

*Is Naturalism Normative? The Function of Epistemic Norms Within Naturalized Epistemology**

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Abstract

The topic of the paper is the problem of normativity within naturalized epistemology. The question I pose is whether naturalism can be conducted as a normative enterprise or whether it is merely descriptive as traditional epistemologists maintain. If they are to be faithful to their philosophical presuppositions naturalists cannot deliver traditionally understood substantive account of normativity. This is the reason why naturalism is often conceived as a merely descriptive enterprise. Nevertheless, naturalists do not reject normativity they just understand it differently. The numerous misunderstandings between traditional and naturalistic epistemologists is rooted in the difference in the attitudes to the naturalistic fallacy taken by these two sides. Naturalists treat this “fallacy” as unavoidable, which profoundly influences their account of normativity. In my paper, I show that the main problem with naturalizing epistemic norms could be expressed by asking, What is the substantial difference between epistemic norms derived from descriptive statements and those statements? What does this derivation really mean? My thesis is that naturalistic epistemic norms are actually descriptions of empirical phenomena which are expressed in a normative form for the sake of everyday life and scientific practice. To justify this argument I firstly recall the traditional meaning of “normativity” in the work of Descartes and the post-Cartesian internalists. Secondly, I present how and why the meaning of “epistemic norm” and “justified belief” change within naturalism with reference to Quine’s and Goldman’s

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versions of naturalism in particular. Finally, I focus on the consequences of naturalizing normativity, especially on the function of epistemic norms within naturalized epistemology. At this last stage I make use of Jonathan Knowles' book *Norms, Naturalism and Epistemology*.

The naturalist turn has been a significant phenomenon within epistemology since the middle of the previous century. More and more epistemologists express their sympathy for naturalistic positions even though they often explicate their attachment in different ways. However, there are a few arguments that are significant and distinguishing for naturalism. In this paper I focus on those among them that are concerned with the problem of normativity within naturalized epistemology, since this is the most controversial aspect of this project. Opponents of naturalism very commonly raise the objection that it can only be descriptive: an objection that I see as very serious. I think, therefore, that the crucial task for a naturalized epistemologist is to establish naturalism as a normative enterprise. The biggest difficulty is that naturalists alter the meanings of the main evaluative epistemic terms, such as "epistemic norm" and "justified belief". This leads to numerous misunderstandings between naturalists and traditional epistemologists whenever they are unaware of these differences and the reasons for their occurrence. My aim is to clarify how naturalists understand terms "normative" and "justified" and to analyze whether they can maintain the normative status of epistemology. Traditional epistemologists argue that naturalism must be merely descriptive since it cannot present an account of genuine epistemic norms as substantially different from descriptive statements. I will claim that although this traditional objection is right, naturalism is still normative in a specific sense. It is essential to remember in such discussions that one cannot expect that naturalism should satisfy traditional standards and conditions. Naturalistic and traditional epistemology are rooted in very different philosophical presuppositions, hence one should expect naturalism to satisfy naturalistic conditions of normativity that are different from the traditional ones.

My thesis is that naturalistic epistemic norms are descriptive statements about empirical phenomena expressed in a normative form for the sake of everyday life and scientific practice. This is the only meaning of normativity a naturalist can see as faithful to their epistemological assumptions but it is sufficient for conducting epistemological research. To justify this thesis I will begin by considering the traditional meaning of "normativity" as used in the works of Descartes and the post-Cartesian internalists. This will make it possible to show how the meanings of "epistemic norm" and "justified belief" change within naturalism as well as the main reasons for this shift. In this part of the paper I will refer to Quine's and Goldman's naturalism and will focus on the consequences of naturalizing normativity, especially for the function of epistemic norms within naturalized epistemology. I will close with a discussion of the way Jonathan Knowles approaches these issues in *Norms, Naturalism and Epistemology*.

