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High standard epistemology and the appeal to intuition.

Abstract: In the analytic tradition, the appeal to intuition has been a common philosophical practice that supposedly provides us with epistemic standards. I will argue that the high epistemological standards of traditional analytic philosophy cannot be pursued by this method. Perhaps within a naturalistic, reliabilistic background can one more coherently evoke intuitions: Philosophers can use intuition as scientists do, in hypothesis- construction or data- collection. This is an ironic conclusion: traditional analytic epistemologists rely on the appeal to intuition but cannot justify it. Naturalists, on the other side, are not that needy of such a method; yet they can better accommodate it within their view.

Keywords: intuition, epistemology, conceptual analysis, experimental philosophy, naturalism.

00. Introduction.

Every philosopher appeals to her or his intuitions at some point. This methodology is so widely spread that one has to wonder whether philosophy could do without it. Most philosophers, though, never bother to give reasons for their appeal to intuition. They may even criticise it, and even appeal to intuitions for the very criticism they provide. (See for example, D. Dennett 2006, pp. 103- 129)

Still, some defend it; Sosa argues that invoking one's intuitions on a subject is as valid as counting on perception or introspection (E. Sosa 1998, 2006, 2008);

Kornblith, among others, see intuitions as reliable, yet fallible, means of trucking knowledge or truth from a naturalistic viewpoint. (H. Kornblith 1998, 2002; N. Miscevic 2004; E. Brendel 2004.)

Some however insist it is the privileged procedure of philosophers in their quest for *a priori* knowledge (G. Bealer 1996, 1998, 2004) or in their pursuit of clarification of reasoning and understanding (L.J. Cohen 1986; L. Wittgenstein 1958, 1977; P.M.S. Hacker 1993; F.Jackson 1982): The appeal to intuition gives philosophy its autonomy and a special kind of authority. (G. Cutting 1998) In this paper I will try to show that those who rely most on intuition are the ones that have the most difficulty justifying such a method. They try to find a method that could guarantee the autonomy and authority of philosophy and give philosophy a special normative status. Yet if intuition is unreliable it cannot offer them what they've bargained for.

One should note beforehand that the term *intuition* itself is vague. Different kinds of appeals involve different notions of intuition; some are highly technical. In this paper, I will consider *intuition* in the most ordinary sense possible: judgments or beliefs that arise from an unconscious or underground or spontaneous reasoning process of whatever short. I will therefore exclude philosophers who introduce some technical sense for the term, such as J.J. Katz, D.M. Armstrong, D. Lewis or even S. Kripke.

Here I will also use a rough distinction between *traditional analytic philosophers,* on the one hand, and *naturalists,* on the other. The distinction is indeed problematic. In fact both terms are rather unclear. Yet, in contemporary philosophical contexts they are widely used in order to emphasise the different methodological styles within the analytic tradition. (See P.M. Churchland 1986; M.A. Bishop & J.D. Trout 2005; J. Alexander & J.M. Weinberg 2007.) I will use the distinction in the same manner: to call attention to those different metaphilosophical mentalities. *Traditionalists* think of philosophy as a purely conceptual enterprise, while *naturalists* see it as a branch of highly theoretical science. Their views on philosophical investigation differentiate their methodologies and thus the way they use intuitions. Traditionalists see intuitions as providing epistemic standards. Naturalists are usually more hesitant to such an appeal, although they sometimes treat intuitions as data or hypotheses that may or may not be verified.

Here I will first focus on the traditional analytic treatment of intuitions: I will try to summarize how they justify the appeal to intuition and go over the main problems

of their proposal. Then I will turn to naturalists and discuss how they use and justify such an appeal. I will conclude that, although traditional analytic epistemologists need the appeal to intuition, they cannot employ it. The strong epistemic standards they have attached to philosophy cannot be met by this method. Contrariwise, naturalists, who are not that needy of an intuition plea, can better accommodate it within their view.

01.The traditionalists' appeal to intuition.

Traditional analytic philosophy suggests that the sole aim of philosophy is conceptual analysis. Traditionalists illuminate our conceptual background by uncovering conceptual rules and presuppositions. This background is supposedly common for all humans who speak the same language or share the same culture at a certain historical time.

