Varieties of Empiricism

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ABSTRACT: *We argue that a sufficiently strong Empiricism calls into question key Quinean doctrines about analyticity and the indeterminacy of translation. This critique of Quine, the arch-Empiricist of the 20th Century, has a paradoxical air about it: under one construal, it looks as though we are using Empiricism to undermine itself. We explain away the air of paradox by highlighting quite distinct facets of traditional Empiricism. Ultimately, we suggest, the combination of an epistemological variety of Empiricism and a doxastic variety of Rationalism might in fact be the most defensible position – depending on how the empirical chips fall.*

1. Introduction

Let us begin with a tempting view. For the time being, we will just call it 'Empiricism', granting that this word has been used in somewhat different ways by other authors:

1. *Empiricism:* No belief can be justified independently of appeal to experience.[1]

By way of stage setting, let us also make a few remarks about what commitment to (1) brings with it.

The central idea is that a necessary court of appeal, in all serious areas of inquiry, is the coherence of one's beliefs with observation and experiment: unless a claim passes muster in this court, it is not known. We should stress, to avoid confusion, that Empiricism, as defined in (1), states only a necessary condition on epistemic justification, and hence on knowledge. It says: no justification without experience. Thus (1) is consistent with there being additional "courts of appeal" that work in conjunction with experience to yield justification. For instance, no matter how radical one's Empiricism, it would be hard to deny that internal (belief-belief as opposed to experience-belief) coherence is also a necessary epistemic virtue; moreover, (1) allows for beliefs which cannot be justified by nonampliative inference from brute observation. Thus (1) is not committed to the idea, endorsed by some radical Empiricists, that

the only task of the empirical investigator is to catalogue observations, without investigating their supposed unobserved causes. Further, Empiricism as we intend is silent on the thesis that knowledge of necessities, generalizations, valid inference rules, etc. cannot come from experience alone.[2] Still, (1) does exclude the view that such things as internal coherence and "pure rational intuition" are themselves sufficient for genuine justification.[3]

A contemporary application of Empiricism, as we intend it, is one variant of "Naturalism" – specifically the view that it is the modern-day natural scientist, employing the canons and norms of natural science, who holds the keys to genuine theoretical understanding. Put into a slogan, the core idea of contemporary Naturalism is this: If you want to limn the contours of ultimate reality, employing the methods of the natural sciences is the only way to do it. Naturalism fits squarely within the broader camp of Empiricism (again, as we intend this term) because, in championing the tools of the natural sciences as the only route to knowledge, it *ipso facto* champions coherence with observation and experiment as a necessary epistemic virtue. On the other hand, though Naturalism entails (1) – because modern day natural science always appeals to experience – (1) does not immediately yield Naturalism. Naturalism only gets supported by (1) to the extent that "experience teaches" that the natural sciences are the premier tool for acquiring highly justified beliefs. But, of course, this is just what contemporary Naturalists suppose experience to have taught us.

As a general epistemological position, (1), especially in its Naturalist guise, is a view one naturally associates with Quine.[4] However, we think that (1), when taken together with certain empirical data, can cause trouble for some of Quine's more famous philosophical theses. Or so we will argue. As a first step, we will focus our attention on his doctrine of the indeterminacy of linguistic translation. That doctrine may sit ill with (1), assuming the empirical data we present are on the right track. That is the first big conclusion: that one can launch an Empiricist critique – a critique employing (1) – of the philosopher often presumed to be the arch Empiricist of the 20th Century. This use of (1), we acknowledge in Section III, has a paradoxical air about it: under one construal it looks like, in offering a broadly empirical critique of Quine, we are using Empiricism against itself – a position of dubious coherence. We explain away this air of paradox in Section IV, by highlighting quite distinct facets of traditional Empiricism. (It is this discussion which yields the title of the paper: "Varieties of Empiricism.")