1. Epistemology as a normative enterprise

Roughly speaking, the traditional task of epistemology is to show how a subject can reach a set of true and justified beliefs called knowledge. Normativity is introduced into this classical definition of knowledge by the concept of justification, for truth and belief are not, strictly speaking, epistemic terms.¹ From an epistemic point of view, if a belief is justified it is valuable; hence the discipline that builds a theory of justification is normative. Epistemology is therefore concerned with questions like: “Under what conditions a subject is epistemically permitted to keep a certain judgment?” Epistemologists are agreed that a belief is justified when it satisfies epistemic norms governing right reasoning.² Norms point to qualities a belief should possess in order to be justified: the question is, therefore, how to understand epistemic norms, and how they should be derived and justified. Hence, the aim of all kinds of epistemology is to explain what the source of epistemic norms’ normative force is, why a subject should care to satisfy these norms. Another epistemological task is answering skeptics’ doubts, namely what good reasons we have to think that our beliefs about the world are true. Although it might seem that traditional and naturalistic epistemology have the same aims, for they both analyze conditions of justified beliefs, their positions on the source and justification of epistemic norms are so different that it is hard to speak of the same epistemological project. Below, I attempt to show that these two schools present different answers to the crucial epistemological questions: when are beliefs valuable and how to form such beliefs.

2. Against the *naturalistic fallacy*—aprioristic sources of epistemic norms

Specifying one’s attitude to the problem of deriving normative judgments from descriptive statements should be the first step in every discussion on normativity. The decision to treat the *naturalistic fallacy*³ seriously or to ignore it is basic for every theory of epistemic norms because it determines the attitude to the sources of these norms and consequently to the criteria for justified belief. Traditional epistemologists choose not to make this *fallacy*, therefore they argue

¹ Kim (1988).

² Pollock (1987).

³ The concept *naturalistic fallacy* was first introduced by G.E. Moore in *Principia Ethica* and it characterizes the process of identifying the property *good* with any different property, especially naturalistic one. One could derive three consequences of this *fallacy*. The first one is the definitional fallacy which one commits when defining indefinable term *good*, the second is the fallacy in inference, namely the fallacy to deduce conclusions with evaluative terms from premises that contain only descriptive terms. The third consequence of the *naturalistic fallacy* indicates a wrong understanding of the subject of ethics. Naturalists, for example, replace ethics with empirical science, such as psychology or sociology. Many philosophers argue, however, that the *naturalistic fallacy*, more precisely the second conclusion of the *fallacy* was first noticed by David Hume in the famous fragment of *Treatise about Human Nature* where he claimed that one cannot deduce *ought*-conclusions from *is*-premises. See (Hare, 1952; Nowell-Smith, 1954).

that epistemic norms are derived from a basic, prior source and not from empirical knowledge. This source must be independent of every belief and it does not need any further justification, for it is evidently and perfectly reliable. Epistemic norms derived from such aprioristic sources form the foundation of whole knowledge; therefore they cannot be based upon empirical information, which is a part of that knowledge. This is the inevitable condition which must be satisfied if one wants to reach a set of valuable beliefs and not get trapped into the vicious circle. The famous representative of this traditional account of epistemic normativity was René Descartes. He divided beliefs into two groups: basic beliefs, which are justified directly, and others, non-basic, justified by their being in appropriate relations to the basic ones. Basic beliefs are indubitable; for example, these are beliefs about a subject's present conscious states. Other beliefs are justified by deduction from this certain fundament.⁴ Hence, within the Cartesian tradition justification is understood as a logical relation between two groups of propositions: reasons and conclusions. To justify a belief one has to refer to another belief already justified. This is the Cartesian structure of knowledge based on infallible fundament. In recent epistemology this traditional project is continued most noticeably by internalists about justification. It should be noticed, however, that there is no clear division between naturalistic externalists and anti-naturalistic internalists. Nowadays more and more epistemologists try to connect internalist theories of epistemic justification with naturalism and, on the other hand, externalist theses with anti-naturalist positions. The representative of the first view is John Pollock and the second conception is defended by Alvin Plantinga. Nevertheless, in this article, for the sake of clarity, I identify externalism with naturalism and internalism with anti-naturalism, since these pairs still most often goes together.

