

A Critical Review of the Goal of Naturalising Epistemology

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Abstract

The focus in this article is on the examination of the goal of naturalised epistemology which seeks to replace the philosophical inquiry into epistemology with the methodology of science. It is argued in the paper that the proposal for naturalised epistemology undermines the importance of the methodology of conducting philosophical inquiry, and hence the philosophical treatment of issues in epistemology, as well as the importance of philosophical inquiry into science. It is concluded that although other means of analysing knowledge may emerge, yet, epistemology will have to continue to evaluate human knowledge philosophically because the philosophical quest for knowledge is a reminder that we can be better than we are, that there are lofty heights of ideals yet to be attained, and search for which we must not relent. Our position is that this philosophical quest is what is responsible for keeping the insatiable human spirit searching, and researching for the perfection, which according to Plato, resides in the world of forms. At the heart of this search is the conviction that certainty, absolute truth, is radically different from scientific discovery about it.

Keywords: Epistemology, naturalised epistemology, science

Introduction

Epistemology, for so long, laid claim to being first philosophy and saddles itself with the responsibility of dealing with the foundation of scientific knowledge. However, the challenge to this claim, championed by proponents of naturalised epistemology, is that epistemologists should desist from handling epistemology as a normative, *a priori*, philosophical enterprise that seeks to evaluate the aims, procedures, and results of scientific inquiry. They would rather have epistemology treated as an arm of science that seeks to describe and explain how knowledge is acquired. In this essay, we seek to examine the goal of naturalised epistemology directed at replacing the philosophical method of conducting epistemological inquiries with the scientific method.

Our contention is that the proposal for naturalised epistemology undermines the importance of the methodology of conducting philosophical inquiries, and hence the philosophical treatment of that branch of philosophy that deals with the theory of the origin, nature and limits of knowledge, as well as the

importance of philosophical inquiry into science and its foundations. We will further argue that the modification of the claim that rather than totally replacing epistemology with science, that what we should have is a collaboration between epistemology and science, which implies that the method of studying epistemology need only consider progress made in science, says nothing new that had not hitherto been accommodated. The essay, thus, considers why traditional epistemology, even if other means of analysing knowledge should emerge, will have to continue to evaluate human knowledge philosophically.

The Naturalist's Proposal about Epistemology

The various types of naturalised epistemology do not conceive the relationship that should exist between science and epistemology the same way. In fact, it makes more sense to speak of naturalised epistemologies than naturalised epistemology. This is because

naturalism in philosophy is by no means as simple a doctrine as it appears at first sight. Because of inherent ambiguities and because of the curious turns in its recent evolution, it is not really one coherent philosophical theory. When two naturalists say the same, they do not (necessarily) mean the same. It should not be surprising, therefore, if one naturalist feels puzzled or even indignant when reading pages written by another (Giedymin 1972:45).

While to some proponents, science should entirely take over how epistemology is done, to others, epistemology need only take into consideration the methodology and findings of science in getting repositioned. There is also disagreement as to which scientific discipline the study of epistemology should be modelled after. For Quine, for instance, it is psychology (Quine 1998:260), while Code holds that it should be ecology (Code 1996:11-17). However, the scientific discipline that naturalists put forward as the model for epistemology matters less because there is a unity of the sciences. Regarding this, although these scientific disciplines differ in the specific objects they study, yet they share something in common and it is that:

scientists are brought together by their belief that their work will result in the discovery of verifiable facts. Physics and chemistry, biology and mathematics may differ in method and in the objects of their investigations, but physicists and chemists, biologists and mathematicians close ranks when asked to agree that their work share at least one feature: the discovery of the manifold properties of one and only one nature (Rota and Crant 2000:475).

What we have in all the sciences is the making and recording of observations about nature, or of simulations of nature, in order to learn more about how nature works.

In the light of this unity of the sciences, what is being advocated for by those who ask that we model epistemology after a particular scientific discipline is that there is need for the discovery of natural properties of, and veritable facts about, knowledge rather than reflectively aiming at the discoveries of ideals of knowledge. In the final analysis, the various naturalised epistemologies are lauded for the promise of shifting epistemology "away from idealised abstraction to established connections with epistemic practice that could enable theories of knowledge to engage constructively and critically with everyday cognitive activities" (Code 1996:1).

