

Chapter 7

Introduction



Joel Katzav and Dorothy Rogers

1 **Abstract** We introduce the key ideas of foundationalist, coherentist and pragmatist
2 theories of knowledge. We then use these ideas as background for presenting the
3 work on knowledge and perception in this part, work by Grace Andrus de Laguna
4 and Marie Collins Swabey. We will see that these authors critique the idea of sense
5 data that was central to the foundationalist theories of knowledge of Bertrand Russel
6 and other early analytic thinkers, though de Laguna's critique leads to perspectivism
7 about perception and knowledge while Swabey rejects perspectivism. So too, we
8 will see that de Laguna and Swabey develop epistemologies with strong coherentist
9 elements, much as did their idealist teacher James Edwin Creighton. De Laguna's is
10 a sophisticated form of naturalism that is built on a critique of pragmatist naturalism
11 and is similar to the one made famous later by Willard V. Quine. Swabey rejects
12 all forms of naturalism, arguing that knowledge requires an a priori foundation in
13 reason.

14 7.1 Introduction

15 Foundationalism about justification is the view that some of the items we are justified
16 about, e.g., some of our ideas, beliefs or judgements, are justified without argument or
17 inference. Moreover, these non-inferentially justified items are the foundations for the
18 rest of what we are justified about. Anything that is inferentially justified is justified
19 by inference from non-inferentially justified items. Coherentist about justification
20 is the view that none of the items we are justified about are justified without infer-
21 ence. On such a view, our beliefs, say, are justified by being part of a coherent set of

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beliefs; beliefs are inferentially related to each other and thus support each other, and our beliefs are justified because they together form a system of mutually supporting beliefs. The relationship between knowledge and justification is complex but, in what follows, we shall assume that when our justified items fulfill certain conditions, such as being true, they comprise knowledge. Thus, foundationalism/coherentism about justification is supposed to come with foundationalism/coherentism about knowledge.

Many absolute idealists working at the turn of the twentieth century were coherentists (about justification and knowledge). The absolute idealist, James Edward Creighton, is an example. On his view, whenever we make a new judgement, we are bringing some new item of experience into an inferential relation with all our previous judgements and testing our new judgement against all those previous judgements (Creighton, 1898; Katzav, 2022). The turn of the twentieth century also saw the emerging analytic tradition providing a foundationalist alternative to the idealist, coherentist epistemology. Two of the most influential analytical figures were George E. Moore and Bertrand Russell. Russell thought that our beliefs about material objects are inferentially justified. Moreover, on his view, these beliefs are justified by our immediate perception of sense data (Irvine, 2004). On such a view, we are immediately aware of how things appear or seem and these seemings comprise sense data, for example, patches of colour, short stretches of sound and tactile sensations of smoothness. On the basis of this data, we justifiably infer the existence of material objects, e.g., the chair we are sitting on or a friend. Moore and other early members of the analytic tradition, such as Alfred J. Ayer and Charles D. Broad, endorsed the idea of sense data (Hatfield, 2021). Intuitively, the fact that material objects often look differently from the way they are, suggests that we cannot perceive them directly but only indirectly on the basis of sense data.

Another rival to absolute idealist coherentism came from pragmatists such as John Dewey and William James (de Laguna & de Laguna, 1910). The pragmatists shared the view that human cognition is a tool that evolved to handle concrete problems in specific circumstances. As a result, a proper understanding of philosophical and scientific problems is to be found in the guidance they offer to behaviour in specific circumstances. Beliefs are thus to be thought of as concrete guides to behaviour, linking specific stimulus conditions, that is, specific perceptions, with specific behaviours. On such a view, beliefs are not justified by their fit within a system of beliefs or by their being supported by foundational beliefs. Rather, a belief is justified by its ability to resolve uncertainty about how to behave in a specific situation.

In the first pair of essays in this part, Marie Collins Swabey and Grace Andrus de Laguna focus on how to understand perception and, to some extent, on how perception relates to knowledge. They both critique the idea that perception involves sense data, though de Laguna's critique comes with a perspectivist view of knowledge and perception while Swabey rejects perspectivism. In the second set of essays, the same authors look more directly at the broader question of the nature of knowledge. This set of essays counters foundationalism and pragmatism. However, de Laguna's rejection of these positions, which we will see is developed with her

67 husband, Theodore, is naturalistic while Swabey rejects all forms of naturalism.
 68 Naturalism tells us that human knowledge is to be investigated by the same empiri-
 69 cal means as all phenomena. Swabey's position is supernaturalistic, emphasizing
 70 the importance of knowledge of reality that is a priori, that is, knowledge of reality
 71 possessed independently of sense perception.