The representatives of internalism about epistemic justification are Roderick Chisholm and Laurence BonJour. Chisholm claims that if a subject wants to evaluate his belief as justified he has to present a reason why he regards this belief to be true. Since every reason is itself a belief which has to be justified, they form a justificatory chain which finally ends up with the reason which does not need justification for it is evidently true. The fact of the certainty of this final belief is recognizable through introspection which is claimed to be the main cognitive ability used in the process of justifying beliefs.⁵ Both Chisholm and BonJour prize introspection very highly and treat it as an indubitable source of epistemic norms. According to them introspection is an infallible cognitive capacity which enables us to evaluate what reasons make a belief justified.⁶ It means that a subject is aware of reasons which justify this beliefs, for he cognizes these reasons through introspection. This leads to the thesis which is one of the most significant for traditional epistemology, namely that reasons which are not accessible

⁴ Descartes (1933).

⁵ Chisholm (1977).

⁶ BonJour (1985).

for a subject cannot make a belief justified, for justification is a result of subjective evaluation. Hence, even if a certain belief is actually true and caused by a reliable process, it is unjustified unless a subject is aware of this process and its reliability. Analyzing these arguments one can notice that internalists focus on the question whether a subject possess justified beliefs, not whether a belief is objectively justified. Justification is not an external feature of a belief but it is a result of subjective evaluation which is not influenced by unconscious causal cognitive processes. To sum up, introspection is an indubitable source of epistemic norms and, what follows, the most effective tool of checking whether a process of reasoning is reliable.⁷

As it was already sad, every position on epistemic norms is based on a certain attitude to the *naturalistic fallacy*. Representatives of the theory of justification described above treat this *fallacy* very seriously, namely they argue that it is a logical and definitional error to derive normative statements from descriptive ones. Epistemic norms which indicate how a subject should acquire justified and true information about the world cannot be derived from information already possessed, for it leads to vicious circularity. Thus, norms should be derived from an *a priori* source that provides them with a universal and normative power. This argument leads to the thesis that the way in which a subject should form his beliefs has little in common with the way in which he actually forms them. Traditionalists clearly distinguish between the matter of facts and causes (context of discovery) and the matter of intentionality and rationality (context of justification). For epistemologists continuing Descartes' heritage it was unthinkable to justify a belief by reference to cognitive processes which caused it, namely to treat a cause as a reason, something which is so commonsensical and obvious for naturalist.

3. The meaning of “normativity” within naturalistic epistemology

Most naturalists are united in forming one central objection against traditional epistemology. Roughly speaking, they are agreed that epistemic norms justified *a priori* cannot form necessary and infallible foundations of knowledge about the world.⁸ Naturalists reject two main traditional assumptions, firstly the existence of aprioristic sources of epistemic norms and secondly the understanding of epistemic justification. More precisely, naturalists do not agree that there are only two ways of justifying beliefs: by reference to infallible source of epistemic norms in case of basic beliefs, and by reference to logical relations between propositions. In addition they indicate external factors, such as causes, as justifying reasons. This disagreement with traditional accounts of normativity is caused by a very different attitude toward the *naturalistic fallacy* taken by naturalists. According to traditional epistemologists, a genuine epistemic norm is derived from an infallible source which makes this norm indubitable and evident. Naturalists

⁷ Hilary Kornblith does not agree. Introspection not always provides us with information about the sources of our mental states because it is fallible. See Kornblith (2002).

⁸ Knowles (2003).

however argue that one cannot specify the criteria of evidence and indubitability which most of epistemologist would accept. Epistemic norms cannot be derived from and justified by an *a priori* source for at least two reasons: first, one cannot objectively verify the infallibility and evidency of such foundation, and second, epistemic norms are always based on empirical knowledge about human cognitive capacities.⁹ Hence, in order to form an epistemic norm, one has to derive it from empirical information already possessed. Consequently, naturalism is inclined to commit the *naturalistic fallacy*; however, for naturalists it is not fallacy at all or it is a fallacy that cannot be avoided. They often shift the burden of proof to the traditional epistemologist and ask “How is it possible not to make this fallacy?” Plainly there is no answer which could satisfy both sides, for they are clashed over fundamental philosophical presuppositions. Worth to notice that naturalists do not question the fact that it is logically impossible to derive normative propositions from descriptive ones, however this logical principle is useful neither in scientific practice nor in commonsensical thinking. In both areas of human activity epistemic norms are rooted in descriptive knowledge about facts.

