quite a bit of philosophy without talking past one another. Rarely do we find philosophers completely immune or impervious to arguments from the other side. This at least suggests a substantial amount of overlap among the concepts of philosophers which would still make conceptual analysis worth doing.

Sosa argues against Stich by remarking that there is something more for the analytic epistemologist to do after recognizing the variety of epistemic theories rooted in a culture:

> Once having discerned the optional criteria, so as to hold them up separately for consideration on their own, the question will remain whether to adopt them. To say that intuition speaks in favor of doing so, either directly or via the deliverances of reflective equilibrium, is now separable from mere ethnocentric xenophobia. For the appeal *here,* once we are holding the criteria or standards themselves in focus, is quite distinct from any conservative appeal to community consensus. (2005, 104)

I quote this to point out that Sosa here seems to be assuming some sort of extra-mentalism. For if intuitions are concept born and culturally bred, they don't supply an objective source of evidence by which to assess the criteria supplied by another culture's epistemic concepts. This marks the importance of the choice between mentalism and extra-mentalism.

Kornblith's Attack on Armchair Philosophy

In the last two decades, the greatest threat to armchair philosophy has been the natural kinds approach. On this view, philosophic theorizing should not be obsessed with the *ideas* of justice, goodness, and truth but should look outward to the world of *objects* to find these things. And if these things happen to be natural kinds, like kinds of rock or fish for instance, then clearly we should reject the armchair for the lab. The philosopher should leave the office and join the scientist out in the field. Philosophy should become a species of science.

In what follows, we will address a paradigmatic and rather austere form of naturalism found in the work of Hilary Kornblith. In *Knowledge and It's Place in Nature* (2002) and in what might be called a companion article "The Role of Intuition in Philosophical Inquiry: An Account with No Unnatural Ingredients" (1998), Kornblith attacks armchair philosophy in favor of his scientific approach to issues like ethics and epistemology. If Kornblith is right and the search for knowledge ought to be modeled on the search for natural kinds, then my writing this dissertation may be complete folly. Let us hope not.

To Kornblith's approach to philosophy, we apply the label "extra-mentalism," for he proposes that we discover the nature of philosophical objects by looking outward and not at our representations of them:

> On my view, the subject matter of ethics is the right and the good, nor our concepts of them. The subject matter of philosophy of mind is the mind itself, not our concept of it. And the subject matter of epistemology is knowledge itself, not our concept of knowledge. (2002, 1)

I must admit a feeling of kinship toward Kornblith at least at this stage. If math and logic can be done from the armchair and seem prima facie to be about something other than language or thought, why can't philosophy be as well? Why can't extra-mentalism be true for armchair philosophy? Although an extra-mentalist, Kornblith unfortunately would have us forsake the armchair for empirical investigation.

On most mentalist views, our concepts determine the structure of philosophical objects. Thus we can discover what free action is in a world where no one acts freely. One salient advantage to this approach is that we can explain how intuitions track the philosophical world, for concepts not only determine the creatures of philosophy but engender data carrying intuitions. But if philosophical objects have an ontologically prior existence to our concepts, then the conceptual analyst must show how our concepts mirror the structure of the world. This would be a tall order indeed.

For Kornblith, we don't need to consult our concepts to get at the nature of philosophical creatures, for if they exist, they exist out there in the material world to be discovered. Just as the scientist amends and emends her concepts in the face of scientific discovery, the philosopher should do the same with hers. We should no longer worry whether our concept of "justice" is the same as Plato's, for this directs us away from the true object of study—justice as a natural kind.

All the prior worries of this chapter about the thesis of conceptual variation of our concepts turn out to be a chimera on Kornblith's view. For according to him, we should give up the introspective gaze and turn our mind's eye outward and rely on methods with a proven track record—the methods of science. But how could one possibly discover the nature of knowledge empirically? Can we point to knowledge? Does knowledge look a certain way, sound a certain way, or taste a certain way? Can we stumble over knowledge? We shall now see if Kornblith can give us an answer.

Kornblith's Proposal

I title this section "Kornblith's proposal" because, admittedly, he makes some assumptions (which he may leave others to argue for) in sketching his new approach to philosophy. He assumes for the sake of argument a causal/historical account of reference.[201] I also think he assumes a thoroughgoing physicalism, a view often hard to pin down, but that can be defined presently as the belief that all that exists is physical or is the sort of thing that enters into causal relations understood nomologically.[202] This means that the internalist or classical foundationalist in epistemology can't hope to see Kornblith vindicated and then use his approach to prove their views in epistemology. His philosophical method is not theory neutral. His philosophical methods will determine certain theoretical outcomes. Prima facie, this may look quite unfair as though Kornblith is in a sense rigging the debate between internalists and externalists in epistemology. Strangely, he is taking what has often been considered a foundational branch of philosophy—epistemology—and using other areas of philosophy to impose a certain outcome.

Kornblith's novel approach to philosophical method is to model the search for knowledge or justified belief on the search for natural kinds like kinds of rock. The method of discovery is slightly different for one doesn't stumble over knowledge or see a piece of knowledge glinting in the sunlight and investigate the thing empirically. One doesn't begin as a tabula rasa and stumble upon something one later dubs "knowledge." One could discover that rocks fall into a kind without any prior idea or notice of them. He could simply attend to them one day and begin to recognize that several specimens share properties in common. This is an important point and one we can't stress enough: Kornblith must link what he does in some way to what knowledge truly is. Not anything can count as knowledge.

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[201] "Here I simply take for granted a causal or historical account of reference of natural-kind terms. While the details of such a theory remain to be established, the general outline is, I believe, perfectly clear in the foundational work of Kripke and Putnam," (Kornblith 2002, 12 fn. 18).

[202] It seems to me that Kornblith must acknowledge the existence of relations of resemblance among objects when trying to categorize things into kinds. But how can we cash out this relation using nothing but scientific language? In other words, how can this relation not be sui generis? Perhaps Kornblith has an answer here. I only note presently that this could be a potential problem.

For the armchair philosopher, the data of philosophy is mostly intuition. Samples of knowledge are brought before the mind via intuitions about specific cases and those samples are examined for crucial properties in common. Kornblith chooses to keep many of the same terms, but gives them a completely different characterization. He is happy to say that we pick out samples of knowledge using intuitions. But for him, intuitions are plain old empirical judgments. They are not a priori in any traditional sense:

> When we appeal to our intuitions about knowledge, we make salient certain instances of the phenomenon that need to be accounted for, and that these are genuine instances of knowledge is simply obvious, at least if our examples are well chosen. What we are doing, as I see it is much like the rock collector who gathers samples of some interesting kind of stone for the purpose of figuring out what it is that the samples have in common. We begin often enough, with obvious cases, even if we do not yet understand what it is that provides the theoretical unity to the kind we wish to examine. (Kornblith 2002, 11)

A page later he writes,

> [O]n the account I favor, these resulting judgments are no more a priori than the rock collector's judgments that if he were to find a rock meeting certain conditions, it would (or would not) count as a sample of a given kind. All such judgments, however obvious, are a posteriori, and we may view the appeal to intuition in philosophical cases in a similar manner. (2002, 12)

Thus as I understand Kornblith, and I admit, I find him very difficult to ferret out, (or he would find me rather obtuse), we find samples of knowledge by initially relying on intuitions about particular cases. These intuitions amount to ordinary common sense empirical judgments no different than judgments that something is a rock or gold.[203] Once we have enough cases collected, we can then empirically investigate them for a theoretical unity. The process will be a matter of trial and error just as a scientific inquiry into rocks would be. We may find that we have to discard some of our initial samples since they fail to belong to the kind in question or that properties we initially took to be unifying fail to be.

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[203] Kornblith is not clear on whether everyone's intuitions should count equally epistemically. I suppose each person has a much experience dealing with knowledge as the next person. I suspect the intuitions of the internalist should be given the least amount of weight.

