A DEFENSE OF THE USE OF INTUITIONS IN PHILOSOPHY[1]

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Although some forms of reasoning are innate, others are culturally derived. That being so, there may be significant cultural variation in how we reason.[2] If patterns of reasoning vary from culture to culture, accordingly, why should we prefer our own? One might naturally wonder: What makes one set of such patterns of reasoning, one "system" of reasoning "… better than another, and how are we to tell which system of reasoning is best?" (572) In a series of publications, Stephen Stich has taken up this question and has argued vigorously against "analytic epistemology." He denies in particular that a subject's system of reasoning is right in virtue of standing in reflective equilibrium. Of course, this is not the only account of the rightness of a system of

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[1] It is a great pleasure for me to contribute to this well deserved tribute to Steve Stich, longtime colleague and true friend, and iconoclast of analytic epistemology. Here I will engage only one of the challenges in his stimulating and influential work.

[2] 'Cognitive state' is Stich's term for belief-like information-storing mental states, while 'cognitive processes' is his "… cover term whose extension includes our own reasoning processes, the updating of our beliefs as a result of perception, and the more or less similar processes that occur in other organisms." See p. 571 of his "Reflective Equilibrium, Analytic Epistemology, and the Problem of Cognitive Diversity," Synthese 74 (1988): 391-413; the references here are to its reprinting in E. Sosa and J. Kim, eds., Epistemology: An Anthology (Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 571-83. Parenthetical references in the main text will be to this publication. My own preference is to stretch the terms 'belief' and 'reasoning' to cover these extensions. So the beliefs and reasonings to be discussed in what follows count as such in correspondingly broad senses. *Reasoning*, for example, is a "cognitive process" that bases a *belief* or "cognitive state" on *reasons*, i.e., on other mental states to which the subject gives some weight, pro or con, in forming or sustaining that belief. 'Basing', finally, is quasi-technical. Ordinarily we would speak more naturally of acting *for* a reason, or of being angry or in some other emotional state *for* a reason. Decisions and beliefs are naturally said to be based on reasons, however, and I am here extending the use of that terminology to cover all cases in which one is in a mental state *for a reason,* or for some reasons. (And it is better yet to speak of one's being in that mental state for a reason *that then "motivates" one* to be in that state. This is to distinguish the case of interest from that in which one is in the state in question "for a reason" only in the sense that "there is" a reason why one is in that state, though it is not a reason that one *has,* much less one that *motivates* one to be in that state.)

reasoning on offer in analytic epistemology. Competing accounts might appeal rather to the truth-reliability of the system of reasoning. How are we to decide among such accounts? Stich uses "… the term *analytic epistemology* to denote any epistemological project that takes the choice between competing justificational rules or competing criteria of rightness to turn on conceptual or linguistic analysis." (578)

Given a system of reasoning in competition with ours, how do we defend our preference for our own? The analytic epistemologist proposes that we engage in conceptual analysis, aiming to elaborate a criterion of rightness for systems of reasoning. With this criterion, we can then assess our system and compare it with competitors.

According to Stich, that is "very wrong." For our evaluative epistemic concepts, such as "justification" and "rightness of reasoning," are themselves likely to vary from culture to culture. (579) So we can hardly defend our own system of reasoning through how well it accords with our criteria of rightness, if criteria of rightness *also* vary culturally. This seems especially problematic if the competing system accords no less well with *its* culture's criteria than does our system with *our* criteria.

Are we driven to a kind of relativism according to which our most basic criteria of rightness determine what is right only relative to *our* culture? Not quite. Indeed this tack would be a "disastrous mistake," since a system of reasoning is assessable by reference to values other than epistemic justification, values such as happiness, prediction, and control. We can ask whether our systems of reasoning foster "… happiness, power, or the rest. And if they do not, we can explore alternatives that do a better job, though there is of course no guarantee that all of these values can be maximized together." (580)

We are told, finally, that "… the program of analytic epistemology views conceptual analysis or explication as a stopping place in disputes about how we should go about the business of cognition." But this is firmly rejected as epistemic xenophobia. Many of us do care whether our system of reasoning

leads to "… beliefs that are true, or give us power over nature, or lead to happiness. But only those with a deep and free-floating conservatism in matters epistemic will care whether their cognitive processes are sanctioned by the evaluative standards that happen to be woven into our language." (581)

Optional criteria of rightness are supposedly woven into a community's language in such a way that adoption of that language imports those criteria, whereas adoption of another language imports competing criteria. To allow linguistic or conceptual analysis to settle which are the right criteria is therefore at bottom simply to insist on our linguistic or conceptual community's optional criteria of rightness. Do we say that these criteria are right *because* they are the ones writ into our language? That now seems tantamount to saying that they are right because they are *ours*, a descent to xenophobic conservatism.