According to traditional philosophers naturalism commits one of the worst philosophical fallacies and for this reason it cannot constitute the normative project which is epistemology. Naturalists, to the contrary, take it as obvious and commonsensical that recommendations about how to acquire knowledge about the world are derived from empirical information about humans’ cognitive abilities. Although naturalists oppose justifying epistemic norms by *a priori* means, they preserve a normative component within their enterprise. There are many naturalists who maintain that they solve normative problems even more effectively and truthfully than traditional epistemologists. Specifically, they think their naturalistic theories to be more appropriate for explaining the phenomenon of human knowledge and more efficient in recommending how to make epistemic progress.¹⁰ This optimism is justified by the fact that naturalists do not seek universal, transcendental norms which are obligatory for every cognizer in every possible world. To the contrary, they evaluate subject’s cognitive abilities with relation to the particular environment which gives them an advantage of formulating very specific advices how to form justified beliefs in particular circumstances. Roughly speaking, the task of naturalized epistemology is to judge on the basis of scientific achievements, which, among humans’ cognitive capacities, are the most reliable.

After this introduction one could ask what naturalists’ answer to the skeptical accusation of vicious circularity is. Skeptics claim that subjects never have good reasons to consider their beliefs of being true for there are not infallible and objectively justified source of normativity. Naturalists agree that aprioristic epistemology failed to constitute such source and, hence, normativity should be derived in an *a posteriori* manner, namely from empirical knowledge already

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Kornblith (1994).

possessed by humans. However, the skeptic would object that naturalists assume what they plan to justify, namely they indicate how justified empirical beliefs should be acquired by reference to other empirical beliefs, which seems to lead to vicious circularity. To avoid this fallacy, the naturalist has to justify the very procedure of forming empirical judgments, and in order to do it he cannot refer to any *a posteriori* beliefs.¹¹ Naturalists however consider this argument as completely false and leading straightforwardly to skepticism. Precisely, one cannot avoid skepticism if he assumes that empirical procedures of achieving knowledge must be justified by some aprioristic source. Therefore, naturalists maintain that a part of human empirical cognitive processes must be assumed as warranted and correct—this is one of the basic naturalistic presuppositions.¹² Humans do not have any other source of justified beliefs than knowledge already formed by fallible cognitive systems which are the product of evolution. This is the only possible starting point for epistemological researches and skeptics must accept this as humans' natural predicament.

Above I have presented the main theses of naturalistic epistemology concerned with normativity; however, in order to clearly show where essential problems appear I need to be more specific. Therefore, I will briefly recall Quine's and Goldman arguments in favor of naturalism, which would be helpful in understanding what the consequences of naturalizing normativity are.

4. The meaning of “epistemic norm” within Quine's naturalism

Quine presents a radical form of naturalism which seems to reject the whole project of normative epistemology focused on justification. The naturalized epistemologist loses his independence, for to evaluate whether a belief is rational he must refer to science. Science however examines only causal relations between cognitive processes and beliefs, thus the normative function of epistemology is reduced to the task of describing the reliability of a cognitive process performed by subjects. It could be said, nevertheless, that this problem is undertaken by cognitive sciences; thus, the significance of epistemology is reduced by Quine to a minimum. Quine accepts the naturalistic assumption stated above, that the processes of reasoning that humans perform are mostly correct.¹³ Thus, in analyzing how a subject should act in order to form a set of rational beliefs, one has to become familiar with scientific research on cognitive processes that humans actually perform. As a result, Quine proposes to replace epistemological studies by psychological ones, specifically he says that epistemology “falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence natural science.”¹⁴ This thesis, called “psychologism” or “replacement thesis,” had a crucial influence on the discussion about

¹¹ Bogen (1985).

¹² Kitcher (1992).

