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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Foundationalism, Coherentism and Naturalism: An Epistemological Survey

Isenyo Solomon Ogaba
Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences.
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria
Email: solomonogaba5@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This work attempts a critical survey of Foundationalism, Coherentism and Naturalism as theories of justification for truth. In this work, I considered these three kinds of theories, the three different approaches to epistemology in general and their justification in particular. In making an exposition of foundationalism, I have made a distinction between foundationalism as a general epistemological approach and foundationalism as a specific approach to the theory of justification. Then, after describing the Regress Argument in defense of foundational beliefs, I made an exposition of Bonjour's argument against foundationalism in terms of epistemic ascent argument. This argument demonstrates how any principle of justification can be challenged on the ground that a principle of justification itself may require justification. Employing Kornblith's (1985) refutation of the *Arguments-on-Paper Thesis*, I find that coherentism and foundationalism have a commonly mistaken presupposition. The mistaken presupposition is that a justified belief is a belief identifiable with a good reason (argument) or based on such good reason which can be noted down on a piece of paper. Two important conclusions follow from my discussion on *Arguments-on-Paper Thesis*. One, coherentism and foundationalism can be put together on common ground. Two, insofar as the common ground is invalid, neither justification nor knowledge must have an explicit formal ground. In other words, through reason or good reason does matter for knowledge, reason need not be so formal that it can be noted down on a piece of paper.

Keywords: Foundationalism; Coherentism; Naturalism; Epistemology.

INTRODUCTION

Foundationalism is an epistemological approach to the structure of knowledge. According to this approach, there must be a foundational/basic statement on the basis of what the whole structure of knowledge is built. In contemporary epistemology, it is taken as an approach to the structure of justification (Roche 2018). In accordance with this approach, every justified belief is either a foundational/basic belief or a belief based on some such foundational/basic beliefs. Foundationalism, construed as a theory of epistemology rather than a theory of justification alone, is the viewpoint that presupposes a distinction between philosophy and natural sciences. It considers the enterprise of philosophy superior to that of natural sciences. A philosopher's job, in accordance with this viewpoint, is to search for some basic truths, which can function as the foundation of all other truths that a natural scientist tries to establish. Thus, philosophy becomes the foundation on which the superstructure of natural Sciences is built on. Descartes' method of doubt to reach the foundational truth, *Cogito ergo sum*, is a classic case of separating philosophy or epistemology from natural Sciences (Seidl 2010). The method of doubt was meant to establish an indubitable truth. What was the need for an indubitable truth? It is to establish a foundation that does not become vulnerable to any doubt and, thereby, any truth based on that foundation won't collapse. The structure of our knowledge gets an invincible foundation. Foundationalism, as a theory of justification, presupposes the above general idea, that is, the epistemological or philosophical truths are meant to be the foundational truths on which scientific truths are based (). However, the focus has been shifted from epistemology in general to justification in particular. Because it is taken for granted that knowledge is justified true belief. As it is justified true belief itself, the task of providing a foundation is not a task of searching for an indubitable truth or unquestionable belief, it is to find the following two things. One, a structure of justification in which there would be some basic beliefs that require no further justification. Two, a relation between the basic and non-basic beliefs such that the latter can be justified based on the former.

As every inferred belief's justification owes to the validity of the inferential rules and the justification of the belief from which it has been inferred, the foundationalist's foundational belief is not a belief based on inference. It is one of the fundamental points of this theory of justification, that there are non-inferentially justified true beliefs; i.e., the basic beliefs. 'Dependency' is another fundamental point. That is, as the basic beliefs are independent of every other belief, the non-basic beliefs are justifiable only if they are inferrable from the basic beliefs. That is, any inferentially justified true belief (non-basic) ultimately depends on the basic beliefs for its justification.

THE REGRESS ARGUMENT

In support of the thesis that there are basic beliefs, the foundationalists put forward the Regress Argument. The argument starts with the idea that some of one's beliefs are justified by reference to others (Sparks 2019). For example, if I believe that Socrates is a person and that all persons are mortal, I might infer from these the new belief that Socrates is mortal. If my two existing beliefs were themselves justified, then via this inference I have acquired a new, different, justified belief. This is an inferentially justified belief. The

regress argument claims that all beliefs cannot be inferentially justified beliefs, there must be some non-inferentially justified beliefs (Eklund 2019). The inference is a matter of moving along a path from premises to conclusion. Conclusions can be justified only if they follow from justified premises. If my conclusion R is justified, that must be because it follows from some justified premise or set of premises. If R is to be justified, then premise Q must itself be justified. It is obviously not enough, to be justified in believing R, to infer R from any old set of premises. But if my belief that Q is justified, that must be because it follows from some other justified premise or set of premises, say premises P. Then the same Issue arises again over the justification of P. The possibilities for inferential justification here are just two: either there is no end to the chain of justification or the chain loops back on itself, P justifying Q, Q justifying R, and R justifying P.

