

C.I. Lewis on the Tasks of Philosophy

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1. Introduction

In this paper I aim to investigate C.I. Lewis' conception of philosophy in *Mind and the World Order*,¹ and suggest that it can be a useful source for rethinking the role of philosophy in a non-reductionist naturalistic framework.

Naturalism can be broadly defined as the attempt to address philosophical problems by assuming that everything there exists is part of the same natural world. It also insists on the continuity between philosophy and the natural sciences. This approach, if interpreted in a reductionist fashion, can generate strongly counter-intuitive results.² The latter usually concern the difficulty of leaving room for normative concepts in the description of our practices (theoretical or moral alike),³ just as the neglect of issues that seem essential in our common-sense grasp on what is mind (as for example the rational status of justifications). Moreover, a related problem concerns the role of philosophy with respect to the sciences, or better, the role that science and scientific investigation should play within philosophy. Should philosophy be absorbed by scientific investigation? Or should it maintain an independent role? As is well known, W.V. Quine preferred, probably provocatively, the first option, but this position is considered problematic by naturalists themselves. Again, the issue is here to find a naturalistic approach to philosophy able to leave room for what we consider as genuine philosophical problems, or able at least to offer us strong reasons for giving up addressing those problems. The difficulties I have just listed, which are immediately connected to a strict and reductionist conception of naturalism, have brought a considerable number of contemporary philosophers to endorse a less demanding approach, even though they are still willing to be considered naturalists.⁴

¹ Lewis, 1956.

² For a discussion of the problems connected to a reductionist naturalism see the contributions included in: De Caro, Macarthur, 2004 and 2010; Shook, Kurtz, 2009.

³ See Hookway, 1994, for an account of how Quine's naturalism can address, or avoid to address, normative questions in epistemology.

⁴ See: De Caro, Macarthur, 2004 and 2010; Shook, Kurtz, 2009.

In this context, pragmatism can be a relevant approach to inform this renewed variety of naturalism, for two main reasons: it has always reserved an essential role to the consideration of purposeful behavior (and thus to normative concepts), and it has considered nature and minds as being in continuity.⁵ However, if it is true that pragmatism can offer materials to construct a non-reductionist naturalism, it is also true that the association of pragmatism and naturalistic approaches generates new problems, insofar as the relationships between these two philosophical standpoints are not immediately clear.⁶ Just to quote two examples, it is not easy to see if James' pragmatism justification of religious beliefs, or Peirce's "neglected" argument for the reality of God, could count as naturalistic positions.⁷ The general picture is complicated by the fact that there are various forms of pragmatism and naturalism. As far as pragmatism is concerned, I will limit my attention to classical pragmatists and, in section 5, to C.I. Lewis in particular. On the other hand, if we want to exclude physicalism as an adequate form of naturalism, not reducing nature to the objects described by the physical sciences, what should we include? The objects described by chemistry and biology for example? And what about psychology and the social sciences? If we then consider methodological issues, what kind of inquiry should this renewed naturalism pursue? Could we allow the use of common-sense conceptions in it?

In order to address these problems and show how C.I. Lewis' pragmatic conception of philosophy can help us to find a viable option, I will begin in section 2 by briefly considering in which senses a philosophical standpoint can be considered naturalistic and how a pragmatist position can relate to it. Then, in section 3, I will show the problems involved in a reductionist methodological naturalism as Quine's. In section 4 I will use McDowell's proposal in *Mind and World* to show the need for a non-reductionist metaphysical naturalism.⁸ To finish, in section 5 I will show how according to Lewis' pragmatism we can stress continuity between philosophy and the sciences without losing the possibility of recognizing a specific kind of philosophical inquiry.

2. Pragmatism and Naturalism

⁵ Examples of this approach can be found in Peirce's attempt to develop an evolutionary metaphysics capable to account for the development of rationality and in Dewey's account of inquiry as a rooted in biological operations.

⁶ See: Ryder, 2003, pp.....