¹³ This claim is based on the thesis inspired by the theory of evolution, that our cognitive system favors true beliefs.

¹⁴ Quine (1969), p. 25.

naturalistic normativity. Naturalized epistemology is no longer The First Philosophy that builds the foundations of science. Naturalism is continuous with sciences in the sense that it assumes the validity and warrant of the scientific project and it uses scientific achievements in order to formulate the criteria of justified beliefs. Hence, Quine clearly argues to replace traditional project of epistemology with a radically different one, which could be still be normative.¹⁵

Examining Quine's epistemology one can clearly notice that he changes the traditional meaning of "epistemic norm" rather radically. From infallible assertion derived from *a priori* foundations it is transformed into empirical information about correct processes of reasoning.¹⁶ Hence, in order to formulate an epistemic norm one has to examine how humans actually form beliefs, which processes they use when they succeed, and which ones when they err. Epistemic norm therefore points at the reliable cognitive processes. At this point, it is worth to give a brief account of Goldman's theory of epistemic justification.

5. The meaning of "justified belief" within Goldman's externalism

Alvin Goldman formulates the theory of justification called reliabilism. The main thesis of this position states that a belief is justified if it is a product of reliable process, namely a process that leads in the majority of cases to the truth. Traditional epistemologists focused on of justification disregard the aspect of acquiring beliefs by a subject. According to naturalists this attitude is ill-conceived, for justification is dependent on the appropriate causal relation between a subject's belief and the processes which caused it. Reliabilism is a kind of externalism which, contrary to internalism, maintains that a subject does not need to be aware of the process which justifies his belief. More precisely, reasons which justify a belief could be wholly external to the subjective evaluation of the justificational status of this belief. This argument is verified by the fact that humans lack a "privileged access" to many facts about processes which cause and justify their beliefs, therefore they often possess justified beliefs though they do not recognize them as such.¹⁷ As a result of this position, the subject no longer plays a leading role in the process of justification. He does not need to consciously obey explicit epistemic norms, for reliable, psychological processes of reasoning governed by these norms often proceed beyond the cognizer's consciousness. This is a fact revealed by empirical investigations not by logical analysis. Epistemic norms therefore should be derived from scientific researches on how humans actually reason and not from some mysterious criterion that ignores information about our behavior. Cognitive sciences explain how epistemic norms guide reasoning beyond the subject's consciousness. These norms are an internalized pattern of behavior

¹⁵ Quine (1969). Quine understands normativity as a "branch of engineering", namely epistemic norms are instrumental advices based on scientific achievements about how to reach a particular cognitive goal in the most effective manner. See (Quine, 1986), p. 663-5.

¹⁶ Quine (1986).

¹⁷ Goldman (1979).

that humans automatically follow in reasoning, for this is the way in which their cognitive system works.¹⁸ Summing up, externalists claim that the justificational status of a belief depends on qualities of the world, on the reliability of processes causing beliefs, namely on causal relations between facts and beliefs.

On the basis of reliabilism one could form an explicit epistemic norm: “in order to have justified beliefs perform cognitive processes which are reliable,” however it is doubtful whether this norm is really needed. Soon I will present Jonathan Knowles’ position, who argues that norms of this kind, formulated within a naturalistic framework, are reducible to factual statements. The argument follows that if one accepts naturalistic assumption stating that humans in the majority of cases perform reliable cognitive processes then the norm stated above is redundant. It merely describes a fact about humans’ cognitive abilities examined by the sciences, therefore it is not genuine in traditional sense for it is not substantially different from the descriptive statement.

To sum up, naturalizing justification could be understood as the process of shifting emphasis from logical analysis of relations between propositions, to analysis concerned with cognitive processes of forming beliefs. Thereby, naturalists diffuse the strict division made by traditional epistemologists between matters of causes and matters of reasons, claiming that this dualism is dogmatic and not defensible. It is crucial for our considerations to conclude that traditional reasons have changed within naturalism into causes, and *a priori* epistemic norms have turned into descriptive statement about reliable cognitive processes of achieving knowledge. Despite all these differences both internalists and externalists are concerned with the issue what the criteria of justified beliefs are and therefore they stand on the common ground of normative epistemology.