The first alternative leads to an infinite regression. Each belief is justified by virtue of its connection to some other belief, and so on ad infinitum. But, this is supposed to be unsatisfying because it offers no prospect of anything being unconditionally justified. The second alternative leads to circularity. Justification for believing that p stems, ultimately, from p itself. This too is unsatisfying because it cannot provide justification for other beliefs, especially those beliefs needed to support the original belief itself. "The Loop", as Jonathan Dancy puts it, "will never succeed in removing the conditionality" (Dancy 1985). As none of the two alternatives enables us to get any belief adequately justified, if all justification is inferential, no belief can actually be justified at all. The sceptical conclusion that no belief can ever have any positive justification is absurd. Therefore, foundationalists reason, we should reject the premise that led us to it, the idea that all justification is inferential. We are to accept that one's premises can be justified in some other way, some non-inferential way. Once some non-inferentially justified beliefs are established, they are counted as the basic beliefs. The non-basic beliefs can be inferentially justified if they are logically derivable from the basic beliefs by employment of some inferential rules.

Foundationalism posits the existence of at least two distinct classes of beliefs: Basic and Non-Basic beliefs. The former class of beliefs is privileged in that they form at least part of the grounds of justification for holding a belief belonging to the other class (the non-basic class). The basic beliefs are more basic than others, in the sense that they cannot be justified by reference to other beliefs say non-basic beliefs, whereas non-basic beliefs can be justified by reference to basic beliefs. This relationship of basic and derived beliefs is not of temporal precedence but of epistemic precedence.

THE EPISTEMIC ASCENT ARGUMENT

Foundationalism seems to be a very convincing approach to justification when one is threatened by infinite regression in justifying one belief after another; when one belief is inferred from another belief which, in turn, is inferred from another belief, and so on. However, the threat of infinite regress may be brought about in a different way. It may be associated with the principle of justification itself, rather than with the beliefs justified in accordance with the principle. **The Epistemic Ascent Argument** is meant to demonstrate such a problem of infinite regression. This argument is an attempt to ascend every possible epistemic justification by demanding the justification of whatever possible principle of justification one can adopt. That is, it asks for a justification of how one justifies· a non-

foundational belief by means of the principle that a non-foundational belief is justified if it is based on a foundational belief. The argument shows the possibility of infinite regression.

A foundationalist's argument to avoid that possibility, is to break the argument down from its starting point. Their claim goes something like this: If S is justified in believing p on the basis of q, S need not be justified in believing that he is justified in believing that p on the basis of q. It is with the simple argument that if S need not believe r, S need not justify that he believes that r, and r is the basic relation between the foundational beliefs and the non-foundational beliefs. For example, If I am justified in believing (i) I hear a patter outside my window, and (ii) If I hear a patter outside my window, then, it is raining; then I need not believe, and hence need not be justified in believing, the dependence of (iii) It is raining, on my foundational belief that (i) and (ii) entail (iii). The intrinsic properties of (i) and (ii) may be such that I will believe in (iii) without believing, and hence without being justified in believing (i) and (ii) entails (iii).

The foundationalists take the most uncompromising foundationalist position when they hold that the foundations of knowledge must be absolutely secure. That is, the basic beliefs have some especially valuable epistemic property. They are infallible or incorrigible or indubitable or certain. Any infallible belief would have to be non-inferentially justified. Non-inferentially justified infallible beliefs will stop the threat of infinite regress. Classical foundationalism says that beliefs about immediate experience are non-inferentially justified because they are infallible. But employing the epistemic ascent argument, one may try to argue for coherentism. As Bonjour, a coherentist, argues that the only way to have a basic foundational belief is to stipulate that it exists. In other words, he states that foundational beliefs are foundational because "I said so". He claims that there are no self-justified beliefs rather beliefs, including foundational ones, ought to be justified by an argument. If all beliefs were justified by an argument structure then there would be no basic foundational beliefs because they rely upon non-inferential perception. Therefore, Bonjour leaves us with coherentism, which prefers epistemic chains in the form of loops.