2. An Empiricist Critique of Quine[5]

Consider the claim in (2):

2. Beyond stimulus meaning, there is nothing to linguistic meaning,

where *stimulus meaning* is characterized strictly behaviorally[6]: roughly, the stimulus meaning of a sentence *S* is the ordered pair of sensory stimulations that would prompt assent to *S* and those that would prompt dissent.[7]

As Quine (1960) has argued, there is a straightforward route from (2) to (3):

3. Linguistic translation is indeterminate.

Given sufficient theoretical creativity, field linguists can produce incompatible translation manuals for any source language, each manual being consistent with all possible behavioral evidence. Some manuals will have "bizarre" target-language translations, others "standard" ones. Yet, if (2) is true, no other evidence for deciding the issue is relevant. Hence there's no fact of the matter as to which manual is *the* correct one. Since the point applies to sentences in *any* language, including our own, we get the result that there's no fact of the matter as to whether, say, 'There's a rabbit' means *There's a rabbit* as opposed to *There's an undetached rabbit-part*, *There's a rabbit stage*, etc.[8]

But we take belief in (2) to be subject to (1): it cannot be genuinely justified independently of experience. The trouble is getting a lock on what non-question-begging empirical grounds might be adduced in support of (2). In fact, there seem to be such grounds against it. In that case, the indeterminacy thesis, (3), which rests on a commitment to (2), may well have to be rejected by anyone with a sufficiently strong attachment to Empiricism.

The empirical grounds we have in mind are pretty familiar. Some have argued that Nativism of some stripe is in fact the best available explanation of certain empirical facts about language acquisition. Consider, for example, satisfaction conditions for a predicate like 'paint'. Clearly more is required to paint something than the application of paint to it: spilling paint on the floor doesn't count as painting the floor. Nor is it sufficient to apply the paint intentionally. If Jill throws a can of paint at a wall, it would be odd indeed to say that she had painted the wall, even though her action was intentional. (Modern performance art might be a different kettle of fish. But let's ignore that.) Is it sufficient to apply the paint intentionally making use of some instrument? Again, it seems not. As Jerry Fodor once pointed out, when the artist dips her brush into a can of paint, she does apply paint to something using an instrument – but, though she "applies paint" to the brush, she doesn't paint the brush! Notice too that the necessary conditions for being a satisfier of 'x painted y' are complicated. You can paint a whole house by painting only (certain sections of) its exterior – that is, it isn't necessary to cover the whole thing in paint. Satisfaction conditions for predicates, then, are indeed intricate. One might add that many logically possible conditions are

excluded by language learners as too "strange," without even having to be considered and rejected. Thus no one would even consider that 'paint x green' required turning the whole object green, inside and out, through and through, by intentionally applying paint with a tool. (Compare 'dye', which does require changing the color through and through.) Or that, to take a leaf from Nelson Goodman, to paint something green is to make it such that it might change color automatically after January 1st 2010.

Yet, second key point, children purportedly learn these complex norms and conditions, and reject logically possible but intuitively "strange" ones, employing very little behavioral evidence. And they do so very quickly, apparently often on the basis of a single exposure. These empirical facts, if such they be, require explanation. The best available one, one might reasonably claim, is that many of the requisite concepts are already in place, "with much or all of their intricacy and structure predetermined," as Chomsky (1992: 113) puts it, so that children don't need to learn the conditions. The child's task is the comparatively simple one of figuring out how the already-present concepts are pronounced in the language spoken around her. But if that is her task, then there is no reason to expect that what she can observe determines, all on its own, her knowledge of linguistic meaning. And if that's true, there's no reason to suppose that linguistic meaning cannot outstrip stimulus meaning. Hence no reason to believe (2).