⁷ See James' "The Will to Believe" in James, 1979, pp. 1-33, and Peirce's "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" in Peirce, 1998, pp. 434-50.

⁸ McDowell, 1996.

Pragmatism and Naturalism are surely associated by the purpose of getting rid of philosophical abstract speculations, either by claiming that a concept should be able to specify practical differences in experience by means of which we could determine if the concept can truly be attributed to something,⁹ or by limiting the scope of the objects and the methods accessible to philosophical reflection to those offered by the natural sciences. That said, there are various specifications that we need to advance in order to understand which kind of naturalism a pragmatist (at least considering the classical pragmatists) could endorse. First of all pragmatism has not necessarily the same extension as naturalism. Pragmatism is a maxim to clarify the meaning of words and it does not necessarily contain substantive ideas on a related conception of nature, even though there are of course some conceptions of nature that better fit a pragmatist approach. I will now introduce two ways in which naturalism can be understood by distinguishing a metaphysical and a methodological naturalism. Even though it is with respect to moral issues that a reductionist naturalism raises more concerns, I will here limit my attention to epistemological questions.

Metaphysical naturalism stresses that everything that exists is part of the same natural world. Thus, supernatural entities as souls and Gods should not be an interest of philosophical reflection. In considering metaphysical naturalism I will avoid any consideration on the exclusion of these entities from philosophical discourse, and concentrate on a more interesting and tricky question, that is the problem whether mind and nature should be seen as being in continuity. In this respect, metaphysical naturalism claims that mind should be understood as a part of nature. Without further specification, this claim could be easily endorsed by many philosophers, but the difficult question is to determine what can be considered as a part of the natural world. Strongly reductionist naturalists would probably endorse a form of physicalism, following which nature is equated to the totality of physical facts.¹⁰ In this framework, facts and properties that we usually associate with minds, such as reasons, beliefs, meanings, etc., should be reduced to physical explanations in order to indicate real existing facts. Otherwise, they could only be considered illusory figments. Of course, there are various ways to moderate these claims. For example, one could maintain that mental facts are supervenient on physical facts.¹¹ That is to say, an object cannot alter in

⁹ This seems to me a clearer way to put Peirce's pragmatic maxim in "How to Make Our Ideas Clear". See: Peirce, 1986, p. 266.

¹⁰ Physicalism first developed in the context of logical positivism thanks to Otto Neurath. For a critical presentation of physicalism see: Gillet, Loewer, 2001.

¹¹ "Although the position I describe denies there are psychophysical laws, it is consistent with the view that mental characteristics are in some sense dependent, or supervenient, on

some mental respect without altering in some physical respect. This seems to be a way not to reduce mental properties to physical properties, but to show a necessary connection between the two. However, this claim leaves us still wanting of an explanation of what is distinctive about the mental.

Another option would be to include biological facts in our conception of nature. This surely would broaden the set of concepts at our disposal in order to account for mental facts, but it would be still problematic to address questions concerning human rationality by only using these concepts. The relevance of biological facts would surely be essential in the context of a pragmatist form of naturalism, especially if the latter is developed along the lines of the classical tradition of Peirce, James and Dewey. In fact, the influence of Darwin in their thought has been relevant and it has surely deeply affected their conception of nature. However, even though they would unquestionably endorse a form of continuity between nature and mind they would also leave room for other sorts of concepts with respect to those of physics and biology to explain mental facts. If pragmatism can thus endorse a form of metaphysical naturalism which stresses the continuity between nature and mind, it seems that it could not be either a kind of physicalism, or a naturalism including biological facts in its conception of nature. I will address which form of continuity between nature and mind a (classical) pragmatist would probably endorse in section 4. I will now turn to my analysis of methodological naturalism.