Consider the way he describes investigating rocks, a process he later uses to describe investigating knowledge:

> What should we say about the rock collector's judgments at early stages of investigation, i.e. prior to any deep theoretical understanding of the features that make his samples samples of a given kind? Such judgments are, of course, corrigible, and they will change with the progress of theory. What seemed to be a clear case of a given kind in the absence of theoretical understanding may come to be a paradigm case of some different kind once the phenomena are better understood. (2002, 13)

The rock collector might think there are some characteristics like smell which distinguish kinds of rocks or rocks from non-rocks only later to find he was mistaken.

Once one gets through the initial stages, one gains more competency and more understanding of what sorts of samples one is looking for. One's judgments about which cases constitute knowledge grow epistemically stronger as one moves along in the process and gains better samples to empirically investigate.

> The judgments of rock collectors at early stages of investigation are substantially inferior, epistemically speaking to those at later stages, when theoretical understanding is further advanced. We should not say that initial judgments are of no evidential value, for were this the case progress in theory would be impossible. Our untutored judgments must have some purchase on the phenomenon under investigation; but, that said, it must also be acknowledged that judgment guided by accurate background theory is far superior to the intuitions of the naïve. (2002, 14)

The above I believe is a serious admission on behalf of Kornblith for if what he says is correct, then why should he be at all sanguine that what we end up investigating is knowledge? If our initial judgments may not be more reliable than not and thus we don't have a right to be confident that the samples in front of us are samples of knowledge, then why should we think that the ones we end up choosing are the right ones to investigate? I should think that the experiment of Weinberg, Nichols, and Stich we discussed earlier, and others designed to show that intuitions tend to be unreliable, would do more to hurt a theory like Kornblith's, since he tends to take the empirical evidence more seriously, and the route I take in solving the problem is not open to him.

Theory mediated judgment gives you more reliable judgments about particular cases only if you started off with the right cases to begin with. Otherwise your theory mediated judgment is parasitic on the wrong cases and unsurprisingly will continue to pick out the wrong ones. In the case of rocks, we need not worry as much, for if one happens to stumble upon a new natural kind, so much the better. But in the case of knowledge, we must be sure to pick out a certain natural kind. Not just any natural kind will do.

Philosophers recognize there can often be a strong disconnection between our initial untutored epistemic intuitions and those intuitions about the same cases which occur in the context of philosophical thought. Consequently, there is the possibility that in the future we might see a decay or decline in our epistemic speech where we use epistemic terms in haphazard, ridiculous, idiosyncratic or very injudicious ways (more of the use of "know" in cases where the person's belief is clearly false). Our intuitions (empirical beliefs) about particular cases would give us quite a hodgepodge to choose from to empirically investigate for discovering a natural kind. Since the natural kinds approach is still nascent, how does Kornblith know we tend to pick out the right items more often than not for empirical investigation? He need not worry if there is some other way to get at the samples, but as we shall see, no other way looks promising. The parallel to cases like gold or rocks starts to break down rather quickly when discussing philosophical items like knowledge or goodness. One relies rather heavily on intuitions to get the right samples in front of her to empirically investigate. This may explain, as we shall see later, why Kornblith in chapter 2 completely changes gears and looks at the possibility of animal knowledge, and instead of using straightforward induction, wields inference to the best explanation.

For someone who cares only about finding natural kinds, regardless of what we call them, picking out the right samples may not be that important. But Kornblith can't be so half hazard in his approach. He wishes to find a certain kind of natural kind. He can't choose to dub any natural kind he finds "knowledge" while legitimately doing philosophy. He must be on a search for knowledge, not just any old natural kind. This seems contrary to the spirit of science. But if our initial intuitive (a.k.a. common sense, empirical judgments) are quite inferior to theory mediated judgments, this makes them sound hardly reliable. And if so, we may end up discovering a theoretical unity among a group of objects that aren't knowledge because of our initial misjudgments.

To see the sort of progress Kornblith has in mind, he points to the case of Descartes. Apparently Descartes required certainty for knowledge because he believed only on such a foundation could we make scientific progress. But Kornblith believes that Descartes has been disproven. We have empirical proof that science can advance without the certainty requirement, and thus our beliefs about which items count as knowledge have been empirically informed. Indeed, Kornblith goes so far as to claim that "It is now just obvious to almost everyone that knowledge is possible without certainty" (2002, 17).[204]

Granted, many will initially make knowledge attribution claims without requiring certainty. But if you press them, I have found you can get them to withhold judgment in the absence of certainty. The lottery paradoxes teach us there is still the tendency in us to demand more from knowledge than mere probability. So when Kornblith speaks about what is obvious to us, he must go on our initial intuitive judgments. But this raises a problem for him. For we know there is quite a difference between the initial intuitive judgments of the average person and their reflective intuitive judgments—judgments which occur in the context of the philosophical process. To which judgments do we attend? Especially in epistemology, the intuitions can end up being quite different. Indeed, Kornblith must ignore the intuitions of epistemologists who after careful thought and reflection think we don't know as much as we claim to know.

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[204] Supposing the truth of the causal/historical account of reference, I wonder what confidence we should have that when Descartes uses the Latin or French term which we translate "knowledge," he is speaking of the same thing. Who knows how the term was introduced into his society, how his parents inherited their use of term, etc. The causal story to be told is so complicated that if one can be quite confident here, then one could have the right to be confident in predicting complicated economic forecasts.

Also, I don't believe the history of science implies the denial of knowledge as certainty. Descartes may have believed he needed certainty to establish something firm and lasting in the sciences, but since we didn't need certainty, why couldn't we argue, we didn't need knowledge, only adequately justified belief. We need not think that the progress of science does disprove Descartes, for he may have been wrong about a necessary condition to establish something firm and lasting in the sciences—knowledge. One only need highly justified belief.[205] As in many cases in life, justified belief will often do.

Our goal then is to discover a theoretical unity among the various samples, to discover their residence in the category of a natural kind, one that can do explanatory work in a scientific view of the world. Not until later does Kornblith tell us how he understands a natural kind:

> Following Richard Boyd, I take natural kinds to be homeostatically clustered properties, properties that are mutually supporting and reinforcing in the face of external change…the properties that are homeostatically clustered play a significant causal role in producing such a wide range of associated properties, and in thereby explaining the kind's characteristic interactions. It is for this reason too that natural kinds feature so prominently in causal laws. (2002, 61-62)

Not surprisingly, Kornblith believes a reliabilist account of knowledge satisfies this account of natural kinds.

One might worry that this methodological approach will lead to a theory that will depart from our folk epistemic notions, and we will appear to be changing the subject matter altogether. For once we look outward entirely toward the physical objects, who knows what sort of theory we will end up with. But Kornblith believes we won't be changing the subject because he anchors the epistemological investigation using a causal/historical account of reference. Since the referent doesn't change throughout the empirical investigation, since the referent is secured not by something internal to the subject but by external causal connections, one's epistemic beliefs can change quite a bit about what justification involves and one won't be changing the subject; the investigator will still be anchored to the subject of his investigation—knowledge or justified belief. Although Kornblith takes this to be a virtue of his theory, we will see how this quickly turns into a vice.

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[205] I wonder if Kornblith is even right in his understanding of Descartes. Would Descartes admit that we have established something firm and lasting in the sciences? Think of the debates still raging on at the theoretical level.

One last point before moving on to more substantial criticisms of Kornblith's theory. He thinks another issue that divides his naturalistic approach to epistemology from others is that the legitimacy of inference hinges entirely on the reliability of the inference used. In other words, when one is justified in inferring P from E, E need only make P probable; one need not be aware of the probabilistic connection. Kornblith brings up this point in the context of a priori justification. Philosophers like Laurence BonJour (1999) have argued that the repudiation of all a priori justification amounts to the denial of reasoning in general, since one then can't be aware of inferential connections holding between propositions.