More generally, the empiricist critique illustrated in the foregoing comments can be put like this. We may characterize a child's acquisition of her native tongue as an input-output relation. The child takes as input certain data, and yields as output linguistic performance. (This characterization should not be objectionable to Quine.) As a matter of empirical fact, the performance yielded as output accords amazingly well with that of her native linguistic community. The question now becomes what the evidential input must be in light of this output. The claim is that it cannot consist merely of behavioral cues. Were that so, children simply would not generally manifest the known output. On the basis of behavior evidence alone, too many incompatible performances would be available as viable options. So one would expect, if behavioral cues alone constituted the input, an enormous variety of performance differences from child to child within any given particular linguistic community. But, again as a matter of empirical fact, there is no such variety; the output performance children generally adopt manifests an astonishing degree of uniformity. Thus, we find empirical grounds for rejecting the thesis that behavioral evidence alone constitutes the relevant input. At this point, the question arises as to how then to understand the input. Certainly, it includes a behavioral component; but there must be more. The hypothesis, with at this point no serious competitor, is that

the input also includes a very large stock of innate concepts and norms. But this hypothesis disconfirms (2).

Notice: the claim isn't that (1) and (2) are in direct conflict. They are not. Taken alone, they are consistent with one another. Instead, the role of (1) is this: it blocks a response to the effect that we know a priori, say on conceptual grounds, the nature of linguistic meaning. Some philosophers could defend (2) in that way. But no one who accepts (1) can employ such a strategy, since it would put at least one issue – namely, the issue of how to understand linguistic meaning– entirely outside the bounds of empirical inquiry.

3. Some Seeming Puzzles

A quick review, before we proceed. We introduced a doctrine, associated with Quine, which we labeled 'Empiricism':

1. *Empiricism:* No belief can be justified independently of appeal to experience.

We then argued that (1), taken together with some empirical observations, may sit ill with some of Quine's key philosophical doctrines. Specifically, we suggested that belief in (2), and hence (3), is open to empirical confutation:

2. Beyond stimulus meaning, there is nothing to linguistic meaning.
3. Linguistic translation is indeterminate.

This critique of Quine, supposedly a paradigm Empiricist, nevertheless remains true to (1) by offering broadly empirical grounds against the indeterminacy of translation. Underlying the argument is the supposition that empirical evidence can be brought to bear on the nature of meaning-facts; and the further supposition that, just possibly, there is empirical evidence in favor of there being meaning-facts which outstrip stimulus-meaning-facts. And if such there be, it is unsurprising that linguistic translation may be just as determinate as other scientific endeavors.

We now present two apparent puzzles that arise out of this line of thought. First, our critique of Quine appeals to innate conceptual apparatus as possibly the best explanation of the astonishing linguistic competence a child manifests after a relatively low degree of behavioral prompting. But such innate endowment seems to run flat against (1). For if Nativism of this sort is correct, then there is surely innate knowledge of analyticities. (As Quine says, the indeterminacy of translation is "of a piece with" the rejection of the analytic-synthetic distinction.) And this, if anything, would certainly count as a priori knowledge. Which seems to contradict (1).

Let us elaborate this latter point a bit. Suppose the Chomskyan explanation of language acquisition is correct. (We do not here take a

stand on that.) Then there will be known meaning-based connections between natural language words. This will occur, for example, when a subject recognizes that the same feature appears in two "Conceptual Structure phrases," each corresponding to a distinct natural language word. (Consider 'kill' and 'cook'. Both will correspond to a phrase, at the Conceptual Structure interface, containing at least AGENT and CAUSE.) It will equally occur when there is recognition of components that are innately linked to one another, in the human "conceptual scheme" – as may be the case between, for instance, AGENT and INTEND. So, empirical work might well show that there are known analyticities by yielding support for Nativism. Indeed, this currently seems to be the direction in which the evidence points. But then there should be things known a priori. Notice, by the way, that many of the items known innately or a priori would be non-linguistic things. For instance, one could say that any competent English speaker knows a priori that if Steve persuaded Mary to leave then Mary decided to leave. This is, we stress, a proposition in the material mode, not the formal mode. Nor would these items be, as it were, merely elements of a "framework" which shapes our cognitions. Rather, if the foregoing is correct, there are certain facts known independently of experience.