One may try to avoid Bonjour's criticism by rejecting the epistemic ascent argument. However, the problems related to the basic beliefs are not over thereby. Why should the foundationalist require infallibility anyway? An historically important reason has been that if beliefs about our own sensory states were infallible, we would have a guarantee that they were always true, and thus a sure-fire reply to some kinds of scepticism. But the issue of infallibility is no less an example than the issues of basic beliefs. Infallibility may mean a) Certainty (p has a probability of 1 relative to S's evidence), b) Incorrigibility (If S believes p, p is true, or p does not go beyond what S is directly aware of, or p can't be falsified by subsequent experience, it has no predictive content), or c) Indubitability (If S thinks of p, S knows p) (Alston 1971).

COHERENTISM

According to Coherentism, a belief is completely justified if and only if it coheres with the system of beliefs it belongs to Dancy. Hence to justify a belief or knowledge claim is to show that the belief coheres with other beliefs of the system. Every justified

belief is justified in virtue of its relations to other beliefs. S is justified in believing that p if and only if S's belief that p fits with S's system of beliefs D. There are no beliefs that are foundational or basic. The basic idea of coherentism is that there are no beliefs that are foundational or basic. Every justified belief is justified in virtue of its relations to other beliefs. As such, this rejects circular justification. A belief is justified in virtues in the way it fits with all other beliefs of the believer. Foundationalism considers knowledge qua justified true belief as impossible without foundational beliefs. It portrays justification as having a structure like that of a building, with certain beliefs serving as the foundations and all other beliefs supported by them. Coherentism rejects this image and pictures justification as having the structure of a spider web. Justified beliefs, like the strands that make up a web, mutually support one another. The essential feature of a coherence theory is that it is a doxastic theory that assigns the same inherent epistemic status to all beliefs. In so far as we can demand reasons for holding one belief, we can demand reasons for holding any belief. And, in so far as we can be justified in holding one belief without having a reason for doing so, we can be justified in holding any belief without having a reason for doing so.

VARIETIES OF COHERENTISM

We can classify coherence theories in two different ways- in terms of the nature of the reasons they embrace, and in terms of the role they assign to those reasons. Some Coherence theories take all beliefs to be prima facie justified. According to these theories, if one holds a belief, one is automatically justified in doing so unless he has a reason for thinking he should not. Some coherence theories negatively consider the function of reason. For them, S must have reasons to reject the opposite of a belief which S takes up as a coherent belief. Rejection of the belief incoherent to his system of beliefs enables him to get those beliefs as opposite as coherent to his system of beliefs. Thus the point of establishing coherence is associated with what candidate belief S has and S's system of beliefs, it is not associated with how or in what procedure S acquired a particular belief. Consequently, justification is not about the acquisition of a belief, rather it is about a belief that has already been held by a subject. The account of the reason it provides is like this: Whereas a negative coherence theory demands S' s reasons for the rejection of the belief that -p, a positive coherence theory demands positive or favourable support for the belief that p, from the system of beliefs S has; if S is justified in believing that p.

A positive coherence theory may be linear or holistic. The former embraces essentially the same view of reasons and reaSOnIng as foundational. The account of the reason it provides is like this: P is a reason for S to believe Q by virtue of some relation holding specifically between P and Q. A reason for a belief is either another individual belief or a small set of beliefs and is not automatically the set of all of one's beliefs. On a Linear theory, if we trace the reasons for a belief and the reasons for the reasons, and so on, we can never reach a stopping point. If there were a stopping point, it would have to consist of epistemologically basic beliefs, and coherence theories deny that there are epistemologically basic beliefs. There are just two ways in which the tracing of reasons can go on forever: infinite regress or circularity. A Linear positive coherence theory acknowledges that justified belief can result either from an infinite regress or from circular

reasoning. Opposed to a linear theory, a holistic positive coherence theory upholds that, for S to have a reason for believing P, there must be a relationship between P and the set of all of his beliefs. Holistic theories adopt a novel view of reasons according to which one's having a reason for a belief is determined by the relationship of that belief to the whole amorphous structure of beliefs comprising his total doxastic system.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST COHERENTISM

Some of the important arguments that often a coherentist has to encounter are The Regress Argument, The Argument Against High-Level Beliefs, The Relevance Problem Argument and The Isolation Argument.