Think of why we reason. Think of the phenomenology behind reasoning. On this point, I think the naturalist just gets things completely wrong. We reason when we realize that one proposition leads to another. We recognize connections, relations, entailments, probabilities, etc. Reasoning is not simply finding oneself with a belief E and then in the next moment finding oneself with the belief that P. Reasoning is about focusing on the space in between propositions. And as BonJour and others have pointed out, without a priori justification, we would have trouble justifying our recognition of the connections in between propositions, the recognition that licenses the move from one belief to the next. Indeed, without such recognition, our cognitive life takes on a mute cast. If when making an inference, we're not implicitly committed to its truth preserving character, one's arriving at a belief from the first person perspective is unexplainable and peculiar and from the standpoint of justification, arbitrary. But according to Kornblith, as long as the process is reliable, everything is fine.

Kornblith's desire to naturalize inference completely ignores the phenomenology of a human cognitive life and a human inference. We don't just find ourselves with new beliefs all the time, but we recognize connections, and often our justification hinges on the justification of that recognition. From the naturalist's points of view, we end up with phenomenological scraps which end up playing no justificatory role. But why shouldn't they? Without them, we can't explain human inference.

There are a host of other problems we could mention for Kornblith's naturalism such as how we even know the laws of logic like the law of non-contradiction, modal truths like the law of non-contradiction is necessarily true, mathematical facts, resemblances between objects, and other types of relations, which can't be naturalized in Kornblith's sense, or if done so, completely distorts what we actually do know. On his naturalistic view, he may be able to accommodate much of science, but science is not the only knowledge to be had.

Problems with Kornblith's View

Kornblith admits that skepticism could be true, even global skepticism—the belief that we don't know anything whatsoever.

> The phenomenon we call knowledge must have a certain degree of theoretical unity if reference is to be secured. Were we to discover that there is no more theoretical unity to the various items we call knowledge than there is to the set consisting of ships and shoes and sealing wax, then a presupposition of the introduction of the term would be undermined, and the view that there is no such thing as knowledge would be sustained.[206]

There is an intriguing and unique problem that Kornblith's view encounters once he admits the possibility of skepticism. This problem could potentially be devastating to his naturalistic methodology.

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[206] Ibid., 23.

On his view, skepticism would be true if knowledge does not form a natural kind but turns out to be a gerrymandered kind.[207] Suppose we discover that knowledge is a gerrymandered kind according to Kornblith's conception of natural kinds. If skepticism turns out to be true, then we would have a reason to doubt whether we know that knowledge must be a natural kind, for the justification of Kornblith's methodology depends on his knowing that knowledge must be a natural kind or nothing at all. And if we have such reason to doubt that knowledge is a natural kind, then we have a reason to doubt whether skepticism is true in the first place, since knowledge could be something else (other than a natural kind). And if knowledge could be something else, then an internalist epistemic theory could be true.

Note that all of this simply follows from his allowing for the possibility at the outset that skepticism could be true (i.e. that knowledge, if there is any, must be a natural kind or it could turn out that knowledge is a gerrymandered kind). If skepticism could be true, if knowledge could be a gerrymandered kind, then internalism could be true according to the above, thus making his search for knowledge unjustifiably narrow. He unjustifiably restricts his search to natural kinds.

Now, what I have described is certainly a possibility since Kornblith admits knowledge could turn out to be a gerrymandered kind (when of course one understands this to be the opposite of Kornblith's definition of "natural kinds"). But if this is possible, then his kind of skepticism could be true (knowledge is a gerrymandered kind). I say "his kind of skepticism" because we don't have ordinary skepticism. When we say there is no knowledge on Kornblith's view, we don't simply have reason to doubt there is no knowledge. Rather we have reason to doubt that knowledge must be a natural kind since, in searching for knowledge, we relied on our alleged knowledge that knowledge must be a natural kind. If so, then if knowledge is a gerrymandered kind, we have reason to doubt that knowledge is a natural kind. This is why I refer to his kind of skepticism instead of talking about skepticism in general because his kind of skepticism actually allows one to get out of the skeptical predicament by opening up the space of epistemic possibilities and allowing other theories to have their day. If knowledge is a gerrymandered kind, we don't know anything. But then we don't know that knowledge must be a natural kind in the first place, which means we don't know if skepticism is true, since the only reason we arrived at skepticism was by restricting our search to natural kinds. His kind of skepticism follows from his alleged knowledge that the only place knowledge can be found is as a natural kind.

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[207] This is a different kind of skepticism than traditional skepticism since knowledge turns out to be nothing at all. If we discover knowledge is a gerrymandered kind, we aren't talking about anything when we try to refer to knowledge.

If his kind of skepticism could be true, we would have reason to doubt that knowledge must be a natural kind. Thus, given the possibility of his kind of skepticism, it is possible that knowledge could be something other than a natural kind.[208] Thus at the beginning of his investigation, Kornblith must admit into the space of possibilities the option that knowledge is non-natural. But he restricts the space of possibilities to natural kinds: knowledge must be a natural kind or nothing at all. Thus any theory he arrives at must ultimately be question begging and unjustified. The only way to avoid this is to assume from the outset that skepticism is not possible. But he is not entitled to do this, for certainly no empirical investigation is justified which assumes at the outset that the objects under investigation must form a natural kind.

Thus in order for Kornblith to rule out the possibility that knowledge is something other than a natural kind, he must rule out the possibility that it's a gerrymandered kind. But his methodology can't allow for this. He can't be certain out the outset that he will find a theoretical unity. So either Kornblith accepts the possibility that knowledge is a gerrymandered kind, which means he must allow for the further possibility that knowledge is not a natural kind, or he must rule out the possibility that there will be no theoretical unity to discover which, of course, is question begging. Thus, either way, his approach is question begging. For if he admits the possibility of skepticism, he must admit the possibility of non-natural knowledge which he refuses to do. Or he if doesn't admit the possibility of skepticism, he begs the question.

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[208] The sort of possibility I have in mind is epistemic possibility. Kornblith would deny it's metaphysically possible since if knowledge does form a natural kind, then knowledge is necessarily identical to that kind giving us an a posteriori necessity holding across all possible worlds.

Another uncomfortable circumstance arises from Kornblith's correct belief in the possibility of skepticism. He thinks we could discover that knowledge does not form a natural kind, but discovery here sounds suspiciously like knowledge. Or put differently, perhaps we could discover that justified belief doesn't form a natural kind, but surely the discovery would need to involve a justified belief. So he involves himself in self-referential absurdity by allowing for the possibility of skepticism. And given his naturalistic approach to philosophy, he must allow for this possibility. There is no guarantee that our term "knowledge" picks out a natural kind.

We have already gestured at what I believe is the most penetrating objection to the naturalistic approach to philosophy. Earlier we worried that if we investigate knowledge empirically, we may find that our resulting empirical beliefs get further and further away from our ordinary intuitions about knowledge. We may find that knowledge is completely unlike anything we had previously believed. What then makes us think we're even speaking about the same subject matter? Since Kornblith believes we refer to objects not because of our beliefs about them or because of what is going on inside our heads but because of causal connections that we bear to them, once the referent is achieved via the right sort of causal connection, our beliefs can change and we won't be changing the subject—we won't lose track of the referent. "[A] central point in favor of the causal or historical theory of reference is the observation that reference may remain stable even in the face of substantial changes in belief…Rather, subject matter is defined by way of connections with real kinds in the world, and what we regard as central or defining features does not determine the reference of our terms" (Kornblith 2002, 11-12). If we work out the implications of this point, we get some very strong unintuitive results.

Torin Alter and Russell Daw, in a little known article entitled "Free Acts and Robot Cats" (2001), raise the crux of the problem. The context of their discussion is free will. There they discuss Mark Heller's (1996) proposal to treat free will as a natural kind, subject to the causal theory of reference, where the essential nature of free actions can be learned by empirical investigation, not conceptual analysis. Immediately one sees the parallel between Mark Heller's approach to free will and Kornblith's approach to knowledge.