The puzzle is, how on earth is this consistent with (1)? How, that is, can we maintain that there might be things known a priori, if we also hold that justification always demands experience? For to say that something is known a priori is precisely to say that it can be known independently of any empirical evidence. That's the first puzzle.[9]

The second is slightly more esoteric. In accord with (1), we hold that whether something is known a priori is itself to be determined by empirical investigation. Put in a seemingly paradoxical way, our position is that whether something is known a priori is known only empirically. To make the puzzle clearer, let us note what the puzzle is not. As long as our point is put in the formal mode – that is, that it is an empirical question whether a given sentence encodes an a priori knowable proposition – the claim, so expressed, should come as no surprise, because which sentences encode which propositions is itself not something knowable a priori. (People are sometimes misled in this respect, because they think only of their native language. But consider how one would justify a claim about whether the sound /**to-do pa-haro vue-la**/ expressed something a priori among people in Montevideo. Clearly, the justification would appeal to empirical observations.) So our view, expressed in the formal mode, isn't especially puzzling. There remains a puzzle, however. The Empiricism we maintain, and which we used to challenge Quine on indeterminacy, leads us to the view that whether a sentence is analytic is to be determined empirically. Yet if the foregoing is correct, that position also leads us to the view that whether the proposition expressed by such

a sentence is known a priori is to be determined empirically. So the puzzle isn't: "How precisely can it be an empirical discovery that a sentence is analytic?" Nor even, "How can it be an empirical discovery that this proposition is encoded by such-and-such sentence, which itself is discovered to be analytic?" That isn't so puzzling. Instead the worry is, how can someone know a proposition a priori, and yet, because of the truth of (1), have to do empirical investigations to discover that the proposition is known a priori? This puzzle arises even if it makes sense to endorse both (1) and the view that certain things are known a priori.

To bring out the puzzle still more clearly, consider an arbitrary proposition p, stipulated to be known a priori. Now consider (4a-b):

4a) p

4b) The proposition p is known a priori

The proposition (4b) is, of course, distinct from p itself – and what we are committed to is that true propositions of the form (4b) are known only empirically. Why is that strange? Well, consider the familiar truism: if an agent S knows q, then S believes q, q is true, and S is adequately justified in believing q. Now there's nothing strange about the suggestion that whether something is believed is an empirical question; the strangeness arises from that suggestion that whether something is *known*, and hence *justified a priori*, is an empirical question. In epistemological circles, to say that a proposition is known a priori is typically to say something about the circumstances under which belief in it is justified, viz., that they ones in which an appeal to experience need not be present. But if experience is not required for justification at this level, what sense can be made of the suggestion that it is required at the next level up? At the very least, some explanation is called for.

4. Overcoming the Puzzles: Three Varieties of Empiricism

How are these puzzles to be resolved? Some headway can be made by first rehearsing some very familiar contrasts: between the cause of a belief and the source of its justification; between an individual and a group; and between an infant and an adult. Keeping these in mind, it's clear that there is a difference between (a) a theory of the justification of a mature group's beliefs and (b) a theory of the causes of an individual's beliefs, from infancy forward.[10] The view with which we began the paper, which we now re-label 'Epistemological Empiricism (General Version)', is best understood as a theory of the former kind. To repeat, it says:

5. *Epistemological Empiricism (General Version):* No belief can be justified independently of appeal to experience.

A rather different doctrine, which we call 'Doxastic Empiricism', provides a theory of the second kind, about the cause of beliefs:

6. *Doxastic Empiricism:* No beliefs are acquired by means of innately given psychological mechanisms, independently of appeal to experience.

This is clearly a different topic from the one addressed by (5): where the former treats of the grounds for justification, (6) takes a stance on the causes of beliefs. Of particular interest to us, given the context of debates about Nativism, this latter view says that the individual infant does not come to have any beliefs, without the requisite experience.