The Regress Argument

The regress argument maintains that coherence theories lead to an infinite regress and such a regress cannot provide justification. This objection is usually conceived of as being applicable to all coherence theories. However, it is against only a few. The main problem with this sort of objection is that it rests on a false assumption. It assumes that one belief stands as a reason for another belief which, in turn, stands as a reason for another and so on. Then, it argues that, certainly, for the justification of a belief, we need a starting point but coherentism is without any such starting point. Now the given assumption is acceptable to no coherence theory except the linear positive coherence theory. Hence, the regress argument incurs real damage to linear positive coherence theory, not to coherence theories in general. A linear positive coherence theory that identifies having P as a reason for believing Q with having explicitly inferred Q from P would run afoul of the regress argument, because it would require one to have performed infinitely many explicit inferences before one could be justified In believing anything, and that is presumably impossible.

The Argument against High-Level Beliefs

This argument is particularly against linear positive coherence theories look much like foundations theories as long as we focus our attention on beliefs not directly based upon perception. We can clearly distinguish the two when we consider perceptual beliefs. According to foundations theories, justification terminates at that point on epistemologically basic beliefs. On the other hand, according to a linear positive coherence theory, justification must instead loop back to other "high level" beliefs. Foundations theories attempt to base perceptual belief on epistemologically basic appearance beliefs. Linear positive coherence theories take perceptual beliefs to be based upon more ordinary physical-object beliefs, whose justification, in turn, rests upon other ordinary beliefs, and so on. This would indeed avoid the problem of not having appropriate epistemologically basic beliefs, but the difficulty with the proposed solution is that perceptual beliefs do not seem to be based, in the way envisioned, on physical-objects beliefs. For instance, suppose I see a red apple on my table and judge perceptually that it is red. A typical foundations theory would allege that my reason for thinking that the apple is red is my epistemologically basic belief that it looks red to me. A linear positive coherence theory proposes instead that my reason 58 for thinking the apple is red is some

more ordinary physical-object belief. The trouble with this proposal is that there are no plausible candidates for such a reason.

One reason is the second-order beliefs that we believe the book to be red, but the claim that we ordinarily have such second-order beliefs is no more plausible than the foundationalist claim that we ordinarily have' appearance belief'. Furthermore, what could our reason be for the second-order belief? Certainly not that we believe that we believe that the apple is red. Nor do there seem to be any other candidates with greater plausibility. The general difficulty is that perception is not inference. When I believe based on the perception that the apple is red, I do not infer that belief from something else that I believe. Perception is a causal process that inputs beliefs into our doxastic system without there being inferred from or justified based on other beliefs we already have. This seems undeniable, and it is a conclusive objection to all linear positive coherence theories.

The Relevance Problem

A belief to be justified based on its being coherent to S's system of beliefs raises a further question, namely, which beliefs must be counted most relevant for the candidate belief? Because, as a coherentist, one does not relate the belief with the relevant fact of the world outside; on the other hand, one relates the belief with other beliefs. For sure, one does not compare the belief to be justified with every other belief that a subject's system of beliefs contains. Hence, there should be some ground or reason by which one can select a particular set of beliefs to be the most relevant, that is, the most significant insofar as the candidate belief is to be compared with or related with. The problem is that there is no such plausible objective ground or reason. For, given any such ground, it proves coherentism inconsistent by an explicit demonstration that coherentism goes beyond the web of beliefs.

We may look into Lehrer's concept of 'competition' as a response to the problem of relevance. Lehrer proposes that a belief that p is justified for a person S if and only if for each belief with which p " competes", S believes that p is more probable than that competitor. For Lehrer, p competes with Q *lfl* S believes Q to be "negatively relevant" to p. To say that Q is negatively relevant to p is to say that the probability of p on the assumption that Q is true is less than the probability of p without that assumption. Lehrer illustrates his analysis by considering the perceptual judgment that he sees a red apple. He observes that he not only believes that he sees an apple, but he also believes that the proposition that he sees a red apple is more probable than the proposition that he sees a wax imitation, or a painting of an apple. All of the latter are negatively relevant to his actually seeing a red apple and hence are in competition with that proposition, but in each case, he believes them to be less probable.