Alter and Daw give several objections, and although one in particular creates much trouble for Kornblith, allow me quickly to mention another of theirs. Imagine that through conceptual analysis we discover that our concept of justification is evidentialist and quite demanding on the human mind, requiring information processing tasks and the recognition of inferential connections many of us often fall short of. Suppose most philosophers agree our concept is evidentialist. However, by using Kornblith's naturalistic approach, we discover justification forms no natural kind. We later discover a group of martians who satisfy our concept of justification. Shouldn't we conclude that some creatures have justified beliefs? Wouldn't we be incorrect to withhold a positive epistemic judgment from their beliefs? And if so, then doesn't our concept determine what justification is or at least plays an important role in epistemology? If a positive appraisal of their beliefs makes sense, even in the absence of discovering a natural kind, then the discovery of a belief's positive epistemic status can't rely on the naturalistic methodology of Kornblith.

The more significant problem involves the possibility that the kind Kornblith may end up with has nothing to do with our concept whatsoever. If we ignore our concepts and focus entirely on the empirical realm, we could end up with an analysis completely incongruous with our ideas of what the thing ought to be. For instance, consider the counter example Peter van Inwagen constructs when applying this natural kinds approach to the area of free will:

> (M) When any human being is born, the Martians implant in his brain a tiny device…which contains a "program" for that person's entire life: whenever that person must make a decision, the device *causes* him to decide one way or the other according to the requirements of a table of instructions that were incorporated into the structure of the device before that person was conceived. (quoted in Alter and Daw 2001, 350)

Alter and Daw draw out the following menacing consequence for the naturalist. "If 'free action' were a Putnamian-kind term, then the discovery that M is true would warrant the conclusion that free action is M-type behavior" (2001, 351). This result looks pretty ridiculous. Surely their actions shouldn't count as free. Theirs is a paradigmatic case of unfree action. The authors go on: "Further, consider van Inwagen's Martians, the creatures who implant the devices in the brains of human infants. Might their actions be free? If Heller's proposal were true, then their actions would be free only if they were of the same kind as the human actions described in the M-scenario. We find that absurd as well" (2001, 351).

This problem applies equally well to Kornblith's approach. For all we know, given his completely empirical approach to epistemology, knowledge could turn out to include instances of false belief or could lack an epistemic component altogether. BonJour's clairvoyant may have justified beliefs, Gettier's subjects may know, but we can even go further and posit something more radical—propositional knowledge may have nothing to do with belief, thoughts or any other sort of intentional state. Knowledge could turn out to be something completely unlike anything we thought of. Knowledge could involve mere true belief, lucky guesses in some cases, or what have you. But this is implausible. If we allowed knowledge to involve such things, clearly we would be changing the subject; we would be speaking about a different kind of thing. Thus Kornblith's view is probably mistaken. He isn't doing epistemology; he isn't investigating knowledge. He is changing the subject.

Kornblith perhaps isn't sensitive to this objection because, in a sense, he lucks out. He believes he discovers an analysis of justification and knowledge already on offer—reliabilism. But before he begins, for all he knows, he could end up with a radically different account of knowledge and justified belief. And given his methods, he will be beholden to that account, regardless of how absurd or anomalous the result is. This result should drive many epistemologists, including Alvin Goldman, away from the natural kinds approach.

Thus at the beginning of our investigation, our pre-theoretical intuitions about knowledge could be completely mistaken on Kornblith's view. But this is false, for there must be conceptual constraints that limit the possible candidates or analyses of knowledge.[209] Either Kornblith assumes them in his methodology, in which case his approach is not entirely empirical, or he does not, in which case the absurdities just listed become real possibilities. Either way, Kornblith's view fails.

When we get samples of knowledge before us, what parts do we investigate? Where do we look? Do we look inside the brain? Do we look at the relation between the subject and the world? Do we look at their eyes? What sorts of things should we be looking at? According to the naturalist, we know we should be relying on sensory experience. But what precisely ought we to be experiencing to discover the nature of knowledge or justified belief? There are too many things in one's visual field to focus on and we need some way of narrowing down the possible candidates so that we get knowledge and knowledge alone in our sights. The advice, "Just look for a natural kind," is unhelpful, for there may be more than one natural kind in front of us.

Michael Huemer raises a similar problem when attacking those who wish to investigate moral properties in the way we investigate water or heat (2008, 84-87). According to the methodological naturalist, just as we discovered that water is identical to the natural property H_2O or that heat is identical to the natural property molecular kinetic energy, an appropriate investigation into moral goodness will discover the natural property to which it's identical.

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[209] Causal theories of reference tend to founder on this problem which leads causal theorist to supplement the theory with descriptive constraints in order for reference to be successful.

Naturalists like Kornblith, Heller, and Richard Boyd[210] are fond of drawing parallels between the types of methods they endorse in the search for knowledge, free will, and moral goodness and the search for the nature of such things as rocks, heat, and water. But the analogy is unhelpful, for we know how to pick out rocks, heat, and water. We can see and touch such things. We know how to isolate them. We felt heat, we stumbled over rocks, we drank and swam in water. But with goodness, free will, and knowledge, simply relying on our common sense judgments about particular cases hardly solves the matter. We need some way of still narrowing down the visual field, for not only do we have knowledge in front of us, but we still have all sorts of other things in front of us. When I say "Look, there is a case of knowledge," one can't be quite sure what I am trying to draw the other's attention to. But in the case of water, at least I can splash some on him.

Huemer argues that given the way these philosophers talk, we expect that goodness or knowledge is supposed to be analogous to heat or water, since the philosopher hopes to explain the underlying nature of these philosophical objects using natural properties, just as scientific theories explain the underlying nature of heat and water using natural properties. "This suggests," according to Huemer, "that moral concepts should be observational, just as 'heat', 'water', and 'sound' are. The reason why we believe, for example, that water=H_2O is, roughly, that *(i)* we have independent (that is, pre-theoretical), direct awareness of the presence of water" (2008, 85). So applying the naturalist strategy, we need moral goodness and knowledge to look like something, feel like something, or have some observable characteristics such that we can isolate them as we do water and heat. But as Huemer argues, we don't have observational direct awareness of goodness since it doesn't look like anything, sound like anything, feel like anything, or taste like anything. The same complaint might be raised on behalf of knowledge. So there is no clear way to trim down one's visual field even when one has samples of knowledge so that one can isolate the knowledge in those samples, for it doesn't look like anything. Again, one doesn't find some knowledge glinting in the sunlight. This is why the attempt of naturalists to model their investigation on the search for rocks or gold sits awkwardly in the mind.

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[210] See his "How to Be a Moral Realist" (1997). There are several problems with Boyd's naturalistic approach to moral philosophy, one of which is his description of how we recognize cases of goodness. He claims that we use observation. But one quickly realizes that the observation involved is nothing like that of the scientists. Rather observation is simply belief.

I suspect then that our epistemic beliefs, on the naturalists view, dictate far more than they ought; they determine a certain answer to the question "What is knowledge?" Instead of letting the empirical data do the talking, our concepts and our beliefs about what knowledge is limit the field of inquiry for us allowing us to circumscribe the number of objects under investigation and pointing us to places to focus even after we have picked out our samples of knowledge. Imagine someone tells you they want you to discover what all blicks have in common and they present to you samples of blicks. Well, there may be several different ways of carving up blicks. Even if we continue to add more blicks to our samples, as long as the samples have enough in common, how will we know where to look or what portions to isolate to find our theoretical unity? And when dealing with human beings who exhibit items like knowledge, the problem is only compounded.

This may explain why in chapter 2 of his book, Kornblith makes a dramatic U-turn. Instead of modeling the investigation of knowledge on the investigation of rocks, he turns to animals. He doesn't get samples of human knowledge before him and try to discover an underlying theoretical unity. He tries to explain animal behavior, ultimately arguing that the best explanation for certain kinds of animal behavior is that they have knowledge. He moves to using inference to the best explanation, which we often use when we can't see the thing we're trying to investigate, but we wish to argue is there.