72 Importantly, the four essays by the two speculative women are part of a broader,
 73 idealist and pragmatist inspired, critique they and other women and men offer of
 74 the idea that knowledge is built on the foundation of a non-inferentially given (see,
 75 e.g., de Laguna & de Laguna, 1910; (Grace) de Laguna 1916; Swabey 1930; Katzav,
 76 2023). Within the analytic tradition, the critique of the idea of an epistemically
 77 given starts later, with Otto Neurath in the late 1920s, and only really gains force
 78 towards the middle of the twentieth century, with authors such as John L. Austin and
 79 Wilfred Sellars (Hatfield, 2021; Uebel, 2021). Perhaps the most influential rejection
 80 of foundationalism within that tradition came with Willard V. Quine's work in the
 81 middle of the twentieth century. As we will see, he reprises ideas from de Laguna,
 82 while Swabey's critique of naturalism is reprised by critics of Quine's naturalism.

83 7.2 Swabey on Perception and Knowledge

84 In 'Mr. G. E. Moore's Discussion of Sense-Data' (1924), Swabey considers what
 85 role sense data might have in justifying beliefs. She explores this question through
 86 an examination of Moore's paper, 'The Status of Sense-Data' (Moore 1914, pp. 357–
 87 358). One of Moore's main questions in there is: what is the relationship between
 88 sensibles—Moore called sense data 'sensibles'—and physical objects? He aimed to
 89 answer this question by assuming that we know, with certainty, that certain claims
 90 about sensibles are true and figuring out what interpretation of the claims explains
 91 their truth and certainty. The interpretation that explains their truth and certainty,
 92 according to Moore, is the correct one (ibid., 370–373). Thus, for example, Moore
 93 assumes that, when seeing two circular coins lying on the ground at a distance, it is
 94 true that our sense data are of two coins rather than of images or hallucinations, and
 95 that the coins are circular, though their sense-data are elliptical. We are to ask how
 96 these truths might be interpreted so as to explain their truth and our certainty about
 97 them.

98 Swabey, however, disagrees with Moore that we are entitled to assume that such
 99 common sense truths are known with certainty (1924, 467–469; this volume). Her
 100 first objection is that, in order to relate a sensible to a physical object, one must
 101 identify the sensible as a certain type of sensible, e.g., as a sensible of a physical
 102 object rather than an image or hallucination. But such identification is always subject
 103 to correction by subsequent experience. So too, our 'certainty' regarding sense data
 104 is merely psychological, reflecting our inability to control them rather than their
 105 evidential veracity. She thus rejects Moore's view that knowledge starts with certainty
 106 about sense data and, by implication, his assumption that we should develop a theory
 107 of knowledge by analysing certainties about sense data. She proposes instead that

108 our minds are not passive. Knowledge is not simply an “acquiescence” to sense
 109 experience, as many foundationalists would have us believe. In her view, our theory
 110 of knowledge needs to recognize the active role of our minds in drawing conclusions
 111 about the nature of reality.

112 Yet she recognizes that this leaves open the question of how to understand the
 113 relationship between sensibles and physical objects. She, accordingly, considers the
 114 four options presented by Moore in his paper, of which we consider the two main
 115 ones. The first main option, which she rightly notes was popular at the time, is
 116 phenomenalism and tells us that claims about physical objects are to be analysed using
 117 conditionals of the form “*if* certain conditions were fulfilled, I or some other person,
 118 should directly apprehend certain other sensibles” (1924, p. 469; this volume). Talk
 119 about the existence of the coins I can perceive is then to be analysed in terms of talk
 120 about the coin-related sensations we would have when, e.g., walking into the room.