Within this *form of life,* to use a Wittgensteinian term, we all share the same concepts and the same intuitions; they are generated by conceptual rules or background certainties and will thus provide us with epistemic standards. They are normative for they represent the ideals of the community or the rules we live by. Analysing our intuitions on *knowledge*, for example, can help lay out the *principles* with which a certain belief should conform in order to count as knowledge. The clarification of a term will offer a better understanding of all issues related to the concept.

Philosophy then is a *sui generis* conceptual enterprise and epistemologists are entitled, as average speakers or thinkers, to invoke their intuitions concerning some particular target concept and analyse them. G.E. Moore and the later L. Wittgenstein, among others, appealed to intuition in order to unravel our pre-theoretical background world-view and clarify the community's epistemic standards. From this perspective, intuitions are either generated by *grammar,* the normative use of words, (Wittgenstein 1977; P.M.S. Hacker 1993) or by *common sense*, the dispositions and the intellectual habits we share as a community. (Moore 1993; J.L. Austin 1979; F. Jackson 1998.) The philosopher is part of this community; she focuses on philosophically interesting concepts; she is more trained in conceptual analysis than an average person; and since her intuitions are as good (or even better) than anyone's, she is the person for the job. (See B. Stroud 2000; Bealer 1996, 1998, 2004.)

Most traditionalists imply there is a sharp distinction between understanding and knowing, between the conceptual and the empirical. The image of the river and the coast that Wittgenstein describes on *On Certainty* makes such a distinction explicit. (Wittgenstein 1977, § 94-99.) Science is supposed to discover new knowledge about the empirical world: it deals with the flux of the river. Philosophy is to describe a conceptual background: it clarifies the riverbed and the rock bottom of our understanding. Such a view guarantees the autonomy and the authority of philosophy as a purely conceptual investigation. (Cutting 1998; Bealer 1998; M.R. Bennett & Hacker 2003; Hacker 2008.) Accordingly, the concepts and the intellectual habits of the community are considered as the source of our intuitions.

For example, Bennett & Hacker (2003) provide *grammatical analysis* when they claim that neuroscientists make a mistake when they ascribe attributes that logically apply only to the *whole* animal to body *parts* of an animal. (p.72) For:

> ... This application of psychological predicates to the brain makes no sense ... Human beings, but not their brains, can be said to be thoughtful or thoughtless; animals, but not their brains, let alone the hemispheres of their brains, can be said to see, hear, smell, and taste things (Bennett & Hacker 2003, pp. 72-73).

According to Bennett & Hacker then, it is wrong to ascribe thoughts or feelings to the brain *because* it is wrong English to say "my brain feels x" or "my eyes see blue". The correct, rule governed, ordinary linguistic usage implies that such statements are illegitimate. Even science follows grammatical rules. Bennett & Hacker here imply that any philosophical investigation should start by evoking our intuitions on language use and use them as a basis for any knowledge-claim. When analyzing those intuitions, conceptual rules become apparent. Philosophers should bring those rules to light and explore how we understand philosophically important concepts.

F. Jackson also address the mind- body problem in a similar way:

> Mary is a brilliant scientist who is, for whatever reason, forced to investigate the world from a black and white room via a black and white television monitor. She specializes in the neurophysiology of vision and acquires (...) all the physical information there is about what goes on when we see ripe tomatoes or the sky, and use terms like red, blue and so on (…). What will happen when Mary is released from her black and white room or is given a color television monitor? Will she learn anything or not? It seems just obvious that she will learn something about the world and our visual experience of it. But

> then it is inescapable that her previous knowledge was incomplete. But she had all the physical information. Ergo there is more to have than that, and Physicalism is false. (Jackson 1982, p.128)

Jackson here evokes *common sense* or "the intuitions of the folk" as he suggests (Jackson 1998, pp 31-32) when he asks whether *she will learn something;* the rhetoric of his story suggests his answer is the answer *everybody* would give. In order to refute physicalism then he appeals to our commonsensical disposition: the way we understand the mind- body problem.

Both quotes above rely on the assumption that there is s background set of ordinary pronouncements that lie beyond any justification or doubt. All other information, knowledge, beliefs or hypotheses are to be measured by those rock-bottom dispositions in order to see whether they make sense. This is why intuitions are relevant: they will provide us with the community's underlying standards.