Kornblith on Knowledge

To finish chapter 3, let's see Kornblith's naturalist method in action. When one reads naturalist philosophers, more often than not, one gets a promissory note or a brief sketch of how the investigation should go. This seems to be the case in chapter 1 for Kornblith. In chapter 2 though, he fills in the details. But in searching for the nature of knowledge, Kornblith makes a strange move. He begins by analyzing animal knowledge.

> There is a large literature on animal cognition, and workers in this field typically speak of animals knowing a great many things. They see animal knowledge as a legitimate object of study, a phenomenon with a good deal of theoretical integrity to it. Knowledge, as it is portrayed in this literature, does causal and explanatory work…if cognitive ethologists are even roughly right, then talk of animal knowledge is not a mere *facon de parler*; rather, there really is such a thing as animal knowledge. Knowledge constitutes a legitimate scientific category. (2002, 28-29)[211]

As one can see, he thinks that we can learn quite a bit from recent studies of the mental lives of animals. But I'm not sure what entitles him to begin with animal knowledge since attributions of propositional knowledge to animals is not something most epistemologists agree on, at least to the sorts of animals he considers (like ants for instance), and I suspect has not curried enough favor among epistemologists to warrant the study of certain examples of alleged animal knowledge. He also begins by favoring the reports of cognitive ethologists (who study animal cognition) but surely they shouldn't count as the experts in trying to choose examples of knowledge to empirically study. Epistemologists should count as the experts. Perhaps we should favor the reports of epistemologists when interpreting the behavior of animals. But, of course, one wouldn't suggest such a thing since epistemologists don't specialize in these matters. Moreover, he does not use an inductive approach but relies on argument to the best explanation. The behavior of animals is best explained by attributing knowledge to them. But shouldn't this come only after we have figured out what knowledge is? How does he know knowledge is present? He can't say, "Let's call this thing 'knowledge'." These are issues we will explore as we observe how Kornblith reaches his reliabilist account of knowledge.

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[211] Whether we could explain animal behavior equally well by positing mere reliable belief production, or knowledge how, or simply justified belief, is a question we'll address later. Naturalists are fond of using Ockham's razor. So when we can do more with less, we shall.

Kornblith first argues that the behavior of animals exhibits a complexity rich enough to demand that we attribute to them intentional states like beliefs. We can't distinguish, say, flight and play without attributing to them intentional states. We can't explain how animals cooperate to steal the eggs of another, where one animal distracts and the other steals, without belief states. To understand many kinds of animal behavior and to categorize such behavior, we must think of such animals as having intentional states.

Let us note in passing that the only reason we know to look for belief states to explain behavior is because of the epistemic privilege of the first person perspective. I am directly aware of my own belief states. I am aware of how my belief states affect my behavior. I don't simply find myself believing that I have beliefs, but I am aware of my beliefs. Indeed, if I were to simply find myself with the belief that I believe that P without any awareness of my belief that P, I would wonder where the meta-belief came from and question its truth.

Without this privileged access, we wouldn't know what to look for to explain animal behavior. But this sort of access, this sort of awareness, is extremely difficult to explain on Kornblith's view of the world. He must reduce this to reliable causal connections holding between beliefs. We have already seen how he attempts to ignore this kind of phenomenology when addressing the nature and justification of inference. But if there is this unique awareness or acquaintance we bear to our own mental states (or to at least more of them than do animals), if this awareness grounds his search for certain kinds of mental states in animals, maybe there is something that distinguishes animal knowledge from human knowledge. We don't find animals trying to figure out whether we know anything for instance. Kornblith doesn't want to allow for this. If human knowledge isn't animal knowledge, then perhaps human knowledge isn't a natural kind (understood in his sense). This would overthrow his entire metaphilosophical approach.

To get his project off the ground, he has to rely on access to mental states where that access does not fit comfortably in his system. One doesn't simply have beliefs that one has beliefs nor does one open the brain and discover them, for she would not know where to look. Instead, she's aware of them. This explains why one forms meta-beliefs about them and how she knows what to look for to explain animal behavior.

Kornblith argues that the only way to find what is common to instances of animal behavior is by attributing intentional states to animals. There is no commonality at the level of bodily motion. Thus for example, the behavior of one human distracting another may have nothing in common at the level of bodily motion with other instances of humans distracting others. Only mental states can unify the activity. And the same goes for animals.[212] The difference between flight, running, or playing must refer to the reasons for the behavior since there may be no difference at the level of bodily motion.[213]

Kornblith's arguments depend on their justification of the following principle of inference: (S) "success in prediction and explanation is taken as evidence that a theory is approximately true." Given Kornblith's disavowal or at least doubt of the a priori, I wonder how he knows this. Let's try to establish S inductively. The problem is that one uses S because one has no other means of verifying the truth of a theory. One does not have direct access to the thing being posited. So one uses S as an indirect route to establish the truth of a theory. So we can't empirically verify that in the past, when S has been the case, a theory T has been true and for a significant number of cases, when S has been the case, a theory has been true. We need an a priori justification that S makes probable the truth of a theory. But this sort of route is unavailable to Kornblith. Thus the principle of evidence upon which he relies may be unjustified on his theory. I also wonder how he could justify certain virtues of explanation without relying on a kind of a priori reasoning which runs afoul of his naturalism.

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[212] I am bothered by the case, which I have mentioned in other chapters, of a person who drives home with her mind focused on other things instead of driving, manages to pull into the garage, and can't remember how she got home. Why does this case have to be anomalous? Why can't we interpret animal behavior in this way?

[213] What if we could monitor their brains when engaged in all these behaviors and found differences that fell into categories. Wouldn't that be enough? Would we need the intentional states as well? There may be a commonality in brain states without those brain states being mental states.

Another kind of behavior Kornblith references is the ability of animals to navigate their environment. To understand how this occurs, we must view animals as engaged in information processing tasks, says Kornblith. "If it is to satisfy its biologically given needs, it will need to recognize certain features of its environment and the evolutionary process must thereby assure that an animal has the cognitive capacities that allow it to deal effectively with that environment. What this requires is the ability to represent information" (2002, 37). He goes on: "Once we recognize the existence of internally represented animal needs together with representations of features of the environment, we have the beginnings of a belief-desire psychology. The ravens distract the hawk because they are hungry; they want to steal the hawk's egg; they believe that by attempting to take the squirrel away from the hawk, they will thereby be able to take the egg" (2002, 38).[214]

Kornblith then arrives at his conclusion by talking about species in general:

> [W]e are interested in an explanation of how it is that members of the species are endowed with a cognitive capacity that allows them successfully to negotiate their environment. It is the focus on this adaptation of these cognitive capacities to the environment that

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[214] Another potential problem is raised by how he regards mental states—as universals or particulars. If he takes them to be universals, he will struggle to explain how they can be located in different places at the same time. If he doesn't take them to be located in space, he will struggle to fit our knowledge of them into his naturalist account. If he thinks of them as particulars united by relations of resemblance, he now has another problem. The relation of resemblance is neither physical, nor located in space, and looks like a non-natural or sui generis relation. How could he accommodate this relation in his austere naturalistic view of the world?