Just introducing these, one can see how the puzzles begin to dissolve. For what we are proposing is that, given (5) plus some empirical observations, there may be good reasons to reject (6) – in particular, reasons to reject (6) as applied to individual infants. That is, according to the former sort of Empiricism, whether Empiricism of the latter sort is true turns out to be an empirical question. And, curiously, the evidence seems not to support the latter sort of Empiricism. Put another way, (5) rules out a priori knowledge, but it certainly does not rule out a priori/innate informational states within the individual infant – to the contrary, (5) entails that this latter issue remains open to empirical considerations.

However promising, the above strikes us as a rather weak-kneed escape route from the puzzles. Happily, we believe that we can do rather better. What we need is another distinction: between a theory of the justification of the intuitive home-truths of commonsense, and one of the justification of the urbane discoveries of theoretical inquiry. Justification of this latter sort –call it "urbane justification"[11]– exhibits features like: having explanatory power; plausibly revealing the objective underlying nature of things; the agent being able to articulate a justification by reflection on the grounds of her belief;[12] playing a part in an interesting and insightful theory; etc. (Quite possibly a proposition could be justified, indeed completely justified, without having any of these features. So urbane justification, as we intend it, is a sub-class of justification, rather than being the contrary of "fake justification.") Given this notion, consider now a third variety of Empiricism:

7. *Epistemological Empiricism (Urbane Version):* No belief can be urbanely justified independently of appeal to experience.

The view in (7) is a more restricted version of (5). It is on the same topic, of course, namely the sources of justification. But, where the former says that there is no justification (and hence knowledge) without experience – which means not for the individual or the group, not for the infant or the adult, not within commonsense or within theorizing – the latter says only that in "urbane" cases, there is no justification without experience. This restricts the domain of the claim, leaving open the possibility of justification without requisite experience in "non-urbane" cases – e.g., in intuitive commonsense matters, from infancy.[13]

Correspondingly, there will be various types of Rationalism. On the one hand, there will be a view about where justification comes from, which will emphasize justification by means of "pure rational intuition" (or something like that, whatever that is) alone. It will see not natural science, but pure mathematics and (maybe) speculative metaphysics as paradigms of genuine knowledge. (Think here of Plato or Leibniz.) On the other hand, there will be a Rationalist view on the rather different topic of the causes of belief – with special focus on the individual's beliefs, from infancy forward. This latter kind of Rationalism will insist on powerful (and probably domain-specific) innate mechanisms, operating over innate contents. So we have:

8. *Epistemological Rationalism (General Version):* Some beliefs can be justified independently of appeal to experience.
9. *Doxastic Rationalism:* Some beliefs are acquired by means of innately given psychological mechanisms, independently of appeal to experience.

And, here again, within Epistemological Rationalism there will be a doctrine which deals specifically not with the intuitive home-truths of commonsense, but with urbanely justified theoretical claims. To wit:

10. *Epistemological Rationalism (Urbane Version):* Some beliefs can be urbanely justified independently of appeal to experience.

Some clarification of these definitions, before we proceed. First, what is involved in the idea of "appeal to experience"? Is it the same in each of these characterizations? We think so. To say that a belief is justified by appeal to experience is to say, roughly, that the sorts of reasons that justify the belief include claims about empirically observed features of the world. And to say that a belief is acquired by appeal to experience is to say that one acquires it on the basis of such claims. By contrast, to say that a belief is justified independently of appeal to experience is to say that the sorts of reasons that justify the belief include no claims about empirically observed features of the world. And to say that a belief is acquired independently of appeal to experience is to say that it acquired (or held) but not on the basis of such claims. The basic notion of "appeal to experience" is thus the same throughout. Most important, however, is the distinction between Epistemological Empiricism (in both varieties) and Doxastic Empiricism. Epistemological Empiricism, like its Rationalist counterpart, pertains to the manner in which the positive epistemic status of beliefs (their being justified, as opposed to unjustified or nonjustified) is acquired, whereas Doxastic Empiricism, like its Rationalist counterpart, pertains only to the manner in which the beliefs themselves are acquired.