6. The main problem of naturalized epistemology: how to derive epistemic norms from descriptive statements?

If naturalism intends to be an epistemology it must show that it is essentially normative. Therefore it is claimed that naturalists have to propose a theory of justification based on epistemic norms which are derived from factual statements but are not reducible to them. The argument that norms should be different in a substantial way from descriptions of facts is widely shared not only between traditionalists. It seems clear that if this condition is not satisfied naturalism could lose the possibility of analyzing the problem of justification, for it is a normative issue. Naturalists however are very optimistic about fulfilling this condition, for they do not see any problem with deriving conclusions about rationality from the empirical knowledge. Using one part of knowledge to justify another is a fundamental naturalistic assumption which makes normative naturalism possible. Nevertheless, it is nontrivial to ask what that derivation actually means and whether there is really no problem with that. The question precisely is how

¹⁸ Pollock (1987).

naturalists can differentiate between norms derived from factual statements and these statements? What is the function of epistemic norms which descriptions of phenomena cannot fulfill? How normative judgments correspond to descriptive truths? The crucial problem for naturalism is therefore not whether one can derive normative from descriptive, but whether there is something like real normativity at all and what is the source of it.

This issue is deeply analyzed by Jonathan Knowles in *Norms, Naturalism and Epistemology*.¹⁹ This book is designated for epistemologists who try to maintain the traditional project of deriving and justifying epistemic norms on the grounds of naturalism. Although the author is faithful to naturalism he goes against the naturalistic epistemology. The main thesis of his dissertation states that the task of delivering genuine epistemic norms by naturalism is misguided and unreachable, for norms which naturalists refer to are reducible to descriptive statements. It is impossible to make sense of epistemic norms which are derived from empirical information but are in some substantial way different from mere descriptions. Norms therefore are theoretically redundant as well in science as in everyday life, for their function of indicating how to form rational beliefs can be performed by descriptive knowledge about humans' reasoning capacities. Anything a subject needs in order to possess knowledge is to competently use his natural cognitive abilities and to perfect them in reference to the achievements of sciences.²⁰ Knowles clearly recognizes the obvious fact that as well in science as in everyday life epistemic norms are widely used, however this norms are actually factual statements which have a structure of recommendation for the sake of everyday practice. To sum up, Knowles' argumentation leads to the conclusion that naturalism cannot present a substantive account of normativity based on genuine epistemic norms and he does not present alternative account of naturalistic normativity.

7. Naturalism without *genuine* normativity

Knowles argues that it is not possible to derive in a naturalistic way any kind of epistemic norms which are substantially different from factual statements. Therefore, naturalism cannot be normative and consequently it cannot be an epistemology. This seems to be inevitable consequences of naturalizing normativity, yet is it really so? Knowles clearly and convincingly illustrates why naturalism cannot be normative in traditional sense, the crucial question is however why naturalism must satisfy traditional standards? Does it mean that if naturalism cannot deliver epistemic norms with essential, universal, normative content it also is

¹⁹ Knowles (2003).

²⁰ Making a comment on Quine's and Laudan's theories of instrumental norms, Knowles claims that these norms are not "genuine", which means that they do not possess universal normative content. They are merely factual statements about empirical relations between phenomena. Hypothetical rules such as "if you want *A* do *B*" could be replaced by an empirical information such as "*B* leads in the most effective way to *A*". See (Knowles, 2003).