Many naturalists, though, are confronting such a claim. In the next section I will run through their main objections. Then I will discuss how they use intuition.

02. Scepticism about intuition.

The suggestion that philosophy can rely on intuition in order to provide us with epistemic standards has strongly been contested. Those who share a naturalistic view of philosophy and its methods have mostly criticized it. Naturalists think all is natural (or even physical) and should be studied by empirical science. Philosophy according to most of them is a highly theoretical proto-science of some sort. The questions people are engaged with are not different in kind; thus the disciplines that try to answer such questions are not different either.

On the contrary, traditional analytic philosophy rests on the conceptual-empirical distinction, suggesting that philosophers deal with norms while scientists with content. Yet, it seems impossible to talk about concepts as if they had no content. After all, concepts are related to beliefs and hence to other concepts. Someone might not be able to ascribe any meaning to the word "moon", for example, unless she has attached certain beliefs to the concept *moon*—that it is in space, it moves around the earth etc. And this whole cluster of concepts and beliefs claims to refer somehow to extra-linguistic reality: to the actual moon. If this is the case, then any *conceptual investigation* will be influenced by what the speaker (or the philosopher) believes

about the empirical world; and vice versa, what she or he believes will influence their conceptual analysis.

But then intuitions are *about* something and thus bring the content back in. They do not come from the community's privileged and purely *conceptual* dispositions and norms; they are generated by the beliefs people have. Those beliefs may be widespread but that very fact does not prevent them from being wrong and/or open to revision or elimination. Such an objection lies behind all arguments against *a priori* or logical truths, deep linguistic intuitions, conceptual schemes, transcendental arguments and so forth and, accordingly, against any sharp distinction between the conceptual and the empirical or philosophy and science. (See W.V. Quine 1953; H. Putnam 1962; S. Haack 1974; P. Kitcher 1983; P. Churchland 1986.)

If intuitions about the use of terms are not content-free, then probably the epistemologist intuitions' evoke some (tacit or explicit) theory about the content of those concepts. In fact, the content of our intuitions is what makes such an appeal fruitful and interesting. When clarifying a concept, then, one does not just lay out grammatical rules or commonsensical dispositions, but rather describes the content they take this concept to have: the properties or beliefs one considers related to *knowledge, reference*, *justified belief,* etc. (R. Cummins 1998, p.121)

Interestingly, even if they do not admit so, this is what most traditional analytic philosophers are doing when clarifying epistemic notions. Bennett & Hacker argue that problems concerning the nature of the mind and its relation to the brain are conceptual, rather than empirical, problems. (Bennett & Hacker 2003) In the quote above they imply that the statements of neurology or physicalistic philosophy of mind transgress the bounds of sense. (p. 382) Yet, their analysis prescribes that the scientists' answers to those questions are not to be taken seriously. Bennett & Hacker overstep their role as conceptual analysts for their analyses and intuitions are *about* something, namely about intelligence. Hacker suggests that the concept of *thinking* makes any talk about body-parts having thoughts incoherent or that that the very notion of *intelligence* cannot be ascribed to some inanimate, body-less creature. (Hacker 1993, p 80) His analysis takes up a position that has to do with the world of experience: scientists are wrong. Artificial Intelligence is and always will be a myth; neuroscientists do not know what they are talking about. (See P. Machamer & J. Sytsma, 2005.)

Jackson's thought experiment about Mary, mentioned above, again faces similar problems. He appeals to the intuitions of the folk. Yet, *whether physicalism is false* is a question that would not normally arise in everyday life. The phrase "all the physical information" also does not have an obvious role in ordinary language or everyday life hence does not evoke any commonsensical or *folk* intuitions. We are asked to imagine a quite *extraordinary* story; and we have no commonsensical inclination about how to answer the question about whether *physicalism is false*. So one can either go along with Jackson or end the story as Dennett does, saying that when Mary goes out of her room and those bad people who held her captive lie to her about the colour of some object, Mary, having acquired all physical information, immediately corrects them and gives the right name for the colour. (Dennett 1991, pp 399-400. See also Dennett 2006, 103-126.) Either way, it is not common sense that provides the answer; it is the theory that the philosopher applauds and might impose on common sense. (Fodor 1964; Dennett 1991.) One should note that Jackson allows philosophy to theorise, while Hacker tries to show that philosophy only deals with conceptual confusions. Yet the rhetoric of Jackson's argument relies on common sense strongly. And it is an open question whether common sense would have anything to say about physicalism.