In the opinion of W.V.O. Quine, the progenitor of the idea, the attempt directed at finding the meaning and truths of science philosophically has failed. He seeks, therefore, to move the theory of knowledge into the field of psychology, where knowledge may be adjudged based on sensory input-output relationship of a person. Quine (1998:260), thus, proposes that "epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science. It studies a natural phenomenon, viz., a physical human subject." Reducing epistemology to a branch of psychology and hence science, for Quine (1998:256), is due to his belief that there are only two unassailable cardinal tenets of empiricism so far. "One is that whatever evidence there is for science is sensory evidence. The other... is that all inculcations of meaning of words must rest ultimately on sensory evidence...." Quine made this claim, most probably, because he believes that "people can survive only to the extent that they can process the information available from their environments, understanding their information processing capacities should yield an epistemology more adequate to human purposes than one that directs its recommendations towards an ideal of epistemic perfection that no human knower could achieve" (Code 1996:3). Epistemology is, thus, reduced to the business of saying what psychological states a cogniser ought to be in in various circumstances, or the states it would be rational or intelligent for him to be in (Goldman 1978:525). Advocates of naturalised epistemology are, therefore, neither committed to analysing what ideal knowers ought to do nor constrained to devoting their best efforts to silencing the sceptic, [instead] naturalists assume that knowledge is possible and seek to understand its real-world (natural) conditions. They abandon any quest for a priori, necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge in general, to examine how epistemic agents actually produce knowledge, variously, within the scope and limits of human cognitive powers as these powers are revealed in the same projects of inquiry (Code 1996:1).

Although there are substantial differences between the various types of naturalised epistemology, yet the basic claim is that we should abandon the traditional treatment of knowledge as it had hitherto been done in traditional epistemology, which is speculative in nature. This is to be replaced with the empirical process of knowledge acquisition. Epistemologists are required "to understand how human beings generate their beliefs, how perception works, and how the brain processes sensory input. In other words, epistemology should be based, not on ideal abstract conditions, or on how we *think* we know based merely on introspection, but on the real processes of human perceiving and knowing" (Alcof 1998:251).

This attempt at "scientising" epistemology is not new in the history of scholarship, and it can be attributed to the arrogance that the scientific method is *the method*. As far as the scientific method is concerned, the pursuit of knowledge, has over time, been linked to it with so many disciplines appropriating the methodology of science because of the belief that this method is the sure and most reliable way to knowledge acquisition as well as the surest way of discovering nature's secrets and how nature works through the discovery of laws and facts that reveal what nature is. It is this aim of this project that has been arrogantly extended to a cardinal branch of philosophy, epistemology. The belief informing this claim is that the attempt at understanding phenomena intuitively and speculatively has so far failed and therefore that "the method of natural science is the only legitimate or appropriate method to be used in attempting to acquire knowledge of whatever kind," (Giedymin 1972:45) or even in solving any human problem. This claim in itself may be traced to the realisation of what the scientific method had enabled

humanity to achieve in its history. According to Wiredu (1995:136), as for the specific case of the superiority of scientific methods, the claim is based on such considerations as their greater efficacy in giving us control over various factors in our environment. And here it should be understood that the comparison is between methods of a certain kind of knowing not methods of living in general or even of knowing in general. That methods of inquiry based on exact measurement, controlled experiment and mathematical sophisticated theorising are superior to those based on rope-measurement and uncoded memories of previous observations seems hardly debatable.

The Nature of the Problems, the Methodology, and the Results of Philosophical Inquiry

There is so many misunderstanding about philosophy as a discipline. According to Gyekye (1997:3), the nature, purpose, methods, and relevance of philosophy are widely misunderstood. In consequence, philosophy has come to be burlesqued and travestied by most people outside this intellectual discipline. The misunderstanding or misconception has in some people matured into prejudice and resilient scepticism about the relevance of philosophy to public affairs in particular and human purpose in general.

As a result of the misconceptions about philosophy we now have a situation in which philosophers are charged with preoccupying themselves with abstract theoretical concerns, with elitism, apriorism, and lack of interest in the practical affairs of life. The result of these misconceptions on the part of nonphilosophers is that philosophy is seen as the quintessence of ivory towerism and irrelevance (Gyekye 1997:3). It is not only nonphilosophers that have questioned the relevance of the philosophy enterprise. Professional philosophers have sometimes been involved in metaphilosophy requesting that we do away with parts of the discipline, for instance, metaphysics, or even contesting the relevance of certain methodologies. It is, thus, important to clear misconceptions and shed more light on what philosophy is. This is undertaken, here, in order to unearth the nature of philosophy as a discipline and how this nature influences how epistemology is studied.