If we cut through the bits about *linguistic* analysis, then the analytic epistemologist is supposed to reason as follows.

(AEA) *Analytic Epistemology Argument (According to Stich)*

1. My system of reasoning, S, is in line with my community's.

2. S is right according to my community's criteria of rightness, C.

3. These criteria of rightness, C, are correct *because* they are endorsed by my community.

4. Therefore, S is right.

To cut through the bits about linguistic analysis is to leave aside reasoning such as the following:

a. Linguistic analysis reveals the meaning content of terms such as 'justified', 'right', and 'correct' as applied respectively to beliefs, systems of reasoning, and criteria of rightness.

b. To adopt a given meaning for such a positively evaluative or normative term involves adopting specific optional criteria or standards that specify substantive conditions for falling within the extension of the term.

c. These terms being positively evaluative or normative, it is part of their semantics that they serve to express pro-attitudes; and adopting them involves adopting general pro-attitudes towards the satisfaction of the relevant substantive conditions.

d. To adopt a language containing such terms is hence *ipso facto* to adopt such optional pro-attitudes.

e. Accordingly, to individually endorse some such pro-attitude *because* it is thus involved in the adoption of the common language is to endorse it *because* it is adopted in common by one's linguistic community, although it is an optional attitude, one *not* shared by other possible and even actual communities.

It is some such reasoning that would show how linguistic analysis, by revealing the meanings of our evaluative or normative terms, thereby reveals optional substantive pro-attitudes. And it is this, presumably, that underlies the charge of xenophobia against analysts. For consider why it is that analysts uphold the meanings of our shared evaluative or normative terms. The reason is that they are the meanings assigned by our linguistic community to these terms expressive of our pro-attitudes. And upholding those meanings is now said to involve upholding also certain optional pro-attitudes. And now these appear to be upheld in virtue of being those commonly adopted by our linguistic community.

Such reasoning requires controversial claims or assumptions, however, prominent among which is (b) that the adoption of a particular meaning for a positively evaluative or normative term necessarily involves adopting some optional standards or criteria yoked by meaning to the relevant pro-attitudes. It is at best controversial that our ordinary normative or evaluative terms thus involve, by their very meaning, certain optional, substantive criteria or

standards. In any case, we can sidestep this controversial issue by focusing directly on the criteria themselves.

Once having discerned the optional criteria, so as to hold them up separately for consideration on their own, the question will remain whether to adopt them. To say that intuition speaks in favor of doing so, either directly or via the deliverances of reflective equilibrium, is now separable from mere ethnocentric xenophobia. For the appeal to intuition *here*, once we are holding the criteria or standards themselves in focus, is quite distinct from any conservative appeal to community consensus. If I believe that 2+2=4 because this is obvious upon consideration, then the reason why I believe it, its obviousness upon consideration, is quite distinct from the fact that everybody else also agrees.

Accordingly, any reasoning based on assumptions such as (b) seems best avoided. And that is why I here put it aside in order to focus on the core of the attack on analytic epistemology as xenophobic, a core that rests on the attribution to analytic epistemology of argument AEA. How then might one conceive of analytic epistemology so that it can avoid AEA?

One project of analytic epistemology is a priori theorizing about the nature, conditions, and extent of human knowledge, rationality, and justification. Other such projects fall under the more naturalist epistemology that studies contingent ways in which we humans can and do satisfy conditions revealed by reflection as necessary for human knowledge of one or another variety. This deepens our understanding of the varieties of human perceptual, or mnemonic, or inferential, or a priori knowledge, et cetera. However that may be, reflection and discussion can be favored as one route to epistemic insight. At least since Plato, philosophical analysis has relied on thought experiments as a way to test hypotheses about the nature and conditions of human knowledge, and other rational desiderata, such as justice, happiness, and the rest.