> forces us to explain the possibility of successful behavior, and it is the explanation of successful behavior that requires the notion of knowledge rather than mere belief. (2002, 57)

Of course, successful behavior requires reliable belief production. One must be forming beliefs in a reliable way to successfully navigate their environment and survive:

> If we are to explain why it is that plovers are able to protect their nests, we must appeal to a capacity to recognize features of the environment, and thus the true beliefs that particular plovers acquire will be the product of a stable capacity for the production of true belief. The resulting true beliefs are not merely accidentally true; they are produced by a cognitive capacity that is attuned to its environment. In a word, the beliefs are reliably produced. The concept of knowledge which is of interest here thus requires reliably produced true belief. (2002, 58)

There are still many questions that remain to be answered. First off, how did knowledge enter the picture? Although Kornblith uses inference to the best explanation, he also heavily relies on the judgments of cognitive ethologists who attribute knowledge to these animals to explain their behavior. Kornblith then is ignoring a feature of causal/historical accounts of reference: deference to the experts.[215] Surely, the experts in the case of knowledge are epistemologists. But nary an epistemologist is appealed to. He simply assumes that cognitive ethologists are mostly reliable in their knowledge attributions. But why assume this?[216]

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[215] See Richard Boyd (2007) 116.

[216] For one, there is literature to suggest that the data often used to attribute robust mental states to animals can be interpreted in a variety of ways, and that many are not yet convinced that the interpretation Kornblith proffers is correct. He says we don't know of any way to interpret animal behavior except in terms of information processing mechanisms and intentional states. But why go from here to mental states? When I drive home while thinking of something else and wonder when I arrive in my garage how I managed to make it home without getting into a wreck, one could from the third person perspective argue that we can't interpret my driving behavior without positing information processing mechanisms. But we know from the first person perspective that my mind was otherwise engaged. My mental life did not take within its scope at the time my driving. Also, some in the discipline of animal behavior find this to be nothing more than sloppy sentimentalism. Sometimes they disagree with the way the animal behavior is described. Given that there is this variance in perspective, why should we take for granted the knowledge attributions of some cognitive ethologists and ignore the withholding of others?

One important part of epistemology is to figure out what knowledge is. We may discover that knowledge is such that to learn of some actual instances, we must appeal to the *cognitive scientist*, since knowledge may be reliable belief production. But this occurs after learning what knowledge is, not before. And those most competent to tell you when we have possible examples of knowledge for discovering what knowledge is are those who spend their time specializing in the matter—epistemologists. And amongst epistemologist, I bet there would be more disagreement on what to countenance as knowledge in these animal cases, especially those who don't share Kornblith's naturalistic view of belief. They also might want to make other more subtle distinctions perhaps between knowledge *de re* and knowledge *de dicto* or knowing how and knowing that.

One wouldn't trust the epistemologist to discover natural divisions among animals in nature. Such a proposal is laughable. But then why are the intuitions of others—indeed, non-specialists—considered completely reliable in this case while the philosopher's intuitions are wholly ignored? Kornblith thinks the assumption is vindicated if we discover a theoretical unity. But to think the theoretical unity found is indicative of knowledge requires that one initially think that the right samples have been picked out. On the above reasoning, this is problematic.

This leads to a second problem, for cognitive ethologists may not know all the relevant epistemic concepts available to them for explaining animal behavior. They could find that the notion of justified belief could serve their explanatory needs just as well. In fact, why not think the animals have justified belief rather than knowledge? Justified belief explains equally well. Or we could move further along: why not attribute to them reliable belief-forming capacities to explain their behavior. Why must we say this is knowledge?

At the end, once he finds reliable belief-forming mechanisms, he says this is knowledge. But he has left the door open for the internalist, for she will deny we have found knowledge. She will wonder how all the sudden knowledge entered the picture. By using inference to the best explanation and waiting until further along in the process to make a knowledge pronouncement, I believe Kornblith is letting his concept determine what counts as knowledge. For remember what he told us originally in chapter 1: we pick out items of knowledge and then we discover their nature. But here we discover the nature of something and we end up calling it knowledge. But why call it knowledge rather than mere reliable belief? Why add knowledge in there? When using inference to the best explanation, we have options open to us as to what to call this thing which helps animals navigate their environment, and other concepts will do just as well.

This is different than the picture he painted in chapter 1, for there he said we get samples of knowledge in front of us and then investigate them for a theoretical unity. But once one uses inference to the best explanation, one sees that reliable belief production or simply justified belief can explain equally well. So why does Kornblith insist that these are genuine cases of knowledge? I suspect it's because he thinks knowledge is reliably produced belief. Consequently, he is not allowing the empirical evidence to inform his beliefs about knowledge but rather is taking his beliefs about knowledge and imposing them on the empirical evidence.

Michael Huemer raises a similar objection to naturalistic theories of morality that claim to detect the presence of moral properties via inference to the best explanation:

> If ethical reductionism is true, the *moral properties* can cause observable effects. Nevertheless, this would not explain how we know moral claims. For us to know a moral claim on the basis of inference to the best explanation, the *moral claim* would have to explain some observable fact *that could not otherwise be explained.* For instance we can know that Hitler was depraved by inference to the best explanation, if the claim that Hitler was depraved provides an explanation for some fact that cannot be explained without invoking moral claims. But in fact, the hypothesis of Hitler's depravity does not explain any new facts about this behavior that aren't already explained by non-moral claims about him, such as that he hated Jews, that he had a lust for power, that he lacked respect for human life, and so on. Since the truth of moral claims of that kind is not in dispute, the moral explanation is superfluous. (2008, 89-90)

So just as Hitler's behavior can be explained without appealing to moral properties, we can explain the behavior of animals without appealing to epistemic properties, or we can appeal to lesser properties like justified belief. One can do quite a bit with just justified belief. We can navigate our environment quite well even when we don't have enough information for knowledge.

Turning to another problem, suppose that later we discover that we can explain the animal behavior without appealing to mental states. This is surely a possibility. Kornblith can't think he has said the last word on explaining animal behavior. But the cognitive ethologist says these are surely cases of knowledge. So then we must say knowledge does not involve mental states. Yet this seems absurd.

This result is perfectly possible on Kornblith's view. If he is confident that the best explanation of animal behavior is knowledge, it could turn out that what unifies their behavior is something different, thus leading us to amend our account of knowledge, and thus leading to the possibility that knowledge may not even involve mental states at all. This is clearly a counterexample to Kornblith's view. He can't say, "I guess they didn't discover knowledge," because we can't impose our concept of knowledge on the thing. Once we have picked out items of knowledge, we must be ready to accept whatever the natural kind turns out to be.

Thus Kornblith is left with a dilemma. Keep these instances of animal behavior as genuine items of knowledge but then endorse a very strange theory of knowledge, one completely unrecognizable and would seem to be completely missing the point, or give up on these examples but then allow one's concept to determine what sorts of results can count as an adequate analysis of knowledge.

CHAPTER 4
CONCLUSION AND NEW DIRECTIONS

> Hylas: Common language, you know, is framed by and for the use of the vulgar. We must not therefore wonder if expressions adapted to exact philosophical notions seem uncouth and out of the way.
>
> (Berkeley, Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonus)

> Hylas: I thought philosophers might be allowed to speak more accurately than the vulgar and were not always confined to the common meaning of a term.
>
> (Berkeley, Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonus)

Let's review where we have come thus far. In the introduction, we began by giving a sketch of what characterizes and sets apart philosophical questions. This led to the formulation that philosophy is an armchair discipline like pure mathematics. Although empirical evidence may be relevant to the philosopher, that evidence is accessible from the armchair. Other and more historical ways of couching this idea is that philosophy is largely a priori involving pure reason and reflection.

One popular conception of armchair philosophy understands the business of the armchair philosopher to be conceptual analysis. In trying to understand what knowledge, truth, and goodness are, the philosopher is looking for the necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct applications of those concepts. Some philosophers think of modern 20th century analytic philosophy as primarily involved in the business of conceptual analysis. But a growing number of philosophers doubt whether armchair philosophy as conceptual analysis or anything similar is viable. The objections can be divided into two types. One type of objection is epistemic in nature, focusing on intuitions which generally serve as the data for the conceptual or armchair bound analyst. The second type instead questions the objects of the analysis either by calling into question the concepts themselves or by redirecting our attention toward the external/physical world. These objections were considered in chapters 2 and 3.