Armed with these definitions, recall the first puzzle: How can we maintain that there are genuine analyticities and innate knowledge thereof, and hence things known a priori, if we also hold that justification

always demands experience? There are two possible escape routes. The weaker one, as noted, goes like this: like Quine,[14] we can endorse Epistemological Empiricism in either the General or the more restricted, Urbane, sense. Unlike Quine, however, we see some empirical reasons for adopting (9), Doxastic Rationalism, and rejecting (6), Doxastic Empiricism. Thus the first way out, the weak way, would be to say: when we claim that there is "a priori knowledge," we merely mean to endorse (9). And this does not conflict with (7), or any other doctrine about justification.

We call this the "weak way out" because, according to it, there needn't be any a priori *knowledge*. There might only be a priori/innate *belief*. The stronger way out is to endorse (8) but not (10). Then we could say that there really is a priori knowledge, but it is limited to the realm of such commonsense truths as *cats are animals* and *painting requires agency*. In other words, when it comes to knowledge which involves urbane justification, nothing is a priori.

How might the non-urbane justification involved in a priori knowledge of such commonsense truths as *cats are animals* come about? Here we might appeal to "rational intuition." More intelligibly, we could say that the justification is of an externalist sort, where there is no requirement that the justification-making features of an agent's belief be reflectively accessible to the agent. Take a simple version of Faculty Reliabilism, for example, according to which a belief (only here, a commonsensical belief) is justified for an agent just in case it is the product of one of her (nomologically necessarily) reliable belief-forming faculties. Now consider the commonsense truth *cats are animals*. A competent speaker *S* of English might believe this proposition despite the fact that she is unable to articulate or even fully grasp the semantic connections that make it true. Does this inability render *S*'s belief unjustified? Well, suppose the following turns out to be the case: *S*'s belief that cats are animals is the product of *S*'s language faculty in state *E* (English as an I-language, say), and, as a matter of nomological necessity, such products are generally true. This implies that *S*'s belief is the product of one of her (nomologically necessarily) reliable belief-forming faculties. And this in turn means that, on an externalist account of the sort under consideration, *S*'s belief is justified after all, and hence an item of knowledge, though clearly not of the urbane sort.

The conjunction of (7) and (8) can be made consistent, then, by denying that the a priori knowledge that there is, is urbanely justified. As we would use the term, the true home of urbane justification is the domain of reflective, theoretical (e.g., scientific) inquiry. In contrast, the sorts of things that are believed and known a priori are homely elements of the life-world, not grand discoveries of "underlying Reality."

Why bother, though? That is, why not simply endorse the weak-kneed reply? Because it's useful to at least keep the option of innate knowledge open – something that endorsing (5) would not allow. Precisely because, depending on how the evidence ends up, there may be such knowledge: think of knowing, in the material mode, that if you persuade someone to leave, then they at some point decide to leave; recall too the possibility of externalist justification for innate mental states. We are not here insisting that there is innate knowledge. But it seems to us an open (and yes, partly empirical) question, for which there is some substantial supporting evidence. Better, then, to allow for this, by distinguishing (5) from its weaker cousin (7). If, all things considered, our philosophical descendants end up concluding that there are (at best) only innate "informational states," none of which is justified in any useful sense, then one can adopt the weak-kneed strategy. Notice also that a happy side effect of seeing things this way is that, whether or not our commonsense world view is "trapped" or "constrained" by innate categories, it will not be the case that our scientific theories are so "trapped." This because the scientific concepts really are constructed, on the basis of experience. Thus one distasteful (apparent) consequence of Nativism – i.e., innate restrictions on our concepts – is overcome.