Any such practice gives prime importance to intuitions concerning not only hypothetical cases but also principles in their own right. The objective is to

make coherent sense of the contents that we intuit, by adopting general accounts that will best comport with those intuitions and explain their truth.

Note that this does not require semantic ascent or specifically *linguistic* analysis any more in philosophy than in mathematics, or even in empirical science. Semantic ascent does have a place in epistemology if only when we attempt to understand persistent disagreement by appeal to ambiguity or context-dependence. Where discussion proceeds smoothly enough, and disagreement is either explicable or recedes through discussion, there semantic ascent is unnecessary.

It would of course be illuminating to understand the sources of rational belief in philosophy generally and in epistemology more specifically. Epistemologists would doubtless welcome the kind of ascent involved in the epistemology of epistemology, where we take up the epistemic standing of our beliefs about epistemic standing. What sort of theorizing is there in epistemology? How do we discover that a belief can be both true and justified without being knowledge, when we had once been so sure of the opposite? It is here that the appeal to intuition seems in place. We feel confident that if someone deduces a true conclusion from a justifiedly believed false premise, his justified true belief in that conclusion will not thereby constitute knowledge. So we can see, in a way that seems intuitively obvious, something previously overlooked: namely, a way in which someone could arrive at a justified true belief that would not thereby constitute knowledge.

Nor need that be a matter of *linguistic* intuition. There is no semantic ascent in the preceding paragraph. We do of course need to presuppose that we have a common understanding of the words I have written, if we are to take ourselves to be communicating properly by means of them. But this is nothing peculiar to philosophy. It is the normal background presupposition of linguistic communication generally. The question is not just whether "knowledge" applies to the protagonist in a certain example. The question is whether the protagonist who satisfied the conditions specified in the example would *know*. To see that

this is the interesting question in epistemology we need only retreat to our own reflection, leaving behind any kind of dialogue, whether in journal, conference, seminar, or hallway, and just entertain the question reflectively *in foro interno*. The question we then consider is whether someone who believed a true conclusion, but only because he had derived it from a justified false belief, would know in believing that true conclusion. We can of course consider *also* whether in our idiolect of the moment it would be correct to apply our word 'knows' to such a justified believer of a truth. But this is a different question, though one now with an equivalent answer.

That the questions are different may be seen by comparing this. If we consider a hypothetical case of a triangle on a plane surface, and we consider whether that triangle is a square we know the answer to that question and we know it because it is intuitively obvious. Of course, one can also consider the question whether the word 'square' in one's idiolect of the moment would apply to that figure. And this is clearly a different question, even if it must receive an equivalent answer.

That I must give the two questions equivalent answers follows from the fact, concerning my idiolect of this moment, that so long as I use this idiolect properly, anything that I correctly characterize as 'square' must be square, and vice-versa. Nevertheless, it is equally obvious that the being square of any figure is a different condition from its being correctly characterizable as 'square' in my idiolect of the moment.

Fine, it may be responded, but still our *way* of knowing the facts of philosophy has to be through knowing facts about proper usage. How unpromising this is may be gauged by comparing the analogous claim about our knowledge of the triangular figure. Do we know that the triangle on our imaginary plane is no square by knowing that our word 'square' does not apply to it? Why ever think this? Surely we don't know an apple we see to be red by knowing that our word 'red' applies to it. The redness of the apple is something different from the applicability of our word, nor do we know the former by

reasoning from the latter. And the same seems true of the squareness of the figure.

Take my knowledge that my word 'square' does not apply to a hypothetical figure that I have stipulated to be a 'triangle'. How indeed do I know that my word 'square' does not apply to that figure, supposing that my word 'triangle' by stipulation does apply to it. Must I not know at a minimum that my word 'square' is a different word from my word 'triangle'? And how do I know *this*? By intuition perhaps? Will it now be said that the way I know this is by knowing that my word for my word 'square', namely ''square'' applies to my word 'square' but not to my word 'triangle'? This way lies vicious regress.

It is hard to avoid appeal to direct intuition sooner or later. I mean intuition that is not just a material mode reflection of some metalinguistic knowledge.