Philosophers invoking either grammar or common sense invite theories or theses about the content of the concept analysed. Usually they evoke tacit theories that supposedly prevail in our form of life. The two examples mentioned above (Bennett & Hacker and Jackson) evoke *folk psychology*: the theory which people use in order to understand, explain and predict their own or other people's psychological events and behaviour. Following folk psychology, we attribute *desires, fears* or *beliefs* in our attempt to explain our behaviour. (See Churchland 1981, 1989, 1998.) Tacit theories, like this one, however tend to be inaccurate and can give rise to inconsistent intuitions. (Cummins 1998) They need to be formulated into an explicit theory and investigated further. What's more, there might be many implicit theories, contradicting each other. In this case one needs to establish a criterion for evaluating them. But, even if there is just one innate theory about something, say *knowledge*, again this very fact doesn't prove the theory right. People's tacit theories on physics or astrology have been wrong many times. There is no argument why we cannot be equally wrong about folk psychology (Churchland 1981, 1989) or about any of our philosophical theories.

Many traditionalists though would accept the fallibility of intuitions and suggest that they only clarify our current understanding of the phenomena. Meanwhile, though, the rhetoric of their arguments often relies on an uncritical confidence in intuition; intuition is used as a starting point and as if it were currently incontestable. (Bishop & Trout 2005, Williamson 2004) It is supposed to give us an insight into the grammar of our concepts or into our presuppositions *before they get contaminated by (philosophical or other) theory*. Yet, if intuition comes down to beliefs that a tacit or explicit theory suggests, it is theory laden and can not serve as the neutral basis of justification and analysis. So, within the traditional analytic framework, even the finest theory won't do as the origin of our intuitions.

And this is not the end of it. Behind all these objection lies one more crucial problem epistemology has to face: if intuitions are fallible, they are contestable. But then, we are to decide between alternative intuitions, grammars or worldviews (just like when we have to choose between alternative theories). And thus we need a criterion by which to support one worldview (or theory) against alternative ones. If different groups or communities hold different worldviews, their conceptual rules or inclinations and, thus, their intuitions will differ as well and there is no way of telling which, if any of them, has epistemic privilege. (Stich 1990; 1998) Bennett & Hacker, for example, argue as if they (or rather their language or their form of life) have the privileged rules. Yet, they need to show why those rules are so privileged. If they cannot argue that, they should abandon this line of argumentation all together.

These objections are being supported today by experimental research. Psychologist's studies have showed that prior beliefs and background knowledge influence our intuitions and that intuition cannot offer the detached understanding many philosophers connect it with. (See for example, Gopnik & Schwitzgebel 1998) Nowadays experimental philosophers too suggest that a number of factors manipulate our intuitive responses: S. Nichols, Stich & J. Weinberg (2003) propose that intuitions differ depending on how many philosophy courses one has attended and, picking up on this, S. Swain, J. Alexander and Weinberg (2006) showed that responses on thought experiments vary according to whether one has considered other thought experiments first. Moreover, Nichols and J. Knobe (2007) suggest that affective content also comes in depending on the rhetoric of the thought experiment and influences our intuitions.

This is not the only worry that has been verified by empirical studies. Weinberg, Nichols and Stich (2001) examine the reaction of subjects coming from different cultural to Gettier-like stories (see E.L. Gettier 2000). They found out that cultural background gave rise to different intuitions. Subjects were requested to consider the following story:

> 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?

Subjects in the study were asked to say whether Bod (a) really knows or (b) only believes. It turned out that 74% of western subjects would agree with Gettier that (b) Bob "only believes" something when faced with a Gettier counter example while 56% of Asians and 61% of Indians think (a) he "really knows". This data implies that one cannot easily draw any general theory about *knowledge* based on intuition. Those experiments rely on Stich's hypothesis that reflective equilibrium cannot be of any help when forming philosophical theories, since different communities have very different epistemic standards. (Stich 1990; 1998) And, although Stich's suggestion was seen as unrealistic (J. Pollock & J. Cruz 1999, p. 150), those experiments provide strong evidence that different communities have different epistemic norms. The question we posed to the Bennett & Hacker line above then, is no longer just a theoretical worry. It seems that different communities do in fact have different standards. Hence one indeed needs to justify why they believe their own epistemic norms are privileged.