If metaphysical naturalism focused on the objects we could consider as parts of nature, methodological naturalism directs its attention to the method we should use in philosophical inquiry. As we saw, metaphysical naturalism posited continuity between nature and mind. Thus, methodological naturalism stresses continuity between the sciences and philosophy. This claim could be interpreted in various different ways. It could simply mean that philosophy has not any privileged standpoint with respect to the sciences and that the form of rationality we find in philosophical arguing is the same we find in the sciences, only at a more abstract level. This means that there is no problem in using in philosophy results developed within scientific inquiries. The latter claim can be easily endorsed by classical pragmatists. In fact many of them have used results coming from the sciences of their times to support their views, and this requires a form of continuity between philosophy and science. Moreover,

physical characteristics. Such supervenience might be taken to mean that there cannot be two events alike in all physical respects but differing in some mental respect, or that an object cannot alter in some mental respect without altering in some physical respect" (Davidson, 2001, p. 214).

pragmatism itself was born as a methodological maxim which first appeared in Peirce's paper "How to Make our Ideas Clear". This paper was part of a series of articles on "Illustrations of the Logic of Science".¹² Pragmatism itself could thus be read as the attempt to bring a scientific spirit within philosophy.¹³

On the other hand, if the claim that philosophy and science are continuous is supposed to mean that philosophy should borrow its method from a specific scientific inquiry, there arise a multiplicity of problems concerning the ways to identify this method. First of all it would not be easy to isolate a unique model for scientific inquiry, even if we limited our attention to the natural sciences.¹⁴ Maybe we could simply refer to a very broad idea of scientific method, but again, this would not serve the purposes of a reductionist approach. Let us also think about the importance that the study of common-sense notions has always had in philosophy.¹⁵ Should this scientific philosophy avoid the analysis of common sense notions insofar as they are not clear and easily distinguishable as scientific ones? Or should it study common-sense concepts by means of an "experimental" and "inductive" approach borrowed from a particular science? It seems that also this extreme form of methodological naturalism cannot fit the philosophical method used by classical pragmatists. Moreover, the idea that we could take the method of a science and use it in other kinds of inquiry seems to be really "unpragmatic", unless we employ a really vague and generic account of method. Eventually, it is the purposes that an inquiry is supposed to reach that decide which method is best. This is an idea that many pragmatists would endorse.

From what we have just said, it seems that pragmatism can be associated to a form of metaphysical naturalism (which stresses continuity between nature and mind) and to a form of methodological naturalism (which maintains continuity between scientific and philosophical reasoning), only if we understand this claims in a non-reductionist way. That is to say, we should not apply to nature and inquiry a unique and pre-determinate model. I will now turn to the analysis of W.V. Quine's methodological approach to naturalism and show the problems it generates.

¹² See Peirce, 1986, pp. 242ff.

¹³ However, Pragmatism should not be seen as a scientific position. In fact, if we consider Peirce for example, the idea of "scientific method" that he used was very broad and included inquiries that a contemporary naturalist would not consider science. See Haack, 1996.

¹⁴ See: Putnam, 2010, pp. 95-6; Dupré, 2004, pp. 42-6.

¹⁵ It might be useful to recall the importance of common-sense for the late Wittgenstein, insofar as there have been some attempts to interpret his late philosophy as a form of naturalism.

3. Some problems in Quine's Methodological Approach

Methodological naturalism stresses continuity between science and philosophy. In its more radical form, it claims that philosophy should become a part of science. The most famous advocate of this position is certainly W.V. Quine. He introduced the concept of naturalized epistemology in his essay "Epistemology Naturalized".¹⁶ It is true that here Quine is concerned only with epistemology and not with philosophy in general, but I think that there we could find the basic ideas of a reductionist approach directly focused on the methods philosophy should pursue. Of course one can also give naturalistic accounts of how philosophy should address moral and esthetic facts, and Quine seems not to be interested in these projects. However, in his epistemology we can surely find a hint on which method a reductionist naturalist should follow in this domains.