To sum up our solution to the first puzzle, then: given the three-way distinction introduced above, it is open to us to say that a priori or innate belief-states, though they lack positive urbane epistemic status independently of appeal to experience, may nonetheless be justified in a non-urbane but real enough way, and hence really count as instances of knowledge. This is perfectly compatible with acceptance of (7), which only requires that if such beliefs acquire a positive urbane epistemic status, it comes by way of appeal to experience.

But what about the worrisome line of reasoning in the second of our puzzles? Before addressing that, let us introduce a few more labels.

11. A belief is *epistemically a priori* just in case it can be justified independently of appeal to experience.
12. A belief is *urbanely epistemically a priori* just in case it can be urbanely justified independently of appeal to experience.
13. A belief is *doxastically a priori* just in case it is acquired by means of innately given psychological mechanisms, independently of appeal to experience.

We maintain that the puzzling reasoning does work for urbanely epistemically a priori beliefs. If the belief that p is urbanely epistemically a priori, then belief in (14) will likely be urbanely epistemically a priori as well:

14. The belief that p is urbanely epistemically a priori.

If one knows p at all, in the way that urbane justification demands, then one is reflectively sensitive to the fact that the conditions under which

one's belief is justified do not require appeal to experience. Thus belief in (14), like belief in *p* itself, will presumably be urbanely epistemically a priori. But this isn't a problem for us, because we're not talking about knowing whether a belief is urbanely epistemically a priori. We're talking about knowing whether it is doxastically a priori. (Or maybe, whether it's epistemically a priori in some non-urbane sense.)

Speaking of which, take a doxastically a priori belief that *p*. To find out that it is doxastically a priori, one has to study things like child development, the natural language sentences which encode it, etc. So, even if the belief that *p* is doxastically a priori, belief in (15) is very unlikely to be urbanely epistemically a priori:

15. The belief that *p* is doxastically a priori.

That is, (15) is established empirically. (That is the view we are urging against the Quine we have portrayed, both in the analyticity debate, and in the debate about how the child's knowledge of language develops.) The distinction between doxastic, epistemic and urbanely epistemic a priority thus equally resolves the second puzzle.

5. Concluding Remarks

Time for some conclusions. The "small conclusion" is this: given the direction in which the evidence seems to be pointing, some of Quine's central philosophical doctrines, at least as we have presented them, might have to be rejected on broadly empirical grounds. As we put the point above, Empiricism as expressed in (1) – or rather, as more cautiously formulated in (7) – apparently sits ill with some of Quine's other views, once certain data are allowed in.

1. *Empiricism:* No belief can be justified independently of appeal to experience.
7. *Epistemological Empiricism (Urbane Version):* No belief can be urbanely justified independently of appeal to experience.

Let us stress: our "small" conclusion is not that Quine's apparent views on these matters have already been empirically refuted. It's early days yet to definitively conclude, for instance, that there are many innate concepts, analyticities, and non-stimulus meaning-facts. There is, we think, some evidence for this. But it's far from "knock down." Nor can we even conclude, definitively, that early behaviorist learning theories were fundamentally incorrect, and hence that the indeterminacy thesis is without foundation – though there's really a great deal of evidence against such behaviorist learning theories. But, great deal of evidence or not, these too are empirical matters, in which definitive conclusions are, sadly, rather hard to come by. So what is our "small" conclusion, if it's not that Quine has been shown wrong about analyticity and indeterminacy? It's merely that there is some empirical evidence that he is mistaken about

these things – and, still more interestingly, that he himself must count this empirical evidence relevant.

The big conclusion is that, in a sense, Empiricism really can be used to slay Empiricism! Whether it ultimately does depends on how the empirical chips fall. But there is no genuine puzzle in this, since what is really going on is the employment of (7), a doctrine about urbane justification, to slay (6), a doctrine about developmental psychology. (We also suggest its use to reject, tentatively, doctrine (5), on the grounds that there really may be some things which are known a priori – albeit not in the urbane sense. But we're even less sure about that.) What we emphatically do not do is use (7) to slay itself – that really would be paradoxical. Perhaps the general conclusion can be put this way: if we are right, rejection of Epistemological Rationalism of the urbane sort doesn't mean that the traditional Rationalists got it all wrong. For example, perhaps despite Plato's somewhat unhappy view of urbane justification – according to which use of the senses actually tends to lower one's level of justification – traditional Rationalists were quite correct about certain fundamental aspects of human psychology. Whether they were right about that, however, is itself an empirical question. Or so we maintain.