Once we allow direct intuition as a source of data for philosophical reflection, we make room for a way of understanding analytic epistemology that has no truck with the xenophobic conservatism of AEA. According to this alternative, the individual philosopher has intuitive access to data such as the Gettier examples, and can take these data into account in assessing criteria of rightness. Once he shares his thoughts with others, the philosopher may encounter apparent disagreement. And this in a way will also constitute relevant data. If it is real disagreement, not just apparent disagreement in misleading linguistic garb, then some explanation will be desirable. If the thinker's own side of the disagreement is to prevail rationally, then, it will be helpful to have some theory of error, of how the other side has fallen into error. This is one reason why it is better to attain agreement with others who share one's philosophical questions. The reason need not be just xenophobic conservatism. Nor need one think that the very fact of the agreement among *us* is a fundamental source of the justification for the coincident beliefs. On the contrary, the main reason for engaging in dialectic may be to learn from others in an exchange of reasons. Preferably, such discussion will yield agreement, which will save us the trouble of elaborating a theory of error. The explanation of agreement as joint, rational

discerning of a truth is confirmatory of our own belief, which then needs no special defense through a theory of error.

In more recent work Stich has attacked philosophical intuitions directly, with the help of collaborators and with the ostensible support of extensive experimental results. I would like now to discuss these results and the attack based on them.

The project is described and its results reported in "Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions," by Jonathan Weinberg, Shaun Nichols, and Stephen Stich, to whom I will refer collectively as 'WNS'.[3]

WNS have conducted an experimental study of two empirical hypotheses, the truth of which would allegedly pose a "serious problem" for epistemology in the analytic tradition. In particular, each would pose a problem for "Intuition Driven Romanticism." This is any strategy that takes epistemic intuitions as input and delivers epistemic normative claims as output, and does so in such a way that significantly different inputs would yield significantly different output. WNS investigate the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Epistemic intuitions vary from culture to culture.

Hypothesis 2: Epistemic intuitions vary from one socioeconomic group to another.

More strictly, the hypotheses investigated are, presumably, that culture and socioeconomic class affect the epistemic intuitions of members. Accidental variation would have no real bearing. Found variation is relevant only if it cannot be put down to mere chance variation. Moreover it cannot be just *variation* in intuitions that matters. If people from different cultures or socioeconomic

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[3] In <u>The Philosophy of Alvin Goldman</u>, in a special issue of <u>Philosophical Topics</u>, ed. By Christopher S. Hill, Hilary Kornblith, and Tom Senor, Vol. 29, Nos. 1 and 2; pp. 429-61. (Parenthetical page references in the main text will now be to this article.)

groups tend to be interested in different subject matter, this will of course entail difference in actual intuitions, with one group never even considering the contents of interest to the other. Clearly, the relevant variation must pertain to the *same* contents. But even this does not yet adequately specify the relevant variation. For epistemic intuitions may vary from group to group only in strength, or in the numbers of those from the different groups who *share* a given intuition. All such variation is compatible with total agreement across the cultures and socioeconomic groups in the sense that *everyone* from any of the cultures or groups who has an epistemic intuition re <p> agrees on whether p. There may be more or less variation in the strength of the intuition, but either everyone who intuits either way intuits that p or else everyone who intuits either way intuits that not-p. If so, there may remain considerable variation in the number of those who intuit either way or in the strength with which they do so, but whatever such variation may remain does not obviously pose a problem for analytic epistemology.

Presumably, the main problem would derive not just from any such *variation*, but rather from *conflict*. There must be enough people from one side with a strong enough positive intuition in conflict with enough people from the other side with a strong enough negative intuition. What is more, they must have conflicting intuitions on the same contents. Given all this, I have some doubts about the study and its ostensible results.

In each instance the study presented an example to two groups different culturally or socio-economically, who were asked to say whether a protagonist in the example *knew* a certain fact or *only believed* it. Striking statistical variation was found in several instances.

Consider first a few of the examples:

1. (From p. 443.) 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?