Three factors have been identified as being responsible for conferring on disciplines their distinguishing features. These are: the nature and genesis of the problems they tackle or study; the accepted method of studying these problems and; the results that are hoped for and the method of evaluating the relative merits of propounded solutions (Bodunrin 1981:13).

In the case of philosophy, the problems tackled in philosophy are fundamental in nature. The questioning of the fundamental assumptions of life has since inception till date constituted the main essence of philosophy. It is a discipline that "refers to attempts on the part of serious thinkers to get at the basis of things. Not the superficial, trivial detail, but the underlying fundamentals" (Stewart and Blocker 1987:3). Gyekye (1997:5) rightly conceives philosophy essentially as critical and systematic inquiry into the fundamental ideas or principles underlying human thought, conduct, and experience, ideas, beliefs, and assumptions. In this regard, Presbey, Struhl, and Olsen (2000:xiv) have rightly held that, "philosophers go to the 'root' of ideas by clarifying, questioning and evaluating our most basic assumptions. Often this challenge to accept norms and ideas can lead to views that are at odds with one's culture.... Philosophy is, in short, a radical critical inquiry into the fundamental assumptions of any field of inquiry, including itself." In what ways are philosophical problems fundamental in nature? Answers Oladipo (2008:33-34), philosophical problems are fundamental in nature, first, because the answers to them, implicit or explicit, are at the basis of the beliefs in terms of which people organise

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their lives and social relations. In other words, they influence our judgements and actions in various ways. But these questions are fundamental in another sense, namely, the ramifications of the answers they elicit go beyond the purview of the concerns that immediately led to them to touch areas of life from which they appear to be quite remote.

Philosophers also address themselves to certain questions which are general in nature. By being general in nature is meant that these questions "are beyond the scope of specific areas of knowledge, for example, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, history, political science, and so on" (Oladipo 2008:20). It entails also that, even though these problems had their origin in human experience, they cannot be tackled by resort to empirical methods. As Moore and Bruder (2002:3) have rightly held "one important feature of philosophical questions is that they cannot be answered, in any straightforward way, by the discovery of some fact or collection of facts... facts are often relevant to a philosophical question, but they cannot themselves provide an answer." Oladipo also reiterates that these problems are not problems that can be tackled through the accumulation of facts. Instead, "they involve a careful consideration of how best to describe the facts that are available, with a view to generating insights about them, which although tentative, are, nonetheless, clear and self-consistent" (Oladipo 2008:32-33).

Although scholars and professionals in the existing intellectual disciplines tackle quite a number of the questions that philosophers address themselves to, yet the pondering of a philosopher on these issues makes the philosopher consider these issues outside the purview of the limited scope of the professionals in those fields. The aim of philosophers, in addressing themselves to questions that are general in nature, as distinct from the specific ways the professionals in those fields address them, is directed at providing "a broad or general guide for perceiving, feeling and transforming reality" (Oladipo 2008:13).

Philosophers also address themselves to questions that deal with norms. "Normative questions ask about the value of something. The sciences are interested in finding out how things are, but they cannot tell us how things ought to be. When we decide that something is good or bad, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, we are applying norms or standards" (Moore and Bruder 2002:3). Epistemology shares in this nature of philosophy as do every other branch of the discipline. This is because epistemic terms are essentially normative and as such epistemology is itself a normative inquiry with the ultimate goal of ensuring systematic study of the conditions of justified belief (Kim 1998:266-267).

Finally, the problems that philosophy tackles are abstract in nature. This arises, in itself, because philosophical questions are general. Operating at this abstract level, offers the philosopher "a vantage point from which to beam her analytical searchlight on the inarticulate and woolly beliefs and thoughts of people" (Gyekye 1997:6) The abstract nature of the problems philosophy tackles has erroneously made many to conclude that philosophy bears little or no relevance to the concrete and specific problems of humanity. Much has been said about the nature of the problems addressed in philosophy generally. Let's briefly address ourselves to the nature of the problems addressed in epistemology before considering the other two factors that are responsible for conferring on philosophy its distinguishing features seeing that each branch of philosophy deals with its own specific issues and problems.