Notes

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[1] Here and throughout, talk of the justification of belief refers exclusively to the *epistemic* justification of belief, i.e. the sort of justification involved in the generation of knowledge. Hence, from the fact that a belief is unjustified in the sense of 'justified' we employ in this paper, it doesn't follow that the belief is unjustified or unreasonable in some other (e.g. pragmatic) sense. An athlete's epistemically unjustified belief that she will win an upcoming competition, for example, may well be reasonable in so far as it increases her chances, however slight, of emerging the victor.

[2] Hence the force of (1) would not be vitiated even if the anti-radical-empiricism arguments in, e.g., BonJour (1998) and Bealer (1992) proved sound.

[3] We should also note that mathematical knowledge may be an exception to (1). But if it is, it is not an exception which matters for our purposes. For a contemporary defense of the view that mathematics is much more empirical than is generally thought, see Kitcher (1983).

[4] See, for example, Quine 1969; Quine 1970, Chapter 3; and Quine 1990, Chapter 1.

[5] In what follows we present one reading of Quine. While we think it is a reading with considerable textual support, we want to emphasize here at the outset that our concerns are not exegetical. Our real point could be made talking about Quine*. The relation between Quine and Quine* is of almost no interest to us. Whether Quine* is correct, on the other hand, is of enormous interest – to us, and to philosophy of language, mind and knowledge.

[6] Thus Quine admits that the indeterminacy thesis is a consequence of his *behaviorism*. (Quine 1987: 5)

[7] See Quine 1960, Section 8.

[8] Which implies that the sentence means nothing at all, as meaning is pretheoretically construed, for so construed it certainly does mean the former *as opposed to* the latter. For more on Quine's nihilism with respect to the pretheoretic concept of meaning, see Stainton 1996, Section 4.6.

[9] Here is another way of stating the puzzle. We take (1) to apply to the statement that there is a priori knowledge. (Call this statement A.) Worse, it seems that, once we investigate A empirically, as (1) tells us we should, we find that A is true! But A flatly contradicts (1). Or so it seems. That's the puzzle.

[10] Which isn't to say, of course, that the causal origins of a belief are inevitably irrelevant to its justification.

[11] In an earlier draft, we called this "robust justification." But this term has the unfortunate connotation that the alternative kind, non-robust justification, is somehow frail and inadequate – which is not our view. We thus now employ the term 'urbane justification', since it captures the idea that the mode of justification is refined and special, without necessarily being stronger.

[12] In this respect, our distinction between non-urbane and urbane justification is similar to Ernest Sosa's distinction between the "aptness" and the "justification" of belief, and hence to his distinction between "animal" and "reflective" knowledge. See Sosa (1991: 270ff).

[13] In the spirit of Quine, it might be suggested that the distinction between non-urbane and urbane justification is one of degree, on the grounds, for example, that the home-truths of common sense are in fact (primitive) *theoretical posits*. We needn't view matters commonsensical in that way; in any case, that a distinction is partly one of degree does not render it uninteresting or trivial.

[14] In so far as Quine is an eliminativist about intentional states in general it would be inappropriate to saddle him with Epistemological Empiricism as just characterized (in terms of beliefs). But we could reconstrue the position in terms of sentential assent, etc. By the way, these eliminativist positions of Quine's are also subject to empirical test, if (1) is correct. As are, for instance: the doctrine that there is no middle-ground between hyperintensional contexts (e.g., quotation) and transparent contexts; the doctrine that meaning is radically holistic; etc.

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