REALLY KNOWS   ONLY BELIEVES

2. (From p. 444.) It's clear that smoking cigarettes increases the likelihood of getting cancer. However, there is now a great deal of evidence that just using nicotine by itself without smoking (for instance, by taking a nicotine pill) does not increase the likelihood of getting cancer. Jim knows about this evidence and as a result, he believes that using nicotine does not increase the likelihood of getting cancer. It is possible that the tobacco companies dishonestly made up and publicized this evidence that using nicotine does not increase the likelihood of cancer, and that the evidence is really false and misleading. Now, the tobacco companies did not actually make up this evidence, but Jim is not aware of this fact. Does Jim really know that using nicotine doesn't increase the likelihood of getting cancer, or does he only believe it?

REALLY KNOWS   ONLY BELIEVES

3. (From p. 445.) Mike is a young man visiting the zoo with his son, and when they come to the zebra cage, Mike points to the animal and says "that's a zebra." Mike is right—it is a zebra. However, as the older people in his community know, there are lots of ways that people can be tricked into believing things that aren't true. Indeed, the older people in the community know that it's possible that zoo authorities could cleverly disguise mules to look just like zebras, and people viewing the animals would not be able to tell the difference. If the animal that Mike called a

zebra had really been such a cleverly painted mule, Mike still would have thought that it was a zebra. Does Mike really know that the animal is a zebra, or does he only believe it?

REALLY KNOWS   ONLY BELIEVES

The responses to these and other examples were found to vary significantly with cultural or socio-economic background. It is this that allegedly presents a problem for analytic epistemology. But the following reflections suggest otherwise.

1. It is not clear exactly what question the subjects disagree about. In each case, the question would be of the form: "Would anyone who satisfied condition C with regard to proposition <p> know that p or only believe it?" It is hearing or reading a description of the example that enables the subjects to fill in the relevant C and <p>. But can we be sure that they end up with exactly the same C and <p>?

Here is a reason for doubt. When we read fiction we import a great deal that is not explicit in the text. We import a lot that is normally presupposed about the physical and social structure of the situation as we follow the author's lead in our own imaginative construction. And the same seems plausibly true about the hypothetical cases presented to our WNS subjects. Given that these subjects are sufficiently different culturally and socio-economically, they may because of this import different assumptions as they follow in their own imaginative construction the lead of the author of the examples, and this may result in their filling the crucial C differently. Perhaps, for example, subjects who differ enough culturally or socio-economically will import different background beliefs as to the trustworthiness of American corporations or zoos, or different background assumptions about how likely it is that an American who has long

owned an American car will continue to own a car and indeed an American car. For some if not all of the examples, I can't myself feel sure that C stays constant across the cultural or socio-economic divide. But if C varies across the divide, then the subjects may not after all disagree about the very same content.

2. A second reason for doubt pertains to the choices offered. We are all familiar with multiple-choice tests where we are asked to choose the option closest to the truth. Now, the choices presented to our subjects were just (a) S knows that p, and (b) S only believes [and does not know] that p. But there are other logically possible options that were left out. It is compatible with all the results obtained, that if the test had included a third choice, one that it could logically have included, then there would have been unanimity across all the groups, or at least substantially less divergence. Here is one such third choice: (c) we are not told enough in the description of the example to be able to tell whether the subject knows or only believes. What I am suggesting is that for at least some if not all of the examples, this might be the option of choice across the board, even when subjects import what they can properly import from their background knowledge.

        If this turned out to be so, that would considerably diminish the interest and importance of whatever differences may remain in the distribution of answers across divides.

3. Finally, WNS explain the conflicting intuitions across the East-Asian/Western divide by appeal to what they call *epistemic vectors* (p. 457). East Asians (EAs) are said to be "… much more sensitive to communitarian factors, while Westerners (Ws) respond to more individualistic ones" (451). And the disagreement may now perhaps be explained in a way that casts no doubt on intuition as a source of epistemic justification or even knowledge. Why not explain the disagreement as merely verbal? Why not say that across the divide we find somewhat different concepts picked out by terminology that is either

ambiguous or at least contextually divergent. On the EA side the more valuable status that a belief might attain is one that necessarily involves communitarian factors of one or another sort, factors that are absent or minimized in the status picked out by Ws as necessary for "knowledge." If there is such divergence in meaning as we cross the relevant divides, then once again we fail to have disagreement on the very same propositions. In saying that the subject does not know, the EAs are saying something about lack of some relevant communitarian status. In saying that the subject does know, the Ws are not denying that; they are simply focusing on a different status, one that they regard as desirable even if it does not meet the high communitarian requirements important to the EAs. So again we avoid any real disagreement on the very same propositions. The proposition affirmed by the EAs as intuitively true is not the very same as the proposition denied by the Ws as intuitively false.