In chapter 1, I laid out the distinction between mentalists—those who think of the objects of philosophical analysis as mental entities, usually concepts—and extra-mentalists—

those who think we analyze the objects themselves and not our representations of them. I then detailed several reasons why philosophers think conceptual analysis is crucial to the business of philosophy.

In chapter 2, I proposed an account of intuition as an important source of philosophical evidence, rooting that account in George Bealer's work. On my view, intuition is not an immediate or direct acquaintance/apprehension independent of sense experience of some necessary truth (as some would have it). This fails to distinguish intuition from acquaintance. Intuition is not a sui generis relation between the self and some fact but rather is a sui generis mental state (seeming) with which one is acquainted. This seeming is an intellectual seeming as opposed to the sensorial seemings we normally associate with vision or hearing. I argued that intuitions count as evidence when they satisfy certain conditions because they necessarily make probable the claims they support. This view is preferable, I believe, because it allows that we can be acquainted with intuition's evidential connection to truth, which is necessary for justified intuitive beliefs on internalist accounts of justification. And it keeps us from having to appeal to intuition to argue for intuition's positive epistemic status, thus begging the question. In the second half of chapter 2, I responded to several attacks on intuition showing how those attacks often rely on intuition or how they often fail to adequately grasp its nature and the conditions under which it has positive epistemic status.

In chapter 3, I addressed one kind of attack on conceptual analysis which focuses on the possibility of conceptual diversity. My aim was primarily negative trying to show that the arguments for conceptual diversity fail to understand the nature of philosophical disagreement or do not explain certain phenomena better than alternative hypotheses. These arguments also often assume the very thing they are trying to disprove in an effort to communicate and evaluate the problems at issue. I then turned to Kornblith's naturalistic philosophy which would have us look outward to the world of physical objects and investigate them scientifically to discover the nature of those objects important to the philosopher. We saw how this approach unjustifiably restricted the possible legitimate analyses of justification, how it could be pushed to yield an analysis of justification or knowledge having little if anything to do with our understanding of these things, and learned of other potential problems as well.

So where do we go from here? I'm still not convinced by the epistemic arguments against armchair philosophy. At this point, they still seem rather weak to me. And I still remain largely unmoved by attacks on conceptual analysis, especially naturalistic programs like Hilary Kornblith's that would have us turn philosophy into a science, unabashedly empirical. Nevertheless, I am still bothered by the thesis of conceptual variation. Although I found the arguments in defense of the thesis no better than alternative explanations, I must admit that from the armchair, there is little I can do by way of constructing a positive account that would bolster the thesis of shared concepts unless I argue for a certain view of concepts, perhaps one that views them as abstract entities and thus not subject to surrounding influences. I did argue that the armchair philosopher, when giving an analysis of something like knowledge, can't be trying to capture *our* analysis of knowledge, for then she would be required to leave the armchair and discover whether we share the same concepts. Even more problematic, this would need to be done before even figuring out whether knowledge is possible and thus would seem to stand things on their head. Armchair philosophy, by its very nature then, is an egocentric enterprise.

There are those who find this result somewhat troubling. What is the person to do who does not wish to be an intellectual island unto himself? More importantly, what is to be done if we think we have discovered something philosophically important about our world, something people ought to care about or would care about if they knew about it and understood their present desires? How are philosophers supposed to dialogue if each seems to be immersed in their own intellectual puzzle, when there is no shared puzzle to which they can each apply their talents? In other words, if the thesis of conceptual variation is as much a problem as those adamantly opposed to armchair philosophy claim it is, can armchair philosophy be salvaged?

Assuming for the sake of argument that conceptual analysis is a lost cause, I would like to propose a way of doing epistemology that is still a species of armchair philosophy and helps to ameliorate concerns that philosophy is egregiously egocentric. This is merely a proposal, a sketch, the barest outline of how I think future epistemological research should be conducted from the armchair.[217] I'm not yet convinced that conceptual analysis is a lost cause, but I do count myself as one bothered by the idea that the 'knowledge' I seek to analyze may be of interest to me alone. My proposal is confined to the area of epistemology, although I hope that it will have application elsewhere.

The Priority of the Existential and the Normative

From what I can tell, on standard accounts of conceptual analysis, we analyze our concept of knowledge, goodness, and truth and not knowledge, goodness, and truth themselves. Thus concepts and the intuitions they generate give us a conduit into the world of philosophical objects. There is also the implicit belief that philosophical concepts are not to be tampered with: concepts are not to be altered or discarded and replaced with ones that map on to reality. Concepts determine the structure of philosophical objects which is why we can still do philosophical analysis even in the absence of any instantiations of the objects themselves. Recall what a prominent conceptual analyst, Alvin Goldman, had to say about the natural kinds approach to philosophy: "Presumably something qualifies as a natural kind only if it has a priori essence, nature, or character independent of anybody's thought or conception of it. It is questionable, however, whether such analysanda as knowledge, justification, and justice have essences or natures independent of our conception of them" (1998, 186-187).

What I propose is that we still keep conceptual analysis but that it function only as the entry point into the philosophical dialogue. Conceptual analysis would still serve many important roles. It is one of the best ways to achieve clarity about the possible structure of objects important to the philosopher. Through it we are exposed to a variety of hypotheses of how sections of the world could be structured and why it would be significant if they were so. But once we're clear about the structure of our concepts, we should then slide from the conceptual question to the existential: does anything in the world correspond to the analysis? This is the point at which epistemologists can then engage themselves in the same task, where epistemology is no longer egocentric (supposing that epistemologists don't share the same epistemic concepts). I think the most important epistemic questions are whether there is anything corresponding to an analysis of epistemic concepts and whether that analysis picks out the most significant epistemic states.

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[217] I plan that my future research will consist, in part, in filling in the details of this sketch so that it becomes a more complete metaphilosophical program.

There will then be a place for conceptual criticism either because an epistemic concept fails to capture a feature of reality or for other reasons. There is a sense in which debates in epistemology already take on this cast. With just some tweaking, some debates can be recast into existential debates or conceptual criticism. For instance, Fumerton and Barry Stroud argue that externalist epistemologies miss the point of skeptical concerns, the sorts of concerns that have motivated epistemic worries for centuries. Fumerton, in particular, has argued that externalists have failed to give an analysis of philosophically interesting concepts:

> The very ease with which the externalist can potentially broaden the foundational base of noninferentially justified belief is, ironically, one of the primary concerns of those philosophers unhappy with externalist epistemology. Many internalists are convinced that externalists are simply re-defining epistemic terms in such a way that they lose the kind of meaning that the philosopher wants them to have in order to ask the kind of penetrating philosophical questions that are the peculiar product of a kind of philosophical curiosity. (Fumerton 2005b)

Externalists criticize internalist theories because they believe that they introduce mysterious entities, propose conditions your average human fails to satisfy or could never satisfy, or complain that the theories do not connect up in the right way with what is epistemically significant: the maximization of the truth/falsity ratio of one's beliefs. This was a common attack against internalist theories motivated by deontological-type concerns. One can construe common attacks against classical foundationalism as a kind of conceptual criticism because it was argued the set of non-inferentially justified beliefs would be too small and, further, there were no inferential connections available that would allow one to build up knowledge of the world from that base.

I propose then to model epistemology more on certain issues in metaphysics. Some debates in metaphysics do not hinge on the correct analysis of a concept but on whether a given concept corresponds to anything in the world. Take the debate over universals as an example. In that debate, little time is spent wrangling over what a universal is when compared to the question of whether there are such things. Furthermore, suppose that we didn't have the concept of a universal or that our present concept of a universal were different (which is perhaps just another way of saying we didn't have a concept of a universal depending on the identity condition of concepts), then the realist who takes herself to recognize the existence of such things through metaphysical reasoning would have a reason to introduce the concept and argue for its application. Or suppose that there was much disagreement amongst metaphysicians over our concept of a universal and they spent many hours arguing about which analysis is correct. This would drive their attention away from the more important question of whether there are such things corresponding to the different analyses of the concepts, for if there are universals (understood in the traditional sense), that would be of significant interest to the philosopher qua philosopher.