121 One worry here is that, when it comes to affirming the existence of objects prior to
 122 their being perceived, we would be interpreting what we say about the past in a way
 123 that is strongly contrary to what we mean. Thus, saying that certain coins existed
 124 before our perception of them would be interpreted as saying that if certain unrealized
 125 conditions were realized, certain sensations would be had that we did not actually
 126 have. But the statement that the coins existed does not really say how physical objects
 127 differ from mere sensibles and thus does not say that the physical object has to do
 128 with possible but not actual sensibles. Another worry about the conditional analysis
 129 is that saying that objects existed before being perceived does not tell us anything
 130 about the conditions under which any sensations would be had. So, the analysis in
 131 such cases really is that if certain unspecified conditions were fulfilled and if we had
 132 certain sensibles, they would be of a certain sort (the sort associated with coins). And
 133 there is no justification for asserting this conditional. We have no idea what to expect
 134 in unspecified conditions. Moore, Swabey notes, agrees that we should reject such
 135 an interpretation of assertions about physical objects (1924, pp. 469–470).

136 The second main option considered by Swabey and Moore is representational
 137 realism, which is standardly attributed to John Locke. On representational realism,
 138 our sense data are caused by physical objects and, in some respects but not others,
 139 resemble physical objects. Typically, it is assumed that the resemblance extends to
 140 extension and shape but not to colour. Swabey takes Moore to be non-committal but
 141 to have an inclination to prefer this view over the others he considers. She, however,
 142 rejects it as it seems to imply that we can never know whether physical objects exist
 143 never mind exist and resemble our ideas of them. After all, representational realism
 144 tells us that we are never directly aware of physical objects and thus implies that we
 145 are never in a position to compare our sense data with their physical causes (1924,
 146 pp. 470–471; this volume).

147 Fortunately, Swabey proposes a position not considered by Moore. On her view,
 148 what makes an object an object is that, by its nature, it is subject to the laws of thought
 149 and to laws of nature. This, she argues, means that the natures of objects are such
 150 that they will, if they exist, feature in a network of interrelationships with each other,
 151 a network that exhibits uniform patterns. Crucially, sensibles, whatever their nature,
 152 will also be subject to the laws of thought and to laws of nature. Thus, the apparently

153 subject-relative or non-objective sense data are subsumed in an objective order, one
 154 that in fact makes no essential reference to subjects or experience, and that exhibits
 155 permanence. Sense data, conceived of as private objects of immediate awareness are
 156 thus excluded from Swabey's ontology (Swabey, 1924, pp. 472–473; this volume;
 157 1930, pp. 258–259).

158 In summary, Swabey rejects the idea, then popular among analytic philosophers,
 159 that knowledge is justified by perception of sense data. Perceptual knowledge is
 160 always fallible and ultimately tested by how it stands up in a system of judgements.
 161 Indeed, Swabey is elsewhere clear that justification is always inferential and is,
 162 ultimately, a matter of systematicity (1930, pp. 83, 153–159). There is, nevertheless, a
 163 non-coherentist element in Swabey's view of knowledge. On her view, what justifies
 164 our inferences about perceivable objects is in part a priori knowledge that these
 165 objects do feature in a logic and law-abiding universe. Empirical judgement thus has
 166 a foundation that is a priori. A priori judgements are at the same time justified by
 167 their coherence with each other (see Part III: 'Scientific Knowledge', p. 115).

168 7.3 De Laguna on Appearance and Knowledge

169 In 'Appearance and Orientation' (1934) de Laguna addresses the nature of perception
 170 and of knowledge. Moreover, she too, like Swabey, rejects the idea of sense data,
 171 albeit on different grounds.

172 De Laguna's solution to the puzzle of how we manage to perceive objects them-
 173 selves despite the fact that they look, or more broadly appear, differently to different
 174 perceivers is to turn to perspectivism, a move that is especially fitting for a philosopher
 175 who crossed disciplinary boundaries, particularly between philosophy and anthro-
 176 pology. In philosophy, perspectivism has an important place in the phenomenological
 177 tradition and, in the last few decades, has become an important position in the philoso-
 178 phy of science (Berghofer, 2020). A version of it was introduced in anthropology by
 179 Eduardo Viveiros de Castro in the 1990s, as an alternative to relativism and continues
 180 to be under discussion within the social sciences (Heywood, 2020). In her discus-
 181 sion of perspectivism, de Laguna asserts that knowledge, including as a special case
 182 perception, is always from a standpoint (1934, pp. 72–73; this volume). We never
 183 know things in themselves, but only aspects of things from our own perspectives.
 184 Perception is one such perspective. Recognizing that she has affirmed a kind of rela-
 185 tivism, de Laguna further asserts that the reality of perspective itself is objective,
 186 because perspectives are objective, insofar as they always have objects as constitu-
 187 tive ingredients, and because the characteristics of objects revealed in perspectives
 188 really belong to the objects. The perspective belongs to the subject and to the object
 189 in tandem. It is a relationship between the two that is constitutive of each—percep-
 190 tient and perceived. The object is inherently something that appears thusly to agents
 191 with the appropriate apparatus and the converse is the case for the agent. percep-
 192 tion itself is thus *not* mere presentation/appearance. Instead, it is apprehension of an