Williams (2001:1-3) identifies five problems tackled in epistemology as a cardinal branch of philosophy. The first is the analytic problem. This relates to clarifying what knowledge is and how knowledge is to

be distinguished from mere belief and opinion. The second is the problem of demarcation. This, in itself is further divided into two, the external problem in which attempt is directed at determining, in a principled way, what sort of things we might reasonably know about, i.e. determining the scope and limits of human knowledge. The other division which addresses internal problems considers whether there are important boundaries within the province of knowledge itself. This is where the distinction between *a posteriori* and *a priori* knowledge is discoursed.

The third relates to the problem of method. This deals with how knowledge is to be obtained or sought. This is further subdivided into three problems: the problem of unity, which seeks to know whether there is just one way of acquiring knowledge, or whether there are several, depending on the nature of the knowledge in question; the ameliorative problem, which considers the possibility of knowing if our means of acquiring knowledge can be improved on. The third subdivision deals with the problem of reason or rationality. Here, the concern is aimed at knowing whether there are methods of inquiry that are distinctively rational, and if so, what they are. The fourth is the problem of scepticism that addresses itself to whether it is possible to obtain knowledge at all. Finally, there is the problem of value which considers whether knowledge is worth having, why and what for? Williams' conclusion is that how a given philosopher judges the relative importance of these problems will shape the philosopher's sense of what an epistemological theory needs to accomplish and how it might be argued for.

Regarding the genesis of problems tackled in philosophy: they begin in wonder. As Aristotle says in his *Metaphysics*, "it is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophise." Plato reiterates in his *Theaetetus* also that "wonder is the special affection of a philosopher; for philosophy has no other starting point than this." Human beings became perplexed upon noticing the baffling and contradictory features- change and permanence, life and death, universals and particulars- of the world. And as a result, men began to wonder what explanations there are to them and thus through wonder, philosophy kicked off. Still, philosophical issues have continued to be generated as a result of wonder, as a result of philosophers wondering whether better explanations do not exist other than the ones provided; as a result of philosophers wondering about the perplexities that arise out of conflicting and contradictory positions that philosophers, scholars, and humans generally put forward. In short, philosophy begins when one is puzzled by something and when as a result of wonder one begins to raise questions in the hope of finding answers.

Another genesis of philosophical problem is doubt. "In the specific case of philosophical inquiry, the central motivation derives from the observation that things are not usually what they appear to be and the realisation that many of the assurances of common sense can be mistaken" (Oladipo 2008:31-32). Because of the difference between the noumena and the phenomena, the way things are in themselves and the way they appear to us, philosophical reflection springs up in the bid to supply rational explanations to dispel doubt.

Although, the method of handling philosophical issues differ from tradition to tradition, from one philosopher to the other (and may even vary, depending on the issue handled by a philosopher at a particular time or epoch); and although "we cannot pinpoint a method as the philosophical method, the way we talk of *scientific method*, for instance" (Oladipo 2008:11) the method of approaching philosophical problems include among others: conceptual reasoning or conceptual analysis, reflection, and speculation. In relation to its methodology, philosophy may be conceived as the discipline that subjects to rigorous

is the discipline of philosophy
examination the fundamental assumptions or issues of life. It is that discipline which engages its subject-matter, whatever it may be, in whatever field of knowledge by being critical, analytical, logical, argumentative, reflective, rational and normative. As a cognitive enterprise philosophy aims at the production of knowledge of some sort. Philosophy, thus, presents us with "a new interpretation and a new awareness of the basic assumptions that underlie our everyday life" (Bodunrin 1981:23). It requires of us to question all things, challenge all assumptions and beliefs until we find beliefs that are sacrosanct.

Unlike the situation in science where consensus on an issue is fundamental in resolving a nutty issue, in philosophy, the consensus of the community of philosophers may not be necessary. What is required of a philosopher is the presentation of arguments of high quality and clarity of expression. The acceptance of the point of view of the philosopher will depend, to a large extent, on the profundity and the logical force of the arguments put forward regarding an idea. Whether people, or other philosophers, accept the arguments depends on their intellectual outlook and ideological leanings. However, it is not the case that "in philosophy anything goes, that one can say anything and make any speculation that one likes. On the contrary, precisely because we lack established empirical or mathematical methods for investigating philosophical problems, we have to be all the more rigorous and precise in our philosophical analyses" (Oladipo 2008:11).