I will avoid quoting the passage in which Quine introduced the concept of naturalized epistemology at length, since his position has become a common reference for every study of the subject. Anyway, Quine argues that epistemology should become "a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science".¹⁷ It should thus be concerned with how the human subject is capable of obtaining "a description of the three dimensional world" as output when "accorded a certain experimentally controlled input".¹⁸ First of all, it might seem odd to include psychology within the natural sciences and this would surely raise some problems if the paradigm of scientific method we should use in philosophy is supposed to be modeled on those sciences. However, I will not address this problem here. Certainly, Quine's formulation can be read as a provocative response to other approaches in epistemology, thus pushing his standpoint to the extreme in order to clearly mark the difference with his opponents.¹⁹ If thus epistemology should scientifically explain how theories are built, we should not necessarily imagine the philosopher as a cognitivist psychologist who studies how humans respond to stimuli in an experiment. Quine's claim that epistemology should be absorbed by psychology could thus be interpreted as a provocation. Maybe Quine's purpose was only to stress that epistemological theories should be based on observation and not concerned with a conceptual analysis of the fundamental structure of our knowledge. In this case, epistemology should only describe what scientists actually do when they develop, test and adjust a new theory. It would not identify what they should do, or how they should justify their theories.

¹⁶ Quine, 1969.

¹⁷ Quine, 1969, p. 82.

¹⁸ Quine, 1969, pp. 82-3.

¹⁹ In a similar but different way, John Capps (1996, pp. 640-2) argues that Quine's naturalized epistemology can also be read in a "soft" way.

This description of the method a naturalized epistemology should pursue is certainly less problematic than an identification with psychological experimental investigations. It simply points out that epistemology should be descriptive and observational, rather than normative. However, I think that it is still too narrow to include what most philosophers, probably also with naturalist interests, would count as properly epistemological concerns. If epistemology is interested in explaining how we build our scientific theories, it cannot avoid asking itself when we regard those theories as valid, and in order to answer this question it seems that something more than a report of what scientists actually do would be required.

I will try to show that this is the case by means of a conception introduced by Quine himself, that is “confirmation holism”. This notion was presented in another famous paper of Quine, that is “Two Dogmas of Empiricism”.²⁰ As is well known, the two dogmas that Quine attacks in this paper are: (1) the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions and (2) the idea that singular theoretical statements can be tested in isolation. Quine argues that these two dogmas are closely related. In fact, the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements identify two kinds of propositions. The truth or falsity of the former is determinable thanks to the meanings of the terms involved, whereas the truth or falsity of synthetic statements needs to be tested in experience. Quine thus suggests that the supposed possibility to test singular synthetic statements brings in, as a limiting case, the idea of statements that can be held as true or false without that testing.²¹ I will not discuss the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements further and concentrate my attention on confirmation holism.

Quine rejects the possibility of identifying a determined set of sensory evidence that would support or reject an isolated theoretical statement. He supports this claim by noticing how we are able to connect a series of expected sensory experiences to singular theoretical statements only by assuming a complex net of theories and hypotheses. Thus, if the expected sensory experience does not verify in relation to a given theoretical statement we could be driven to reject the statement in question or to adjust the related theories and hypothesis in order to preserve it.²² We can imagine the possibility of relating the proposition stating the gravitational constant to a series of observational statements concerning expected sense-experience. If this expected experience do not verify we could be lead to the rejection of the gravitational constant or simply to the revision of the connected hypotheses and beliefs which

²⁰ Quine, 1961.

²¹ Quine, 1961, p. 41.

²² Quine, 1961, pp. 41ff.

have driven us to expect that particular sense-experience. Quine's confirmation holism thus claims that we cannot confirm theoretical statements in isolation, but only together with the theories and hypotheses involved in the derivation of the expected experiences.

I have not introduced Quine's confirmation holism in order to address its consistency or plausibility, but only to ascertain the status of his claims on the subject. Holism is surely a central thesis of Quine's epistemology, but it is hard to see how it can be obtained following the naturalized method previously identified. How could we argue for confirmation holism by means of an experimental inquiry which explains how we are able to produce theories when given a certain amount of experiential input? If we use the less demanding sense of naturalized epistemology I have sketched above, we could stress that confirmation holism is derivable from the observation of how scientist actually develop and test their theories. But still, this seems not enough to account for what Quine is doing here.²³ When Quine claims that we cannot confirm or infirm singular theoretical statements, he is not simply proposing a theory to account for the actual behavior of scientists. He is proposing an analysis of the logical and semantic relationships holding between experiential evidence and scientific theories.