193 object/entity from a given standpoint. Neither is perception simply a set of circum-
 194 stances or “external fact” in which a person encounters the object/entity before them.
 195 Instead, perspective is “a factor internal to perception” (1934, p. 73; this volume). De
 196 Laguna underscores this point. Perspective/standpoint is not an object-as-it-presents-
 197 itself (an outdated metaphysical claim about sensation/experience), but instead is the
 198 object-as-experienced by a percipient.

199 De Laguna further establishes (1934, p. 73; this volume) her own position on the
 200 nature of experience/perception: (1) Everything is apprehended from a standpoint.
 201 There are no “sensibles” as in Moore’s system—no “bare given,” no “datum” that
 202 is unmediated, then cognitively synthesized by us. (2) A given percipient perceives
 203 from a standpoint, which may mean they perceive only aspects of an object/entity,
 204 yet they *do* perceive how the object really is, from their *own* standpoint. And in this
 205 sense, their knowledge is unique.

206 While Swabey’s motivation for rejecting sense data is epistemological, de
 207 Laguna’s, at least in this article, is conceptual (1934, p. 74; this volume). The sense
 208 datum theorist wants to distinguish between the real circular shape of, say, a penny
 209 and the penny’s apparent one. When we see a circular penny from an angle, for
 210 example, we do indeed see that it is circular but, says the sense datum theorist,
 211 what is really going on here is that we are immediately aware of an ellipse and our
 212 imagination recognizes this ellipse as belonging to a series of shapes that are the
 213 various appearances of a circle. Such a theory is conceptually untenable because an
 214 ellipse too appears differently from different angles, so that our imagination would
 215 be required to identify the ellipse as being part of a series of appearing shapes. We
 216 are thus led to an infinite regress of imaginings and, at no point can we make sense
 217 of an immediate apprehension of anything.

218 Thus, although we make use of analogies like “ideas” or “images” in our discus-
 219 sion of perception/knowledge, de Laguna is clear that perceptions are not ideas or
 220 images in the traditional sense within epistemology. Instead, they are psychological
 221 representations, which are not “before” our mind (which would be to characterize
 222 the mind as passive) but are relations constitutive of perceptual states. In her view,
 223 this establishes the mind as an *active* entity that engages with other entities in the
 224 world, perceives and makes sense of reality.

225 De Laguna concludes by considering why it is that, despite the fact that all percep-
 226 tion is perspectival, we mistakenly tend to think of only one perspective as giving
 227 us the real shape of what is perceived. Here, she acknowledges that there is a privi-
 228 leged standpoint in perception but offers a psychological explanation for this rather
 229 than one that appeals to what is real. When we say that a penny is circular, we do
 230 implicitly refer to a perspective, namely that in which the penny appears right in front
 231 of us and in a plane perpendicular to the line of our vision. We ordinarily suppress
 232 reference to this perspective because it is a perspective in which objects are best
 233 perceived, because it is one in which we are well balanced and because it is the one
 234 from which we cannot ‘catch’ an apparent shape. None of this, claims de Laguna,
 235 indicates that the privileged perspective is the one real or ontologically privileged
 236 perspective (1934, pp. 74–76; this volume).

237 One might be tempted to respond to de Laguna that science provides us with a
 238 privileged perspective. For example, it can tell us what the shape of the penny is
 239 using measurements, and thus vindicates the view that some perceptual perspectives
 240 are ontologically preferred. But this would be to beg the question against de Laguna.
 241 She thinks that the different sciences also provide no more than perspectives. She
 242 argues that when scientists evaluate their claims they only do so for specific purposes
 243 and thus only reveal aspects of reality relevant to those purposes (de Laguna & de
 244 Laguna, 1910; Katzav, 2022).