These features reflect through every branch of philosophy in the interrogation of their subject matter either as first order disciplines or as second order ones that interrogate the aims, procedures and outcomes of other disciplines.

The Nature of Philosophy and its Concerns with the Discipline of Science

We turn the focus of the discussion now to how the nature of philosophy as a discipline determines how it engages the discipline of science.

According to Staniland (2000:4), a person is engaged in philosophising if the person is engaged in a train of thought whose ultimate purpose is the criticism of certain vitally important ideas. This opinion of Staniland, which defines philosophy as the criticism of the ideas we live by, rightly places the activity of criticism as an essential activity in the act of philosophising. Philosophy is a critical discipline. "An exercise is critical if and only if it avoids any kind of dogma however trivial" (Owolabi 2000: xi). In philosophy, we achieve our aim "by probing criticism- letting loose our entire intellectual activity in the consideration of a problem and pursuing our enquiry with a preparedness to abandon our most cherished beliefs if reason demands that we so do" (Bodunrin 1981:23). Philosophy as a discipline criticises received opinions- it is critical of views internal to its field of study and at the same time critical of views expressed in other fields of study. This critical nature of philosophy is directed at making clear all ideas in order to avoid the esoteric and the mystical and in order to provide the justification, where necessary, or refutation, as the case may demand in certain cases, for all beliefs and knowledge claims. In this regard, Owolabi (2000:x) posits that philosophy, avoids ideas that are mysterious, dogmatic and complicated. And that although philosophy mingles with religion and science, it does this not for the purpose of adopting their subjects and methodology, but in order to supply rational arguments for the justification or rejection of those aspects that deserve either acceptance or rejection. Philosophy is, therefore, interested, as a second order enterprise, in interrogating how knowledge is acquired and justified in these other areas, as well as, in criticising and justifying the grounds of the knowledge claims

made in other disciplines, including science. In relation to the discipline of science, philosophy is interested in the evaluation of scientific claims and or knowledge. Philosophy saddles itself with this responsibility because the philosophic spirit "leaves no valuations and aspirations unexamined and no piece of knowledge isolated; it seeks the grounds for the validity of whatever is valid" (Rickman 1979:129).

Another defining feature of philosophy, apart from criticism, is scepticism. In line with its sceptical nature, philosophy challenges science's knowledge claims and demands that we be not easily satisfied with simple or superficial scientific evidence. It demands that there is need to cast doubt on scientific claims and that unless certain criteria are met that we should deny such claims. The reason why philosophy makes this demand is because science relies heavily for its claims on sense experience which is unfortunately prone to error. We do know from experience, for instance, that our senses (even when aided with instruments) are, in some cases, deceitful or unreliable. And inasmuch as this is true, we are cautioned in relying on them for deriving absolute certain knowledge of phenomena as they are, and beyond that, in predicting the future. In the light of the above description of philosophy, we will proceed in evaluating the mission of those who have argued for the severing of epistemology as a cardinal branch of philosophy, just as other branches of knowledge, with developed methodologies, have over time been severed from philosophy.

Should Science be the Method?

One of the reasons for the naturalist's proposal for replacing traditional ways of addressing epistemological issues with the methodologies of science is that traditional epistemology has failed to achieve certainty. However, to us, certainty is definitely elusive to man. To err is human, and the fact remains that in all human endeavours errors occur, more so in science. Wiredu has rightly concluded that: "knowledge, whether it be *a priori* or empirical or about necessary or contingent propositions, can have only a certainty compatible with human fallibility. In every case it is bound to the conditions of human existence, biological and cultural" (Wiredu 1995:146). This is the reason why explanations, theories and laws change in science. Since change is the one constant thing in nature (change, not necessarily in the sense that nature itself changes but that our understanding of nature changes), scientific claims, knowledge, and theories can only at best be transitory since "what we say about reality is the product of certain orientation of being, certain interest, certain motivation, our individual will and arbitrariness" (Unah 2004:63).