Of course, Lehrer tries to illustrate how the justification of a belief might be a function of one's total doxastic system without being determined by relations between individual beliefs of the sort envisioned by "classical" theories of reasons and reasoning. But it does not solve the problem of relevance. Because, the problem of relevance requires a criterion of relevance and the criterion, whatsoever may be, is not only susceptible to the Epistemic Ascent Argument but also goes beyond the system of beliefs a subject

possesses. For it is not necessary on the part of the subject that he must believe the criterion of relevance when he holds a belief coherent to his system of beliefs.

The Isolation Argument

As coherentism accounts justification In terms of the propositions one belief without giving due importance to the world outside, it is argued that coherentist account of justification is isolated from the world and, thereby, it is inadequate. Because one of the main objectives of knowledge is to find out what or how the world is. In other words, any account of knowledge completely bereft of perception is unacceptable and coherentism does not succeed in accounting perception. This isolation objection is universally applicable to coherence theories of justification so long as we acknowledge that one's empirical evidence extends beyond the propositions one believes or accepts. The problem of course is that there is no necessary connection between (a) the holding of coherence relations, however comprehensive, between propositions one believes or accepts and (b) conformity to the contents of one's perceptual experiences. But empirical epistemic justification, by definition, requires all one's empirical evidence, including the contents of one's perceptual experiences. For example, the belief that S has no pain may cohere with S's system of beliefs which represents superficial eliminative materialism, even if S actually experiences severe pain. As the evidential experience suggests that S has severe pain, we cannot say that S is justified in believing that S has no pain, even if it coheres with S's system of beliefs, namely, superficial eliminative materialism.

Naturalism

In epistemology, naturalism does not accept the foundationalistic idea that philosophy can find some basic principles or truths on which the superstructure of science can be built. A naturalist finds epistemological and philosophical inquiry in continuation with the inquiries in natural sciences (Greenberg 2011). Epistemologists do not have privileged access to any belief that a natural scientist cannot. We are all in the same boat. If we try to make out in terms of the form of language, we should say that the foundationalist is of the view that no normative language can be reduced to or compared with a descriptive language. How ought we know has nothing to gain from how do we know. On the other hand, for a naturalist, they can reciprocate, they can supplement to each other. How do we know and how ought we to know can gain from each other. The normativity of epistemology is not sacrosanct. Epistemological principles and psychological principles can correct each other. We can broadly divide naturalism into i) Substantive Naturalism and ii) Methodological Naturalism. The former gives emphasis on the point that all epistemic facts are natural facts. The latter gives emphasis on the methodological aspect by keeping both epistemology and natural science at the same level. Epistemological investigations and psychological or scientific investigations do not differ in kind, In so far as their methodology is concerned. As in ethics, naturalism 'is the doctrine that moral facts are facts of nature' (Gilbert 1977), so also, in epistemology, Substantive Epistemological Naturalism is the doctrine that all epistemological facts are facts of nature.

Substantive Naturalism

It seems very trivial to claim that all epistemic facts are natural facts unless it is supplemented with some account of what counts as a natural fact (Wheeler & Pereira 2011). One view is that the natural facts include all the facts that a complete science will acknowledge. Another way to characterise the natural facts is to provide a list of representative examples of the sorts of things that count as natural. The latter characteristic is meant to provide us with a reasonable good idea of what else might be included under natural facts. The two approaches are not compatible, since the examples might not be a list of the sorts of facts science acknowledges. Alvin Goldman produced one such list (Goldman 1979). Goldman suggests that 'believes that', 'is true', 'causes', 'is necessary that', 'implies', 'is deducible from' and 'is probable' (either in the frequent sense or the propensity sense) are not epistemic terms. In general (purely) doxastic, metaphical, modal, semantic, or syntactic expressions are not epistemic (Goldman 1979). Goldman also provides a list of epistemic terms which includes 'justified', 'warranted', 'has good grounds', 'has a reason (to believe)', 'knows that', 'sees that', 'apprehends that', 'is probable' (in an epistemic or inductive sense), 'shows that', 'establishes that' and' ascertains that' (Goldman 1979).