245 In summary, de Laguna's critique of the idea of sense data supplements Swabey's
 246 critique. And thus, although de Laguna is not primarily concerned with what serves to
 247 justify our beliefs in presenting her view of perception, it does bring with it a critique
 248 of the kind of foundationalism found in the writings of Russell. However, de Laguna's
 249 commitment to perspectivism also indicates that she and Swabey disagree funda-
 250 mentally and thus must ultimately develop their theories of knowledge in different
 251 directions. While Swabey's epistemology indicates that, on her view, what we are
 252 developing is a single, unified understanding of nature as governed by a single set
 253 of laws, de Laguna's perspectivism indicates that no such single perspective is to be
 254 had. In particular, no further development of science can eliminate the perspective
 255 of perception.

256 7.4 De Laguna's Naturalistic Critique of, and Alternative 257 to, Pragmatism

258 In *Dogmatism and Evolution: Studies in Modern Philosophy* (1910), de Laguna and
 259 her husband co-authored a critique of pragmatism. A particularly important part of
 260 this critique is found in the chapter 'Pragmatism and the Form of Thought', which
 261 is included here. In this chapter, the de Lagunas target the core pragmatist claim that
 262 thought has as its function addressing concrete problems in specific circumstances.
 263 An important implication of this general claim is the claim that formal logic cannot
 264 provide general rules for reasoning and thus does not allow evaluating instances of
 265 reasoning for validity apart from how these instances guide behaviour in the specific
 266 circumstances in which they occur. Reasoning, according to the pragmatist, does not
 267 have some kind of intrinsic validity (ibid., pp. 202–203; this volume).

268 We here follow Katzav (2022) in presenting the de Lagunas' position and argu-
 269 ment. As the de Lagunas understand the pragmatist view, it tells us that each concept
 270 is merely a function that links specific stimuli and with specific responses. A concept
 271 merely tells us that, in such and such external circumstances, such and such actions
 272 should be taken to attain such and such a goal. The de Lagunas agree that part of
 273 the meaning of a concept has to do with its *import*, that is, with how it links stimuli
 274 and behaviour. However, they think this link is not direct, so that the meaning of a
 275 concept has another dimension, its *content*. On their view, the content of a concept is

276 fixed by the concept's place in a system of concepts, more specifically by the logical
277 relations it bears to other concepts. As they put it,

278 the reference of a concept to a mode of conduct is never direct. The concept never directly
279 bridges the gap between stimulus and response. On the contrary, thought is a long-circuiting
280 of the connection, and its whole character depends upon its indirectness, its involution, if
281 we may use the term. Though concepts, apart from the conduct which they prompt, mean
282 nothing, yet their meaning is never analyzable except into other concepts, indirect like the
283 first in their reference to conduct. (1910, p. 206; this volume)

284 Thus, in order to understand the concept of a coat, we need to understand other
285 concepts, such as those of clothing, bodies, arms, sleeves, shirt and the like. In turn,
286 an understanding of these concepts, requires an understanding of yet further concepts.
287 And our understanding of a system of concepts includes our ability to see how they
288 are related, e.g., to see that if something is a coat, it is an item of clothing or can
289 be used as protection from the elements. What this implies is that a concept only
290 links stimuli and a response via a host of assumptions or beliefs. The view that the
291 meaning of a concept depends on the system of concepts to which it belongs is called
292 meaning holism.

293 Meaning holism implies that there is no simple correlation of stimuli and response.
294 Instead,

295 [a] concept is never univocal in its reference to a mode of conduct; that is to say, its meaning
296 is never limited to the correlation of a certain type of stimulus with a certain response. On
297 the contrary, its import invariably embraces a variety of actions. (1910, p. 205; this volume)

298 Meaning holism also, according to the de Lagunas, implies confirmation holism,
299 the view that our beliefs are tested in systems rather than individually. Moreover,
300 confirmation holism implies fallibilism, that is, the view that all our beliefs, including
301 those of logic itself, are tentative. Why so? When our behaviour does not lead to the
302 results we expect, we can in principle blame any of the assumptions we made that led
303 to that behaviour, so that it is the system of relevant assumptions that is effectively
304 tested by the frustration of our expectations. Similarly, because no belief is tested in
305 isolation, no belief is immune from revision. In the de Lagunas own words:

306 [e]very concept involves an indefinite number of problems; and these cannot be stated except
307 in terms which themselves in turn involve indefinite series of problems. Nowhere is there
308 an absolute given, a self-sufficient first premise. From this, as well as from the indirect and
309 equivocal nature of the reference of thought to conduct, it follows that the confirmation or
310 invalidation of a concept by the result of the conduct which it serves to guide can itself be
311 no more than tentative. (1910, p. 206; this volume)

312 A further implication of the de Lagunas' argument is that there is, after all, a
313 non-pragmatic element to evaluating our hypotheses. While they acknowledge that
314 all beliefs are revisable in light of experience, and thus that, strictly speaking, there
315 is no such thing as truth by virtue of meaning, they note that the indirect nature of
316 thought implies that thought must have a structure that is relatively independent of
317 our future behaviour. Only if the logical relations between concepts are relatively
318 stable, can our conceptual system guide our behaviour across a diversity of contexts.