Other studies, again, indicate that some intuitions never change, even when proven wrong. (Cummins 1998, pp.116-118) Consider the gambler's fallacy: people infer that the likelihood of throwing seven increases every time a non -seven is thrown. This intuition does not change even if one explains and persuades them that the odds of throwing seven remain the same every time one throws the dice. So even if I know I am wrong, I am strongly inclined by my intuition to bet on seven, since seven has never been thrown the whole night. I might choose to ignore this intuition but I have it nevertheless. Intuition in such cases does not provide epistemic standards but rather stands on their way.

Traditional analytics have tried to find a common ground in human understanding and describe the norms it poses in all of us; thus they've turned to intuitions. They have high expectations from philosophy: philosophy will clarify the rock bottom of our understanding; it will show which quests make sense and which do not. The higher the expectations the more problematic it is to trust judgments based on intuitions. For intuition cannot provide the community's epistemic standards philosophers ask for. For one thing, intuitions invite all kinds of background beliefs, intellectual habits or emotions in. They do not just reflect content-free rules. This brings us to the next problem: since intuitions let the content in, philosophical or other theories are reflected by all such appeals. And intuition cannot provide the criterion by which one would choose between alternative (tacit or explicit) theories. It is vague, easy to manipulate and untrustworthy.

In the next section I will try to show that naturalist can better embrace such a method exactly because their expectations from such an appeal are lower and their view of philosophy is more modest.

03. Naturalism.

Most arguments criticising the appeal to intuitions, including the ones suggested above, come from the naturalists' camp. But, despite their critical attitude, naturalists use intuitions too, and, what's worse, some don't seem to notice; most of the time they don't bother to justify such a use at all.

At first glance, the appeal to intuition seems inconsistent with their agenda. Naturalists insist they rely on empirical evidence; some of them strongly criticise conceptual investigators. Yet they often jump to conclusions solely using their intuitions on how things are going to be. To give a crude example, they argue that since there is scientific evidence that some mental phenomena have a physical basis, then all mental vocabulary will be eliminated and replaced by physical vocabulary:

> Modern theories of mental dysfunction led to the elimination of witches from our serious ontology. The concepts of folk psychology—belief, desire, fear, sensation, pain, joy, and so on—await a similar fate ... And when neuroscience has matured to the point where the poverty of our current conceptions is apparent to everyone, and the superiority of the new framework is established, we shall then be able to set about reconceiving our internal states and activities, within a truly adequate conceptual framework at last. (P.M. Churchland 1988, p. 44).

Churchland, in the above quote, intuitively infers that the concepts of folk psychology will be eliminated from our ontology, just like witchcraft concepts have. Neuroscience will fill up our ontology, proving its superiority over folk psychology. Science will solve traditional problems concerning the mind. Churchland even suggests the type of solution it will provide: total elimination of propositional attitudes.

Undoubtedly, neuroscience offers a lot in explaining the brain, but from this very fact, one cannot infer that it will manage to eliminate the whole corpus of our mental vocabulary. As expected, Churchland insists that his suggestion is based on "entirely corrigible assumptions about the failings of current folk psychology and the expected character of future cognitive theories". (Churchland 1992, p. 44) Yet his claim, just like Jackson's thought experiment about Mary, sounds like science fiction. For the time being, there is no hard scientific evidence that science is close to eliminating and replacing mental vocabulary. His claim is beyond induction. Churchland just appeals to his own intuitions about the future of science and the future of folk ontology. He even appeals to intuition when declaring that witchcraft metaphysics have been abolished from our vocabulary; there is no research grounding this claim; if there was, the results may not be as optimistic as Churchland is.

Naturalists appeal to intuition too. They may even bring intuitions in when criticising traditional analytic methodology. For example, M.A. Bishop and J.D. Trout (2005) strongly criticise *Standard Analytic Epistemology (SAE)*, as they call it, on the basis that philosophers' intuitive judgements have no epistemic privilege against psychologists' empirical methods; in particular, ameliorative psychology's methods. Their argument is empirical: *Ameliorative Psychology* and *Statistical Prediction Rules* work better.