In a more recent paper,[4] WNS have responded to this sort of doubt by conceding the possibility of such conceptual variation combined with terminological uniformity, while countering that the variation would still be a problem for analytic epistemology.

> In the philosophical tradition, skepticism is taken to be worrisome because it denies that knowledge is possible, and that's bad because knowledge, it is assumed, is something very important. On Plato's view, 'wisdom and knowledge are the highest of human things' … and many people, both philosophers and ordinary folk, would agree. But obviously, if there are many concepts of knowledge, and if these concepts have different extensions, it can't be the case that *all* of them are the highest of human things. [It has been argued that]… the arguments for skepticism in the philosophical tradition pose a serious challenge to the possibility of having what high SES [Socio-Economic Status], white westerners with lots

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[4] "Meta-skepticism: Meditations in Ethno-epistemology," in S. Luper, ed., The Skeptics (Ashgate, 2003), with a different order of authors, now listed as Nichols, Stich, and Weinberg.

of philosophical training call 'knowledge'. But those arguments give us no reason to think that we can't have what other people—East Asians, Indians, low SES people, or scientists who have never studied philosophy—would call 'knowledge'. And, of course, those skeptical arguments give us no reason at all to think that what high SES white western philosophers call 'knowledge' is any better, or more important, or more desirable, or more useful than what these other folks call 'knowledge', or that it is any closer to 'the highest of human things'. Without some reason to think that what white, western, high SES philosophers call 'knowledge' is any more valuable, desirable or useful than any of the other commodities that other groups call 'knowledge' it is hard to see why we should care if we can't have it.[5]

To my eyes this line of reasoning boils down to the following.

> If what is picked out by the cognates of 'knowledge' in various cultures and socioeconomic groups varies enough, this itself gives rise to doubt that we should continue to value what is picked out by our epistemic vocabulary of "knowledge," "justification," et cetera.

This line of argument I find baffling. I wonder how it is any better than saying to someone who values owning money banks that since others mean river banks by 'banks' his valuing as he does is now in doubt, and that he needs to show how owning money banks is better than owning river banks. Why need he suppose that owning money banks *is* better? He just thinks it's quite good as far as it goes. Maybe owning river banks is also good, maybe even better in many cases. And the same would seem reasonable when the commodities are all epistemic. The fact that we value one commodity, called 'knowledge' or 'justification'

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 245.

among us, is no obstacle to our *also* valuing a *different* commodity, valued by some other community under that same label. And it is also compatible with our *learning* to value that second commodity once we are brought to understand it, even if we previously had no opinion on the matter.

4. Nevertheless, it might be concluded, we do get a real disagreement between the EAs and the Ws when the former insist on communitarian standards for the formation of beliefs while the latter do not. And this raises an interesting question about the content of epistemic normative claims. When we say that a belief is justified, epistemically justified, or even amounts to knowledge, are we issuing a normative verdict that this is a belief one should form or sustain? Might there not be more valuable or important things that we might be doing with our time than forming a belief on that question? Are we even saying so much as this: that if we leave aside other desiderata proper to a flourishing life, and focus only on epistemic desiderata, then we should be forming or sustaining this belief? I doubt that our talk of knowledge and epistemic justification is properly understood along these lines. Just consider the fact that one can obsessively accumulate all sorts of silly facts that one has no business attending to at all, that are not worthy of one's attention. One might out of the blue decide to count the number of coffee beans remaining in one's coffee bag and if one proceeds with due care and diligence one may attain epistemic justification of a very high grade that there are now n beans in that bag. Is this something that one *should* believe at that time? Well, in one clear sense it is *not*. Clearly one should not even concern oneself with that question, so it is false that one should be conducting one's intellectual life in such a way that one then returns an affirmative answer to that question. The whole question is beneath one's notice. One should not be forming *any* opinion, positive or negative, on that question. One has better things to do with one's time, even if we restrict ourselves to properly epistemic concerns.