319 Indeed, we need something like formal logic if reasoning is to work at all. As they
320 put it,

321 with respect to thought and conduct it must be said that the very indirectness and equivocality
322 of the reference of the former to the latter gives thought a character of its own, which is as
323 independent of aught beyond as can well be imagined (1910, p. 207; this volume).

324 Thus, already in 1910, (Grace) de Laguna rejects foundationalism for a view that gives
325 coherence within a system of beliefs centrality in all justification. Her 1934 arguments
326 against sense data discussed above are a more specific critique of foundationalism
327 than her 1910 criticism of it. Indeed, the appeal to coherence in 1910 is also more
328 radical, given that even the beliefs of logic are revisable. At the same time, de Laguna
329 may not be offering a purely coherentist view of justification. Perhaps she agrees with
330 the pragmatist that a concept's actual success in guiding behaviour, which is captured
331 by its import, also has a role in determining whether it is justified.

332 As Katzav (2022) points out, de Laguna here articulates a sophisticated alternative
333 to foundationalism that later came to be associated with Quine's influential 1951
334 paper 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism.' But, as Katzav also points out, de Laguna
335 goes beyond Quine's paper in a variety of ways. For example, while Quine does not
336 explain why logic has, despite everything, a special status, de Laguna's critique of
337 pragmatism comes with such an explanation.

338 7.5 Swabey's Critique of Naturalism

339 Swabey contributed to the discussion of realism, naturalism, and pragmatism with a
340 chapter on 'The General Nature of Reason' in her book *Logic and Nature* (1930). She
341 opens by asserting that reason must be understood either as one of/as a function of
342 several natural capacities, or as a distinctive capacity that gives us "supremacy over
343 nature" (*ibid.*, p. 33; this volume). The first of these options was preferred by many of
344 the philosophers in America in the early decades of the twentieth century, including
345 by the pragmatists, and by de Laguna and some of the other women philosophers
346 working before Swabey, women such as Eliza Ritchie.¹

347 Swabey divides her critique of naturalism into two, one targeting a more extreme
348 form of naturalism ('extreme naturalism') and one targeting a more sophisticated
349 version of naturalism ('sophisticated naturalism').² According to Swabey, extreme
350 naturalism posits that all action, including that of reason, is a response to a specific
351 environment, a response that serves the evolved function of self-preservation and
352 that can be explained as an evolutionary adaptation. Since this form of naturalism
353 takes reason to be an adaptive response to specific evolutionary circumstances, it
354 "denies the pretensions of reason to envisage genuinely formal and universal, as

¹ See Eliza Ritchie, asserting that we are physical and psychological entities with a fixed nature, in *The Problem of Personality* (Ithaca: Andrus & Church, 1889), pp. 30–33.

² In what follows, we borrow from Katzav's (2020) discussion of Swabey.

355 opposed to material and particular, objects. Concepts or generic notions are accounted
 356 as nothing more than “generalizations”; while theoretical grounds and reasons are
 357 denied efficacy, being considered as idle compensatory “rationalizations” after the
 358 event (1930, p. 40; this volume). The reader will quite clearly recognize that, here,
 359 Swabey’s target includes de Laguna’s 1910 target, namely pragmatism.

360 One of Swabey’s objections to extreme naturalism is that it takes the mind to be
 361 akin to a biological adaptation but that “the chief mark of most biological tools is
 362 the fact that they are bound up with the structure and locus of the organism” and
 363 “require some direct contact with the environment for any experience or knowledge
 364 of it” (1930, p. 42; this volume). Reason, by contrast, is not obviously constrained
 365 in this way by direct contact. It has the ability to envision possibilities and theorize
 366 about what it will never have contact with. Swabey recognizes that the naturalist
 367 might respond with scepticism about such abilities, but she worries that, then, the
 368 naturalist will have to be skeptical about much of science and thus about what they
 369 themselves rely on in developing their own positions (1930, pp. 43–44; this volume).