Scientific claims, knowledge, and theories are susceptible to change. This is why scientists in their efforts to provide a better understanding of nature constantly attempt to make new discoveries and develop new concepts, laws and theories, that better enhance our understanding of natural phenomena. In doing this, scientists attempt to dislodge or modify old explanatory models by causing paradigm shift. Of a truth then, "the precision and the reliability of mathematics and the experimental sciences seem to make these the definitive types of knowledge," says Rosen, "even though it would be difficult to say that such knowledge is unchangeable" (Rosen 2000:xiv). Derry (1999:4), therefore, rightly posits, "this body of scientific results changes from year to year, and may sometimes be unrecognisable from one generation to another." Oladipo makes the same point when he posits that:

our knowledge of the world, in spite of the giant strides that has been taken by science in the growth of knowledge, is still limited, just as the resources- spiritual, intellectual and

moral- available to us for coping with the challenges of life are characteristically inadequate. Given this situation, the ideas and ideals- core aspects of world-views- we live by are best regarded as tentative guides, which can be re-examined from time to time in the light of new knowledge or information and our understanding of our socio-cultural condition and its existential demands at any given time (Oladipo 2008:16). ✖

Given the fact that the specialised knowledge possessed by scientists is highly fallible leading to a situation in which today's scientific knowledge may turn out to have been today's scientific error, philosophy needs to scrutinise the claims in the sciences in order to eliminate erroneous beliefs. Science as a body of imperfection can hence not be taken as the paradigm for attaining the normative aim of the philosopher in arriving at what knowledge is indeed. Gyekye (1997:24) rightly holds then, "that philosophy speculates about the whole range of the human experience: it provides conceptual interpretation and analysis of that experience, necessarily doing so not only by responding to the basic issues and problems generated by that experience but also by suggesting new or alternative ways of thought and action." Indeed then, the philosophical quest for absolute certainty, for perfection, is not out of place. It is a reminder that we can be better than we are, that there are lofty heights of ideals yet to be attained and the search for which we must not relent. That philosophical quest, hence, keeps the insatiable human spirit searching, researching and further researching for the perfection, which according to Plato, resides in the world of forms. At the heart of this search is the conviction that certainty, absolute truth, is radically different from human's opinion or judgement of it.

Furthermore, given the fact that there is a distinction between appearance and reality, there is cause for the philosopher to question the scientist as to whether the latter had really dealt with reality of a phenomenon in itself or its appearance. This concern is justified in the light of the view expressed by Agnostic Materialism that holds that even though ultimate reality is material in nature, yet that even with all the advances in knowledge about matter, made possible by science now, we are still ignorant of its essential nature. The state of our ignorance cannot be eliminated totally, even in the future, given the fact that even the increase in our knowledge about the ultimate and fundamental reality in the future will not imply that we have laid hold of reality's essential nature for there is more to matter than what human understanding can capture given the limitation of our conceptual scheme, the limitation of man's devised measuring instruments of matter and the fact that we can only know the revealed aspect of matter. Although lengthy, permit us to quote how Raymond N. Osei captures this point. According to him,

... though we have accumulated across the centuries a great deal of information about the underlying stuff and workings of this world- thanks to the advances in science- yet we are far from clear as regards the intrinsic nature of this reality. As contemporary philosophers remind us again and again, the question is not that it is a matter of time, and not the inadequacy of our conceptual systems (common sense and scientific), that accounts for our ignorance of this reality. It is true that in time we will come to acquire more knowledge of the workings of this ubiquitous stuff by deploying our existing conceptual systems (enriched by time and experience). Yet, in spite of these advances in the past and possible advances in the future, we despair that the basic structure of our present conceptual systems could in the final analysis reveal to us this reality. This scepticism is sustained by the fact that we have epistemic

access to two distinct kinds of phenomena: the mental and the physical, or the experiential and the non-experiential; we also have strong intuition that there is an intimate relationship between the two phenomena; but our current conceptual systems seem wholly inadequate in offering a coherent account of this relationship. This is the perplexity that afflicts our human condition (Osei 2006:9-10).

Holding a similar view, Unah (2004) has argued that reality is, on the one hand, multi-faceted and, on the other, perpetually in process. Being multi-faceted implies that reality has many faces or many dimension, while being perpetually in process entails that reality is not localisable, meaning that reality is always unfolding itself, always more than what it is at any time. The implication of these, according to Unah (2004:63), is that "there can be no adequate conceptualisations of it. If there can be no total conceptualisation of it, there is always something left to see and say. There is always something to excite our ontological wonder, something to give rise to further questioning."

Moreover, since the knowledge expressed in science is a tentative expression of and partial understanding of the events and natural phenomena in our world, these expressions inevitably have their weaknesses and strength. It is the task of philosophy to expose the weaknesses and, if possible, further strengthen the area of strength.