If thus Quine himself seems not to obey the restriction he imposed to philosophical inquiries, it seems plausible to leave behind the preoccupation for a philosophy pursued as a part of the empirical sciences. Of course we could find other ways to define the method of philosophy by claiming that it should be continuous with the sciences, ways that leaves to philosophy a major independence. This is what I will try to do in section 5 thanks to a consideration of C. I. Lewis' position. However, I do not think we could find a unique model for describing the relationship between philosophy and the sciences within the pragmatist tradition, even if we limit our attention to the classical pragmatists. After all, pragmatism is already a methodological position able to get rid of philosophical abstract speculations. That is to say, we do not need to indicate another condition for doing philosophy in a meaningful way.

4. McDowell's Metaphysical Proposal

²³ Contrary to what I am claiming here, Michael Resnik (2005, p. 418) suggests that "apparent normative talk of what logic permits is only a metaphorical substitute for descriptive speculation about how various arguments would fare when subjected to standard logical tests." Maybe Quine's argument for "confirmation holism" can be translated in this "descriptive speculation". However, Quine does not use this strategy in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism".

If a methodological approach to naturalism assumes continuity between philosophy and the sciences, a metaphysical approach is distinctive for postulating continuity between nature and mind. I have already stressed in section 2 how physicalism or a form of naturalism integrated with biological concepts are not satisfying positions for addressing the continuity between nature and mind. I will only add here a brief consideration. If it is true that it is impossible to explain mental facts only using a physical or a biological language, it is also true that biological facts themselves are not reducible to the language of physics. Accordingly, already Peirce noted in his *Cambridge Conference Lectures* of 1898 that “irreversible” processes like life and growth cannot be accounted for simply by making reference to physical laws.²⁴ Thus, a naturalist might say that if we cannot reduce biological facts to physical facts, we should at least try to reduce mental facts to biological, chemical and physical facts. But why so? If we can give up trying to resolve the supposed inconsistencies between physical and biological explanations, why cannot we also give up trying to reduce mental facts to lower levels of explanation?

I will now briefly introduce McDowell position in *Mind and World*, because I think it could be a way to approach the continuity between nature and mind in a pragmatist framework. That said, I am not claiming that McDowell is a pragmatist himself, but only that his conception of the relationship between mind and nature can be endorsed from the pragmatist perspective I am here presenting. I will also avoid to discuss McDowell’s main purpose in *Mind and World*, that is the elaboration of a theory of perception which allows room for an informative content of experience, without falling into the “myth of the given”. What I am interested in is the discussion of the concept of nature he pursues in order to defend his views on perception.

McDowell argues that the reason why we cannot easily include characteristics and capacities we normally ascribe to minds (as for example the possibility of having beliefs and arguing for them) within our concept of nature lies in the specific concept of nature we use. The latter is the model of nature that developed with the rise of modern science. In this context, nature is the object described by the natural sciences.²⁵ We have already seen that it is difficult to obtain an unambiguous concept of nature even if we limit ourselves to this description. In fact, defining the relationships existing among the objects described by the different natural sciences is not easy. However, what is central for our discussion is the equation of nature with the realm of laws. When nature is paralleled to the domain of natural

²⁴ Peirce, 1992, p. 203.

²⁵ McDowell, 1996, pp. 70-2.

laws, it becomes impossible to account for concepts like reasons, meanings, beliefs, etc. as parts of that nature. How is it then possible to stress that mind and nature are in continuity? If the strategy of reductionist naturalism was to modify our conception of mind in order to make it fit into our model of nature, McDowell proposes to pursue a different route, one that modifies our conception of nature in order to make room for what we find essential in order to account for our rational thinking.