370 More, fundamentally, however, Swabey worries that extreme naturalism is, by its
 371 own lights, a kind of idle, compensatory rationalization. The hypothesis that life has
 372 the teleological function of maintaining life is “a teleological-metaphysical theory
 373 about the world which goes far beyond the warrant of direct experience, yet which
 374 seemingly must be granted if the results of the sciences are to be construed by it
 375 as either trustworthy or significant” (1930, p. 41; this volume). The problem here,
 376 according to Swabey, is that naturalism of this kind presupposes, but cannot justify,
 377 its own truth.

378 Swabey thus rejects the pragmatist middle ground between foundationalism and
 379 coherentism. Any adequate theory of knowledge will have to allow that reason is
 380 capable of more than local solutions to problems. Sophisticated naturalism does
 381 allow this. According to it, reason is still a proper part of nature but is distinguished
 382 by its ability to address general problems. Reason makes use of abstract schemas
 383 of objects without grasping them as particulars and is able to do this because of the
 384 relational nature of its concepts (1930, pp. 45–46; this volume). Another mark of
 385 reason, on this form of naturalism, is that it tends to organise data into systems, thus
 386 disclosing previously unknown relations between objects. Further,

387 [i]n conformity with this inclination, understanding never apparently accepts a “fact” off-
 388 hand at its face value or takes an isolated judgement as more than provisional; but requires
 389 that each shall be confirmed by linkage with other facts and judgments which mutually
 390 sustain and support it.... (1930, pp. 46–47; this volume)

391 In the end, although reasoning presumably never realizes the ideal which is that of
 392 a single, all-inclusive system with no grounds outside of itself, it is customary to
 393 assume that, other things being equal, the more comprehensive a coherent body of
 394 judgments is and the richer in interconnections, the more reliable it is likely to be
 395 (1930, p. 47; this volume).

396 Swabey, however, thinks that sophisticated naturalism, no less than extreme natu-
 397 ralism, undermines itself. On her view, if we assume that our minds are proper parts

of nature, we will be committed to the paradoxical assumption that the human intellect is “both the source and the product of nature” (1930, pp. 48–49; this volume). She offers a number of supporting arguments for this claim. Here is one: if our minds are proper parts of nature, then any theory of nature will always extend beyond what experience might by itself support. In particular, experience will then never be able to provide any reason to suppose that survival value is a test of the truth of our theories. So, the naturalist will be forced to conclude that nature is, contrary to his or her initial assumption, a construct rather than a cause of our minds (1930, pp. 51–52; this volume). Another of Swabey’s supporting arguments tells us that even the distinction between theory and fact will have to be taken to be a construct of the mind once the naturalist accepts that “our contact with facts is always in the context of theory” (1930, p. 49; this volume).

Sophisticated naturalism bears a striking resemblance to the naturalism developed by de Laguna and her husband. They too recognize that the simple stimulus–response model of reason is inadequate and that reason needs, in any adequate account of human knowledge, to be supposed to have a substantial degree of autonomy from specific problem situations. Moreover, they too take systematicity to be a hallmark of reason. Sophisticated naturalism also resembles more recent forms of naturalism, such as that of Quine. He too thought that there is no a priori justification for our claims about reality and that the only way to evaluate the criteria of success of science is to do so empirically. Indeed, one of the important lines of response to Quine is akin to Swabey’s critique. Barry Stroud and Michael Williams, like Swabey, think that a rejection of a priori knowledge of reality will, when applied to itself, lead to scepticism (Stroud 1981; Williams 1996).

How, then, would the de Lagunas respond to Swabey’s worries about what happens when our minds are assumed to be proper parts of nature? They would respond that Swabey’s ideal of knowledge is unattainable. As we have seen, their view is that all claims, including those of logic are, in principle, revisable and subject to criticism. So, they accept that it is not possible to justify any criterion of truth. In a sense, then, it has been misleading when we have, above, described them as offering a theory of justification—they do not think we can give positive reasons to believe in the truth of our claims. Nevertheless, on their view, it is possible to subject our system of knowledge, including its standards of knowledge, to criticism and thus potentially to learn how we are wrong even at the most fundamental level (see Part III: ‘Scientific Knowledge’, p. 115).

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