The crucial thing about sentences using epistemic terms is that they seem to do more than merely describe how things are. They say or imply how something is to be evaluated from an epistemological perspective. Traditional epistemologists take these evaluative epistemological sentences to be objectively true or false, and thus they are committed to there being epistemological facts. On the contrary, naturalism does not accept these statements to be objectively true or false on the ground of epistemological facts, they are construed to be contingent truths based on natural facts. One may deny that epistemic sentences report facts at all. Defenders of such a view argue that they are meaningful but non-factual, perhaps because they are expressions of approval or disapproval of the beliefs and believers. There have been some defenses of this view, though more frequently in ethics than in epistemology (Irwin 2013). Another approach for naturalism is to argue that epistemic terms can be given naturalistic definitions. For the present purpose, we take a definition of a term to be a statement of logically necessary and sufficient conditions for its application. Familiar accounts of epistemic terms seem to be divisible into those that employ only clearly naturalistic terms and those that do not. Many traditional definitions of epistemic justification make essential use of other evaluative epistemic terms. Thus, it is common to define justification in terms of good reason, adequate evidence, strong grounds, the right to be sure, and the like. On the other hand, the simplest version of causal theory says that a belief that p is justified when the fact that p is causally connected to the belief that p. This theory invokes facts, beliefs, causal connections and all other terms acceptable to naturalists. Reliabilism also seems to invoke only naturalistically respectable terms. In its simplest form, it holds that a belief is justified provided it is produced by a belief-forming process that reliably leads to true beliefs. More complex forms of reliabilism also appear to be naturalistically acceptable.

These considerations suggest that one aspect of the debate among naturalists is best understood as a debate about whether knowledge and justification can be understood in terms of naturalistically suspect evaluative terms. A very widely accepted view is that evaluative ethical and epistemic facts supervene on naturalistic ones. To say that the

evaluative facts supervene on the natural ones is to say that in any two worlds in which all the natural facts are alike. (This is strong supervenience, as some define it). The key point is that things in different worlds that are descriptive alike must be evaluationally alike. A weaker notion would say only that any two things in the same possible world that are descriptively alike must be evaluationally alike.. Alternatively, one might say that facts about the epistemic status of beliefs supervene on natural facts provided that, necessarily, if two believers share all the same natural properties, then same beliefs are justified for them. As Kim (1998, p. 8) puts it, " ... if a belief is justified, that must be so because it has certain factual, non-epistemic properties .... That it is a justified belief cannot be a brute fundamental fact... [it] must be grounded In the factual descriptive properties of that particular belief'. There is, of course, considerable disagreement about which facts are central to the supervenience base for epistemic facts. Evidentialism holds that the key natural facts that determine whether a belief is justified are facts about the evidence the person has for that belief. The evidence one has is some combination or other of the experiences one is having, the memories and other beliefs one has. All of these are unquestionably natural facts about a person. And evidentialism holds that necessarily, people who have the same evidence are justified in believing the same things. In other words, the theory is that natural facts about evidence possessed determines epistemic facts. Reliabilism holds that the crucial facts in the supervenience base of epistemic facts are facts about the reliability of the causal producing or sustaining the belief. These two are unquestionably natural facts.

If supervening on natural facts is sufficient for making a fact natural, then it follows that epistemic facts are natural facts. It is difficult to determine whether supervening on what is natural is sufficient for naturalness. Some naturalists contend that a substantive naturalist view must treat epistemic facts as supervening on causal rather than logical facts (Philip 1992). Perhaps some support for rejecting the view that anything that supervenes on what's natural is itself natural comes from the fact that this thesis yields the surprising result that the famous ethical non naturalists were actually naturalists. For example, G.E. Moore would have endorsed the supervenience thesis. However, Kim says that we use the term "naturalism" ambiguously in "ethical naturalism" and " epistemological naturalism". The former requires definitions in natural terms. The latter requires only supervenience (Kim 1988). So Kim's view seems to be that, so far as the debate about naturalistic epistemology goes, epistemic facts are natural facts if they supervene on unquestionably natural facts. In the light of the discussion that many epistemic facts are natural facts, a question remains for some traditionalists. In addition to facts about particular people being justified in believing particular propositions, they are committed to the existence of epistemic facts about what beliefs are supported by a particular body of evidence. It remains unclear whether these are natural facts. Traditionalists often regard these facts as necessary truths, and it is their necessity that enables evidentialists to endorse the supervenience thesis. If the epistemic support facts are not natural facts, then not all epistemic facts are natural facts and according to traditionalists, Substantive Epistemological Naturalism is false. If the epistemic support facts are natural facts, and justification is defined in terms of evidence possessed and

epistemic support, then justification is defined in entirely natural terms. In that case, evidentialists do not need to rely on supervenience to defend naturalism.