But why is this not simply a way to beg the question? For example, we could use a similar strategy to resolve the existing contrast between our conception of nature as governed by natural laws and a religious conception of nature as a free product of God's will. That is to say, we could expand our conception of nature in order to make room for God's free acting. However, it seems that there is something specific to our discussion of mind that justifies our extension of the concept of nature in order to make room for rationality. This is the fact that rationality is an essential concept to account for our behavior as "rational animals". It is a peculiar way in which we humans, as animals and as members of nature, deal with the environment.²⁶ If this is true, there is no reason to see nature and mind, nature and rationality, as being in contrast. Someone could still argue that concepts like reasons, meanings and beliefs are not compatible with the other objects and laws we consider as part of nature. Thus, for example one can say that explaining an event as following from a rational decision cannot be rendered compatible with a physical explanation of the same event. As we already saw however, the irreducibility of two different models of explanation does not only affect the relationship between facts about nature and facts about mind, but it is something we also find in considering the objects of natural science themselves. In this sense, biological explanation cannot be reduced to physical explanation. We should see these different approaches to nature and mind as having different purposes, as different attempts to explain different facts. They are justified if they are successful in explaining those facts. Even though they are not reducible to a unique model of explanation, there is no reason to consider them as accounts of different natures. In this context, philosophical treatments of our rationality make no exception. They surely use a different language with respect to the natural sciences, but they are nonetheless concerned with facts that pertain to members of the natural world, that is humans.

I think that this way of considering the continuity between nature and mind, between nature and rationality is the best suited to a pragmatist standpoint. It allows to see human

²⁶ McDowell, 1996, pp. 77ff.

rationality as in continuity with the natural world without blocking the possibility of inquiring what is specific about it.²⁷ Let us now see if C. I. Lewis can help us to find a way to address the continuity between philosophy and the sciences.

5. The Role of Philosophy according to C.I. Lewis

C.I. Lewis would probably agree to the way in which we accounted for the continuity between nature and mind in the previous section. Accordingly, he stressed that “the coincidence of our fundamental criteria and principles is the combined result of the similarity of human animals”.²⁸ That is to say, the rational criteria which constitute the main interest of our philosophical considerations are not something that puts us in a realm distinct from nature, but it is our peculiar way of being animals. It thus seems that Lewis would have endorsed the form of metaphysical naturalism we have just presented.²⁹ But what about the continuity between philosophy and science requested by a methodological approach to naturalism. Does Lewis also propose a view that can be considered naturalistic in this sense? Does pragmatism involve a particular kind of methodological naturalism?

As far the latter question is concerned, I do not think that pragmatism can be related to a particular form of methodological naturalism. If we limit our attention to the classical pragmatists, they have surely addressed the relationship between philosophy and the sciences in very different ways. Moreover, as I have noted in section 3 pragmatism is already a maxim that excludes wishful thinking from philosophy. Thus, there is no need to require another condition tightly linking philosophy to a determinate model of scientific inquiry. That said, I think that C.I. Lewis’s conception of the relationship between philosophy and the sciences in *Mind and the World Order* can offer us a paradigm to consider them as being in continuity without losing the peculiarity and independence of philosophy.

First of all, Lewis, as the naturalists, does not consider philosophy as the queen of the sciences, as an inquiry dealing with foundational questions and being independent from any

²⁷ That said, I think that McDowell’s distinction between the “logical space of reasons” and the “logical space of natural-scientific understanding” is too sharp and retains some of the difficulties associated to the division between nature and mind.

²⁸ Lewis, 1956, p. 20.