Bishop & Trout criticise intuitions: first, they argue that our intuitive judgements on are often *false*. For example, while people think they will be happier if they have more money, are healthy or get tenure:

> ... scientific evidence shows that they are wrong in all counts... These results are counterintuitive but fortunately, science (unlike some branches of philosophy) isn't about respecting our intuitions. The very happiest people [have a common, yet simple "secret":] they tend to be more social, with stronger and romantic relationships than the less happy groups. (p. 65)

So people intuitively reply that money, a permanent job or good health would make them happy. However, when their actual happiness is measured by systematic psychological tests, it seems that a vivid social life makes people happy. The question is though whether this conclusion is as counter-intuitive as Bishop & Trout suggest. If those results are truly counterintuitive, the question arises, about how one thought of bringing in issues such as social capacities or romantic relations and relating them to happiness. Why didn't they count on other cues such as the length of people's hair or how many bottles of water they have stored? One could argue that perhaps they would have come to that if this were the case; that is, if nothing intuitively grasped seemed to relate to people's happiness. But it didn't come to this; *something that made sense* seemed to matter for people (and therefore they stopped looking).

What is that differentiates then this appeal to intuitions than the traditionalists' appeal? Bishop & Trout do not appeal to their own intuitions, but rather to the scientists'. Yet it seems, then, that science too, and the models it constructs, pretty much rely on intuition (and on what intuitively makes sense) just as old-fashioned philosophy does. At least scientists do so when constructing their hypotheses. Consider another lucid example: J.W. Howard and R. Dawes (1976) found a simple linear model of predicting marital happiness, the *F-F rule*. They take the couple's rate of lovemaking and subtract from it their rate of fighting. If the couple fight more than they make love, they are more likely to report being unhappy. Bishop & Trout argue in favour of such models: they are easy to use, they need only a few cues and they are very successful. (pp.30-31.) One may add an extra advantage that might help explain at least this model's success, one which Bishop & Trout fail to mention: it is very intuitive. Again it seems that science formulates hypotheses based on intuition; and at least sometimes these hypotheses seem to work. (See also Miscevic 2004)

Even scientists do it then. The question is why philosophers shouldn't do it too. Bishop & Trout (2005, pp.104-115) criticise traditional analytic philosophers' judgements also on the basis that their judgements "*do not represent regular folks' intuitions* since philosophers form a rather small and idiosyncratic group of well educated, intelligent people". (p.106) Yet, although scientists too form a rather small and idiosyncratic group of well educated, intelligent, upper class PhDs, they are allowed to use *their* intuitions. Bishop & Trout do not seem to worry about the scientists' intuitions and whether they are idiosyncratic. For

> ... in the natural sciences... hypotheses are typically tested against the world. But in SAE, hypotheses are tested against the well considered judgements of other... philosophers. (p.106)

So the difference in those alternative appeals to intuitions is that scientists, unlike traditional analytic philosophers, evaluate their intuitions against the phenomena. Such an appeal can be justified for naturalists too then. And it is in line with their overall view that science and philosophy do not differ in kind. Naturalist can always appeal to intuition in the same manner that scientists do: Intuitions can be used in forming hypotheses as long as one tests them against the world. This reasoning is implied in Churchland above and many naturalistic appeals to intuition (see Dennett, *ibid.*) In fact H. Kornblith argues that *only* within such a reliabilistic naturalistic programme is the appeal to intuition justified.

> [When appealing to intuition] what we are doing is ... 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. (Kornblith 1998, p.134)

Naturalistic epistemologists presuppose that human knowledge is an empirical phenomenon. Kornblith (2002) in particular suggests that knowledge is a natural kind. From such a perspective, one can first turn to common sense and gather all possible instances of what intuitively counts as *knowledge* in order to form a theory about knowledge. It should be clear though that those samples are neither *a priori*, nor independent of background theory; they are corrigible and theory mediated and will probably change as investigation progresses and those judgements are checked and re-checked against psychological or neurophysiologic findings on concept formation, inference, cognitive development, etc. (see also Brendel 2004) This seems the only way to make sense of such an appeal for epistemic purposes; and this is the way science too uses intuitions. Kornblith suggests that investigation of knowledge, as well as all philosophical investigation, could very well begin with common sense's tacit theories, as long as it proceeds on the model of empirical investigation. (Kornblith 1998, pp. 132-140)