not able to present any theory of epistemic norms? Knowles does not submit an alternative and that is the reason why his book seems to suggest that naturalism cannot be normative at all. Nevertheless, although many naturalists, Quine and Laudan for instance, would agree that their epistemic norms are reducible in some sense to factual statements, they still talk about normativity. The question is therefore how to make sense of naturalized epistemology that does not refer to the traditionally understood genuine epistemic norms? The available way of understanding naturalistic normativity is very different from traditional, for naturalism cannot and does not need to satisfy traditional standards in formulating conditions of rational beliefs. Naturalists however can maintain normative character of their project by referring to empirical knowledge already possessed by humans. Representatives of the naturalistic camp do not deny that some epistemic norms must be obeyed in order to gain knowledge; nevertheless, they identify them with scientific descriptions of facts about humans' reliable processes of reasoning. These descriptions are often reformulated into norms, for it is more convenient in everyday life, especially in illustrating how one could avoid errors in reasoning. Knowles does not conceive naturalism as normative, for he understands epistemic norms in the traditional manner, as a consciously obeyed judgment possessing universal, substantial and normative content. It is clear that descriptive statements or internalized rules of reasoning cannot be called epistemic norms in this sense. Nevertheless, it is essential to be aware that expectation of real, substantive normativity is too high and completely unrealistic for naturalistic presuppositions.²¹ The question however remains how to make precise an alternative account of normativity, a more naturalistic account.

8. The function of epistemic norms in naturalized epistemology

Although the naturalistic account of normativity is unacceptable for traditional epistemologists, it is everything naturalists can afford while being faithful to their naturalistic presuppositions. Epistemic norms within naturalism are actually descriptive statements which are treated as norms for pragmatic reasons. More precisely, empirical claims are transformed into epistemic norms in cases when a subject wants to know, for many reasons, how the process of acquiring reliable beliefs proceeds. Thus, there is no real derivation between norms and factual knowledge, namely norms are not derived as something substantially different. At this point one could make a remark that naturalized normativity is much "weaker" than traditional normativity, in the sense that it does not present infallible and unchangeable standards but it reduces epistemic norms to unstable descriptions of empirical phenomena. Naturalist would riposte however that this is exactly what gives naturalist an advantage over traditional epistemologists.

²¹ J. Kim maintains that epistemic norms are not reducible to facts but they supervene on descriptive properties of phenomena. Knowles would probably ask why we need such kind of supervening norms, for if they rest on facts so why do not simply refer to facts? See (Kim, 1988).

Naturalism should satisfy its own standard of valuable, rational beliefs, and it has nothing to do with mysterious, infallible, *a priori* sources.

For many philosophers, especially for those who are not naturalists, my argument could be unconvincing. For, finally, what the epistemologist's task is? On the basis of the previous analysis one could conclude that this task is merely linguistic, namely he translates sentences with factual form into normative form. This seems to be not enough for epistemology to survive, hence this activity does not provide information about cognitive processes and justification. Answering this argument one should firstly notice, that the thesis about the possibility of transforming epistemic norms into descriptive statements does not lead straightforwardly to the claim that the only epistemologist's task is concerned with translation of descriptive statements into normative. It is true that the aim of epistemological enterprise is to form epistemic norms, nevertheless in the case of naturalist, this process is very developed and the activity of translation is the last stage of it. Before changing the form of descriptive statement the naturalist has to formulate it and this task does not belong only to scientist. Psychologists or neurophysiologists do not form descriptive statements, that indicate when a subject posses knowledge and how reliable cognitive process leading to true beliefs proceeds, which are ready to translate into norms. Scientific research is an indispensable database for epistemologist, but it is his task to find in this set relevant information for epistemological enterprise and to form descriptive statement which later could be translated into norm. Epistemology, therefore, is not redundant as Knowles claims. It is true, that to know how to make my natural cognitive capacities better it is enough to refer to empirical relations between phenomena instead of forming explicit epistemic norms. It is epistemologist, however, who indicates empirical relations which are relevant for this problem.

Ending up, my suggestion is that naturalism can be conducted as a normative enterprise even if it does not satisfy traditional conditions of normativity. Epistemic norms are normative aspects of descriptive statements for used the sake of convenience in everyday and scientific practice. Naturalized epistemology is normative as far as it could be according to its own presuppositions. It forms conditions of justified belief with cooperation with scientists, on the bases of scientific descriptions of humans' cognitive processes and abilities. It is essential to remember not to confuse traditional and naturalistic meanings of epistemic concepts and standards for these two epistemological positions are formed from very different philosophical standpoints. Those who forget about this are doomed to misunderstandings and confusion which make fruitful discussion between the two camps impossible.

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