METHODOLOGICAL NATURALISM

Quine begins "Epistemology Naturalized" (1994) by discussing attempts to derive statements about the world around us from statements about our own sensations. Quine argues that such an effort to ground our beliefs about the world has failed. In the light of this failure, Quine recommends us to study the psychological processes by which we form our beliefs about the world. As Kim points out in a critical discussion on Quine, a conspicuous difference between traditional epistemology and what Quine recommends is that they study strikingly different topics (Kim 1998). The old epistemology was interested in questions about rationality, justification and knowledge. The questions that most intrigued the traditional epistemologists were questions about what exactly it was to know something and whether we really did have knowledge in the range of cases in which we ordinarily thought we did. One way to think of these questions is as questions about whether an epistemic support relation holds between our basic evidence and our beliefs about the world. Epistemology thus prominently includes evaluative questions, questions about the quality of evidence. As Kim sees it, Quine has proposed ignoring these evaluative questions and investigating instead the causal connections between our sensory evidence and our beliefs about the world. The Quinean view that we should consider epistemology as a chapter of psychology is not widely accepted by contemporary naturalists in epistemology. However, a more modest descendant of his view is extremely popular, which holds that, while there are evaluative questions to pursue, empirical results from psychology concerning how we actually think and reason are essential or useful for making progress in addressing evaluative questions.

Methodological Naturalism has many advocates, as can be seen from the following claims;

> " Thus, a mixture of philosophy and psychology is needed to produce acceptable principles of justifiedness" (Goldman 1994).
>
> " ... any epistemologist who reject skepticism ought to be influenced in his or her philosophical work by descriptive work III psychology" (Kornblith 1985).
>
> " ... the result from the Sciences of cognition may be relevant to, and may be legitimately used in the resolution of traditional epistemological problems" (Haack 1993).
>
> "It is hard to come up with convincing normative principles except by considering how people actually do reason, which is the province of descriptive theory" (Haack 1986).

No doubt the philosophers just quoted were engaged in different epistemological projects and their views about the exact role psychology might play in their efforts differed accordingly. One is confronted with a difficult question when one begins thinking about the connection between epistemology and psychology: What counts as epistemology? The answer affects the plausibility of methodological naturalism considerably. There is no doubt that if epistemology is as expansive a discipline as some think, then methodological naturalism is true. Philip Kitcher (1992), another advocate of methodological naturalism, asks, "How could our psychology and biological capacities and limitations fail to be

relevant to the study of human knowledge?". Obviously, empirical work IS relevant to "the study of human knowledge". But this shows its relevance to epistemology only if epistemology is itself as broad as the study of human knowledge. The complete study of human knowledge would presumably, include historical studies of what people knew when and how knowledge has grown over time, studies in neuroscience concerning the ways the brain processes involved in belief formation, sociological studies about the ways knowledge is transmitted in societies and so on. So, it is hard to imagine any disagreement with the view that methodological naturalism is true given such a broad interpretation of what counts as epistemology. However, if epistemology addresses only the philosophical questions about knowledge, rationality, and justification, then presumably it addresses something less than the complete "study of human knowledge". We noted how methodological naturalism can do well in a context that broadens epistemological investigations from mere normative principles to facts and principles of both philosophical and scientific importance. With this note, we can explain two fundamental features III Quine's naturalized epistemology and, in doing so, explain the way III which a naturalist can do justice to both epistemology and natural science, also, to both knowledge and skepticism. As a result, we may succeed in showing that methodological naturalism has made a different approach to questions about knowledge but never has it suggested annihilating epistemology. The fundamental points of Quine's naturalized epistemology are (i) The reciprocal containment between philosophy and natural science and (ii) the replacement of philosophical skepticism by scientific skepticism. Quine says,

> "The old epistemology aspired to contain, in a sense, natural science; it would construct it somehow from sense data. Epistemology in its new setting, conversely, is contained in natural science, as a chapter of psychology. But the old containment remains valid too, in its way ... there is thus reciprocal containment, though containment in a different sense, epistemology in natural science and natural science in epistemology" (Quine 1969, p. 24).