²⁹ Lewis did not always consider himself a naturalist, even though his understanding of the word was certainly different from our own. For example, in his 1912 paper “Naturalism and Idealism” he attacked naturalism (Lewis, 1970, pp. 20-34), whereas in *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* he described his position in ethics as being naturalistic (Lewis, 1971, p. viii). On this point see also Murphey, 2005, pp. 54ff., 253.

data coming from experience.³⁰ As a pragmatist he also adds that philosophy should always relate to experience in a twofold manner. It should be able to specify some experiential differences related to the concepts it develops, and these differences should be able to have a practical utility for us.³¹ On the other hand, for Lewis, this is not enough to stress that philosophy should become an empirical science itself. Accordingly, he claims that this does not mean that “the categories of biology and psychophysics have some peculiar advantage for the interpretation of the practical attitudes of thought”.³²

But what then should be the method of philosophy? Which purposes should it pursue? For Lewis, philosophy cannot gain positive knowledge by an a priori course of reasoning independent from experience and from the sciences. In this sense philosophy cannot be considered as a foundation of the other sciences. On the contrary, it depends on them and on ordinary experience in order to have materials to work on. Lewis stresses that “in philosophy we investigate what we already know”.³³

If philosophy cannot produce new knowledge, its purposes and methods should be different from those of the natural science. Lewis thus claims that philosophy should pursue a “reflective” inquiry able to unveil the normative structure already present in our normal dealing with the world we live. Ethics must make evident how we judge on good and wrong actions, logic on valid and invalid reasoning, aesthetics on the beautiful and metaphysics should highlight how we introduce the criteria of the real in knowledge.³⁴

I will not discuss how these ethical, logical, aesthetical and metaphysical criteria are a priori but pragmatic and revisable for Lewis. My aim is to point out some issues that are relevant for our discussion. This “reflective” stance of philosophy is dependent on the sciences and common experience for having contents. In this sense, philosophy cannot but be in continuity with the sciences if it wants to have objects in the first place. However, philosophy, as a second order investigation on what we already know, has also a certain independence from the other sciences and pursues its inquiries with a different method. This way of addressing the relationship between philosophy and the sciences seems to meet the needs we have expressed at the beginning of this paper concerning a non-reductionist form of naturalism. In fact, philosophy can be seen as in continuity with the sciences, but it can also claim its independence and its capacity to address normative questions. It was exactly the

³⁰ Lewis, 1956, p. 35.

³¹ Lewis, 1956, pp. 31, 34-5.

³² Lewis, 1956, p. 35.

³³ Lewis, 1956, p. 2.

³⁴ Lewis, 1956, pp. 3-4, 14, 17.

impossibility to adequately address these questions that caused the most serious problems for reductionist naturalists. Lewis' reflective account of philosophy is able to allow a central place for normative concepts in philosophy without claiming any priority or foundational role for it. I would say that this emphasis on normative concepts and this anti-foundational account of philosophy is typical of every pragmatist philosophy. However, what is distinctive about Lewis's position is the reflective way in which he accounts for the method of philosophy.

I would like to add another observation on common-sense. Beside the normative, Lewis' account of the role of philosophy allows us to leave room for the consideration of common-sense experience. We saw that a reductionist naturalist could address common-sense reasoning, but only using a method borrowed from the empirical sciences. On the contrary, for Lewis, philosophy can analyze the way in which normative concepts are essential to account for our every-day practices. It can do so by following the same second order inquiry it also conducts with respect to the sciences. Philosophy can thus consider common-sense knowledge with the same focus on normative issues that characterizes its examination of scientific practices.

6. Conclusion

C.I. Lewis "reflective" account of philosophy is able to offer us an account of the continuity between science and philosophy that is also able to indicate what is specific about philosophy, that is: its attention to normative questions. Even though philosophy should not become a natural science, it is free of unwarranted speculations about first principles, thanks to its pragmatic stance and to its incapacity to develop new knowledge. Lewis' position can thus be read as a non-reductionist form of methodological naturalism. It can be easily associated to a non-reductionist form of metaphysical naturalism which claims continuity between nature and mind by noticing how rationality is our way of being part of nature. We introduced this position thanks to an analysis of McDowell, but we have also seen that Lewis could be read in that direction. These non-reductive forms of metaphysical and methodological naturalism allow us to avoid the problems of reductionist approaches we have analyzed in this paper, especially in relation with Quine's position.

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