That being so, it is far from clear that the EA emphasis on communitarian factors will necessarily reveal itself in a proclivity to form beliefs that satisfy such factors, or in a normative approval of beliefs that satisfy such factors, or even in a normative approval of such beliefs once we restrict ourselves to *epistemic* concerns. Silly beliefs about trivial matters can attain the very highest levels of epistemic justification and certain knowledge even if these are not beliefs that one should be bothering with, not *even if* one's concerns are purely epistemic.

Thus, the supposed normativity of epistemology seems rather like the normativity of a *good* gun or a *good* shot. This normativity is restricted to the sphere of guns and shots in some way that isolates it from other important concerns, even from whether there should be guns at all, or shots. At least that seems clear for a discipline of epistemology whose scope is the nature, conditions, and extent of knowledge. If ours is the right model for understanding the normativity proper to such epistemology, then in speaking of a justified belief we are saying something rather like "Good shot!" which someone might sincerely and correctly say despite being opposed to gun possession and to shooting.[6]

And now any vestige of conflict across the divides is in doubt. For now there seems no more reason to postulate such conflict than there would be when we compare someone who rates cars in respect of how economical they are with someone who rates them in respect of how fast they can go.

Even when we take all such considerations into account, clearly we will fall short if we leave out of account the sort of disagreement that divides the superstitious from the enlightened. The enlightened are not just saying that the superstitious value beliefs that satisfy certain conditions (derivation from tea leaves, or crystal balls, or certain writings) such that the enlightened are just

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[6] This leaves open the possibility of a broader concern with the *kind* of knowledge we should seek in a good life. Wisdom might be one such, something closely connected with how to live well, individually and collectively. Another such might be a world view that provides deep and broad understanding of major departments of proper human curiosity, which of course cries out for an account of what makes curiosity proper.

focused on *different* conditions. No, the enlightened *object* to the conditions elevated by the superstitious. But they do not *necessarily* object to the formation of such beliefs as a means to inner peace or community solidarity. They *may* object this way too, but they *need* not, and probably *should* not, at least in some actual cases of primitive cultures, and in many cases of conceivable cultures. What the enlightened object to is the notion that the sort of status elevated by the superstitious constitutes *epistemic* value in the actual world. And this is presumably because they see superstitious status as insufficiently connected with truth.

Compare a culture that loves the way a certain sort of gun sounds, even though it is woefully unreliable and far inferior to bows and arrows. The visiting military advisor need not object to their preference for that sound, nor *need* he object to their taking the gun into battle in preference to their bows and arrows. He need not object to that *all* things considered. That would be at most the business of a political advisor; actually, not even he may be in a position to make any such all-things-considered objection.

The military advisor's advice is restricted to informing his clients on what would produce the best results in the battlefield *with regard to military objectives*. The political advisor's advice would take that into account, but would go beyond it to consider also broader *political objectives*. And of course even that will not cover the full span of considerable objectives.

Something similar seems true of epistemology. Epistemic justification concerns specifically *epistemic* values, such as truth, surely, and perhaps others not entirely reducible to truth, such as understanding.

Even once we put aside inner peace, happiness, solidarity, and technological control, as not properly *epistemic* values, however, various remaining statuses of a belief may still qualify as epistemic, such as the following:

• being true

• being a truth-tracker (would be held if true, not if not true)

• being safe (would not be held unless true)

• being virtuously based (derives from a truth-reliable source)

• being rationally defensible by the believer

• being reflectively defensible by the believer (rationally defensible in respect of the truth-reliability of its sources)

• being virtuously based through a virtue recognized as such in the believer's community (and, perhaps, *properly* recognized as such)

Interestingly enough, it is not just people from different cultures or different socioeconomic groups who apparently diverge in rational intuitions on epistemic questions. Notoriously, contemporary analytic epistemologists have disagreed among themselves, nearly all professors at colleges or universities, nearly all English-speaking Westerners. On one side are internalist, evidentialist, classical foundationalists, on the other externalists of various stripes (process reliabilists, trackers, proper functionalists, some virtue epistemologists). It is increasingly clear, and increasingly recognized, that the supposed intuitive disagreements across this divide are to a large extent spurious, that different epistemic values are in play, and that much of the disagreement will yield to a linguistic recognition of that fact, perhaps through a distinction between "animal" knowledge and "unreflective" justification, on one side, and "reflective" knowledge and justification on the other.