The above passage implies eliminating traditional epistemology as the distinct province of inquiry into the nature, limit and the sources of knowledge; in favour of science or psychology: That is, by discovering the processes by which we actually arrive at belief, we arrive at the beliefs we ought to because the processes by which we arrive at the latter beliefs are just the same as those by which we arrive at the former. For Quine, scientific knowledge is the nature, the scope and the limit of knowledge. Beyond the scientific facts or outside science, we cannot hope to get knowledge. The source of knowledge, as he states explicitly, is the combination of the subjective and objective, i.e. the combination of two quite general, but distinguishable factors- the contribution of the world and the contribution of the knowing or perceiving subject. Quine claims that sceptical doubts are scientific doubts. According to him, traditional epistemology could not answer the general question "How is the human knowledge, in general, possible?" because it is not a priori question. Naturalistic or scientific understanding of human knowledge will give us everything there is to understand about human knowledge. Quine begins his essay by saying that Epistemology is concerned with the foundations of science. Quine further argues, that, as science makes clear the falsity of our former beliefs and our susceptibility

to illusion, the question naturally arises but through science as to whether the belief we arrive at, even under the best of conditions, is likely to be true. In short, the question arises as to whether knowledge is possible. In so far as this question arises from within science, we may call on the resources of science to answer it. Far from making epistemology a necessary prerequisite to doing science, this makes epistemology continuous with the scientific enterprise.

So far in our discussion, we tried to answer what is foundationalism, what is coherentism and what is naturalism; in addition to that, we tried to outline some of the important issues connected with the three approaches. Now, following Kornblith (1985), we can attempt to bind foundationalism and coherentism together against naturalism. Foundationalism and Coherentism share a common false presupposition, i e., an approach to epistemological questions should be psychological. Once this false presupposition has been rejected both foundationalism and coherentism can be refuted on a methodological ground. Following Kornblith's explanation of *Arguments-on-Paper Thesis*, I try to show that both foundationalism and coherentism can be put under the same umbrella. They can be put so as they have a common approach that naturalism repudiates. The standard account of what it is to be justified in believing a proposition is a psychological account. Questions about justification amount to nothing more than questions about the quality of various sorts of arguments, provided if such an account is correct. Hillary Kornblith called the standard account the *Argument-On-Paper Thesis* (Kornblith 1980). However, the coherentist makes different claims about what makes for a good argument. He supposes that there are no starred propositions. For him, an argument is good if none of the premises is starred and second, the conclusion bears the relation C to the premise. The relation C is a 'coherence' relation defined in one way or other but solely in terms of relations among the propositions S believes. The significance of C is that if a proposition p bears C to other propositions that S believes, S is justified in believing p. That is, if q bears C to p and (p-q), S is justified in believing q. A standard account for both foundationalism and coherentism can be formulated as shown by Kornblith. "*The arguments-on-paper"* thesis is just the view that a person has a justified belief that a particular proposition is true just in case that proposition appears on the list of propositions that person believes, and either it requires no argument, or a good argument can be given for it which takes as premises certain other propositions on the list" (Kornblith 1985, p. 7). It may be argued that APT is untenable. S may justifiably believe (i) p and (ii) (p-q), yet S may not be justified in believing q. For example, even if q is true and S believes that q is true, S may not trust Modus Ponens. S may have believed q due to the familiar sound of a sentence through which q has been expressed.

CONCLUSION

What is fundamentally wrong with APT is that it counts 'belief dependency' in terms of 'belief contents'. All the justified beliefs bring in a closure of the domain of S's justified beliefs through 'dependency' relation. Once the foundational beliefs are listed, all possible domains for the justified beliefs can be constructed. If one belief depends on another, the former must be causally dependent on the latter. One belief cannot depend on another when the two are causally independent. The notion of belief dependence must be

accounted for by looking at the belief status of persons and, in particular, at the relation between them. Mistaking belief contents for the primary units of an account of justification, foundationalists seem to enter into an essential truism between the two key concepts - belief dependency and justification - namely, an account of justification is an account of belief dependency. But since APT is untenable, either justification or belief dependency has to be abandoned for the sake of belief contents. To avoid this clash, one may look for a balance between them. The question of justification and belief dependency might be tied to the processes responsible for the presence of those beliefs one must recognize the importance of 'status' of beliefs in contrast to the 'contents' of beliefs. That is, 'belief dependence must be accounted for by looking at the belief status of persons and, in particular, at the relations among them' (Kornblith 1985, pp. 115- 128).

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