What is more crucial on my approach then is not so much the analysis as whether that analysis has application to the world. Consider the debate over truth. The debate often centers around the nature of truth—whether it is correspondence, long run justification, coherence, pragmatic, etc. Suppose our concept of truth were coherentist and suppose that correspondence is a real relation in the world. Would the fact that our concept is coherentist eliminate the value of getting correspondence between truth-makers and truth-bearers or would that relation not be of any significance to the philosopher qua philosopher? I doubt the latter would be the case. What if those who first coined the term "truth" were obsessed with getting their beliefs to cohere and thus used the term to designate coherence? That would not eliminate the value for us as human beings of instantiating the relation of correspondence nor the value of that relation to the philosopher. On this view, the correspondence theorist wouldn't have to construct an entirely new set of arguments, for some of the best arguments against coherence theories, one's that point to the internal tensions of the theory for instance, can be used on this conception of philosophy.

Consider an analogy. Suppose Dan, who is married, goes out on a date with a woman who is not his wife. Dan's friends, John and Mary, discover this and disagree over whether Dan cheated on his wife. Since Dan didn't have sex with the woman, John believes that Dan didn't cheat. Mary argues that by going out on the date, Dan did cheat; he needn't sleep with her for his action to constitute cheating. If this were a real case, I suspect Mary would be eager to show that her analysis of the concept "cheating" is correct because there is an implicit normative claim embedded in the concept. Dan's cheating conceptually entails that he did something wrong. But this discussion may mask a more fundamental agreement. In more cases than not, I suspect the two would agree that Dan did something wrong. Granted, they may disagree over the severity since one regards it as cheating and the other doesn't (and even if both saw it as cheating, the one form of cheating is certainly less severe than the other). Nevertheless, the conceptual dispute disguises a more fundamental agreement over a question that is more important given their conceptual disagreement.

So given this approach, which views conceptual analysis as the entry point into the philosophical dialogue, armchair philosophy is still legitimate, and depending on one's analysis of the epistemic concepts, the epistemologist may be able to remain sedentary after the meta-epistemology has been done and he turns toward questions more applied in tone.

There are other reasons for not confining epistemology to mere conceptual analysis. The world is a rich and diverse place. Given the finitude of our minds, we cannot expect that we possess all of the relevant concepts that have application in the world. Scientists consistently frame new concepts to think about parts of reality recently discovered. Why then must philosophers be confined to the concepts they already have? Why can't they discover segments of reality hitherto unnoticed by others? Thus I don't see why externalists shouldn't ask whether internalist theories posit conditions or epistemic states which can be satisfied or entered into even if their concept of justification is externalist.

The process of conceptual analysis often opens up the space of possibilities for us. Think of all the different analyses of knowledge which cropped up in light of Gettier counterexamples. This process is a salubrious one, directing our minds toward features of reality we previously ignored and allowing us to address the existential question and the question of whether the features picked out are of value. By focusing exclusively on the concepts we do have, we have needlessly assumed that we possess the same concepts and have diverted our attention away from philosophically significant segments of reality. By viewing our task as one of not only conceptual analysis but also conceptual development and criticism, we can view the plethora of theories offered to solve Gettier cases as an attempt to point to significant features of reality we had hitherto ignored. We are now more keenly aware of the possibility of reliable belief-forming mechanisms, undefeated justified true belief, beliefs that result from proper functioning, or those that may be grounded in a direct acquaintance with their truth maker. Each theory is trying to point to an important feature of cognition. The only question is whether the concepts have application, and if so, the value of instantiating the state of affairs described.

Some of the debates between internalists and externalists can be recast, not as quibbles over the correct analysis of epistemic concepts, but as disputes about whether the analyses satisfy the interests we have as cognitive beings. For instance, the internalist could be seen as arguing that of the many competing conceptions of knowledge we have, only internalist accounts give us the kind of knowledge we're interested in as human beings when engaged in philosophical pursuits. When I want to know what the good is, I am not looking for the same kind of knowledge as when I wish to know how many tress are in my backyard.

When Fumerton argues in *Metaepistemology and Skepticism* that externalism has the unacceptable consequence that one can justifiably use memory and induction to justify the legitimacy of memory, or perception and induction to establish the legitimacy of perception, which is egregiously question begging, he can be seen as pointing to the externalists failure to offer an account of justification that satisfies the qualms that spark the epistemic search in the first place. In other words, the externalist has yet to identify a significant or valuable epistemic state relative to human beings.

Consequently, even if classical foundationalism is an incorrect account of what knowledge or justified belief is for most, it is still worthwhile to ask whether we can build up our beliefs in the manner recommended by that theory. If we could, then doing so would certainly satisfy some of the epistemic aims we have as reflective human beings. Classical foundationalism then could be construed not as an analysis of knowledge and justified belief but rather as a program in epistemology: can we satisfy the conditions and enter into the relations set out by the classical foundationalist?

Ultimately, I believe the problem with externalist theories of justification is that they fail to capture cognitive states unique to human beings, the kinds of states which drive philosophical inquiry and the pursuit for substantive knowledge in general. Externalists propose conditions for justification which even ants could satisfy. This is because externalists tend to reduce epistemic concepts to nomological connections. Internalism on the hand often seems like the search for something more. As human beings, there is something unique about our cognitive situation as evidenced by our activities, especially the activity of philosophy and the quest for the nature of knowledge itself. Perhaps this resides in our ability to be acquainted with truth-makers, truth-bearers, and the correspondence between them. As human beings, it seems that we can stand in the most intimate relation to truth. We can have a direct confrontation with it. We don’t need to settle for merely getting a high ratio of true beliefs to false ones; we can actually be aware that our beliefs are true where this awareness is sui generis and captures the difference between the relation we stand in to our own pain and the relation we stand in to the pain of others. On externalist views, they are content to strip the uniqueness of knowledge of our own pain and make it similar to the knowledge of other's pain.

I've already suggested how this can lead to some strange results when discussing Konrblith's view of justified inference. On his view, what justifies us in inferring one thing from another is that the inference is reliable: when the premise is true, the conclusion tends to be true. Thus what justifies us in using an inference pertains principally to the reliability of those inferences regardless of whether we are aware or acquainted with their truth preserving capacities. Yet this account fails to attend to the phenomenology of inferences. I don't infer the conclusion of a modus ponens argument simply because I have been trained or hardwired to believe that the conclusion necessarily follows. I am acquainted with the relation of entailment. This contrasts with cases where I may believe that a complicated mathematical proposition follows from others because I have been told so on good authority but where I don't apprehend the relation of entailment.

If we do have the capacity to enter into the most intimate relation with truth, a capacity which distinguishes the cognitive abilities of humans from other living things, or is something we search for as evidenced by our behavior, then Kornblith's account of justification debases the mind. The important question then is not whether the internalist has captured our concept of justification but whether the internalist proposes conditions for justification which have application to the world

The question then between internalists/classical foundationalists and externalists is whether skepticism is true, which is what epistemology was concerned with in the first place. If internalist/classical foundationalist conditions can't be satisfied or even weaker internalist/moderate foundationalist conditions can't be, then we should look to satisfy externalist conditions. But if the knowledge and justification proposed by classical foundationalists is achievable at least for a good number of items of knowledge, then that would be a significant discovery, one which would differentiate human knowledge from animal knowledge and give humans the kind of knowledge worthy of their intellectual capacities. Philosophy is taken up by humans because we have certain intellectual capacities. To only search for knowledge that could be had by birds and ants even is to forget about our unique ability to even ask the epistemological questions or go on the search for knowledge in the first place. Surely there is something unique about our situation that deserves recognition, otherwise we couldn't ask the questions that spark epistemic debate.

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