Intuitions can also provide the empirical data that a theory should embrace, especially in psychological or linguistic investigations, when for example the expert examines the phenomenology of pain or whether a sentence is used correctly. (Gopnik & Schwitzgebel 1998, pp. 79-80) Again it should be treated cautiously; one must be able to explain why an intuition must be embraced. Moreover, one should be aware

that intuitions are sometimes very easy to manipulate; sometimes all you need to do is tell the story differently and you create a different intuition on the subject.

On the face of such problems some suggest that the appeal to intuitions should be abolished all together from philosophical investigation. (Williamson 2004) But, at least for the time being, one might not need to take such extreme (and perhaps unrealistic) measures. After all intuition has worked for science on many occasions. Within the scope of naturalistic epistemology, one can appeal to intuition but as theory progresses and more empirical data are collected and evaluated, intuitions are re-evaluated and the appeal to intuition decreases.

Naturalists do not expect philosophy to ground any other practice or provide the epistemic standards every method should comply with. They consider philosophy to be as fallible (or as reliable) as science is. Thus they can use intuitions as scientists do.

Moreover, they are aware of the problems any appeal to intuition suffers. Consequently they treat them with caution. What's more they do not just depend on such an appeal. Empirical data can provide a test for their intuitions but also the evidence their analyses need. Even though they do not trust intuitions or depend on them, they can accommodate them more easily within a naturalistic background theory.

04. Conclusion: normativity, high standard epistemology and the appeal to intuition.

Intuitions can be epistemically justified if we use them as corrigible hypotheses or as data within a background theory and admit we should re-evaluate them in the process of theory formation.

Traditionalists would argue that this kind of naturalised appeal leaves the normative question open: they would object that the naturalists' quest misses the point of epistemology altogether. Epistemology is a normative enterprise: *it is after an ideal*. The traditional analytic philosopher is not investigating "the robust physical phenomenon of knowledge". She rather cares about what knowledge *ought to* be. Philosophy aims at providing us with the *normative standards of the concept*.[1] Hence

[1] The naturalists' views differ as far as normativity is concerned: some don't mind abolishing it, while others, such as Kornblith, try to find a way to embrace it, arguing that naturalistic epistemology also is

the traditional analytic philosopher turns to his or her intuitions on the subject; these won't change because of any empirical theory. Contrariwise, it is the normativity of his analysis that will guide us as to what will count as justified empirical theory. The normativity of the conceptual enterprise also brings intuitions into play. For one needs a firm start in order to avoid circularity.

However, so far as tacit theories are the origin of our intuitions and background knowledge, context and presentation techniques influence them, then *traditional analytic* intuition has the same function as in Kornblith's reliabilistic conception, even if they don't admit so. It serves as some kind of theory mediated hypothesis or data, hence suffers from the same problem that traditional analytic philosophers accuse the naturalists of, namely, circularity. *This stands whether they appeal to their intuition about what- ought -to -be or to their intuition on what- is.* Tacit theories about ideals may very well face the some difficulties, as tacit theories about (empirical) facts.

The high standards of the traditional analytic conception of epistemology are precisely what makes the appeal to intuition worthless: Traditional analytic epistemology strongly depends on a theory-free starting point. And intuition cannot offer such. Intuitions bring tacit theories along, some are too easy to manipulate while others persist even after they have been proved wrong. It is clear then that traditional analytic philosophy cannot rely on this method. *The very conception of epistemology as a normative, high- standard quest excludes appealing to intuitions*. If they insist on arguing for philosophy's special status, they need to find a more trustworthy method than the appeal to intuition.

This is an ironic conclusion since traditional analytic epistemologists ground their whole conception of philosophy (and the autonomy and authority of it) on such a method that supposedly distinguishes it from the sciences. Naturalists are not that needy of such a method, and this is why they can better employ it within their view. They appeal to intuitions, just as scientists do, in a reliabilistic process of theory formation.

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normative. According to Kornblith (1993), for example, epistemic norms can be grounded in people' desires. Discussing those arguments would take us beyond the scope of this paper.

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