Furthermore, philosophy is interested in science in order to rein in the excesses of science. Science ought to look to philosophy, in one form or another, not simply for justification of its achievements or immense power but for insight into its legitimate purpose and its wise limitations (Rosen 2000:xxvi). Like a mother that keeps its children in check philosophy stimulates rich discourses about the values that ought to guide the discipline of science so that the discipline can indeed realise the highest good for humanity. To understand the importance of this interest of philosophy we should just evaluate the threat that unbridled development in science has contributed to environmental crisis in our world today, availability of weapons of mass destruction which increasingly make chaos, calamity and destruction to stare humanity in the face. Olu-Owolabi (2011:31) concludes on this issue that:

With the feats of science in the modern age, scientific enterprise is allowed to have a field day and the philosophical wisdom that ought to be the guiding and directing force is therefore sent out of the arena of performance.... This is the situation of things today. Science is the performing dog; philosophy is the guardian-police. There is the need to bring in the philosophical enterprise with its attendant wisdom to temper the excesses of sciences.

In the light of this, we are convinced that rather than having epistemology integrated into the discipline of science what we should seek to have is the dialogue of the disciplines. As Kujore (1977:19) had rightly noted, "certainly, in a properly conceived development of national character, scientific knowledge and technical expertise should go hand-in-hand with a well-adjusted sense of human values and a conscious discipline of character." He further holds,

... there is nothing to be gained in creating an unnecessary gap between the sciences and the humanities and in regarding both as implacable rivals; the sciences can, and should, be studied in a humanistic spirit, and the humanities can, and should, be cultivated in a scientific spirit. I believe also we can now realise that we do not stand to lose, but rather have much to profit from, by sharing the common and great experiences of the past of humanity (Kujore 1977:21).

What is this common and great experience of the past of humanity, especially as it relates to the production of knowledge? It is that the production of knowledge at its inception did not suffer the kind

of deficient demarcation now known in the generation of knowledge. The situation was such that the sciences (in the general understanding of the word) kicked off as philosophy. It is in the light of this that, the proposal of those who advocate a type of naturalised epistemology that rejects the basic tenet of the Quinean type of epistemology that seeks to totally replace the philosophical inquiry into epistemology with scientific inquiry and would rather have us have an epistemology that takes cognisance of development in science says nothing new other than requiring us to return to the ancient track abandoned in contemporary scholarship.

According to Quine (1968:185), "knowledge, mind and meaning are part of the same world that they have to do, and that they are to be studied in the same empirical spirit that animates natural science. There is no place for a prior[i] philosophy." The aim of the proponents of naturalised epistemology that seeks to have epistemology as a branch of science, ignores the fact that science is a branch of knowledge and that just as it has a claim to its method of generating knowledge other branches of knowledge should equally be permitted to thrive on methodologies adjudged suitable for making progress in those disciplines, taking into cognisance the objects they study. We doubt, for instance, whether philosophical problems and issues can be solved by the empirical method for there is no amount of observation that can determine the knowledge about whether or not the universe has a purpose and whether, and in what sense, human beings have free will (Gyekye 1997:7). We cannot agree less with Gioldymin (1972:53) that "knowledge, in the form of scientific and mathematical theories belongs to the world of ideas and is to be studied not with the methods of psychology but by analysing, developing and criticising the content of theories in relation to problems which are likewise susceptible to similar scrutiny...." This is best done in philosophy in the light of the qualities it possesses. John R. Searle has argued rightly, to some extent, that there is no sharp line of division between philosophy and science for both, in principle, are universal in subject matter and both aim at the truth. However, according to him,

though there is no sharp dividing line, there are important differences in method, style and presuppositions. Philosophical problems tend to have three related features that scientific problems do not have. First, philosophy is in large part concerned with questions that we have not yet found satisfactory and systematic way to answer. Second, philosophical questions tend to be what I will call 'framework' questions; that is, they tend to deal with frameworks of phenomena, rather than with specific individual questions. And third, philosophical questions are typically about our concepts and the relationship between our concepts and the world they represent (Seale 1999:2070).

In the final analysis, some things are not amenable to treatment scientifically. In fact, Quine's claims were philosophically argued for and not scientifically proven. Says Kertesz (2002:274), "the arguments which Quine puts forward in order to prove this conclusion is of exactly the *same philosophical nature* which characterised both scepticism and traditional epistemology."

Conclusion

Naturalised epistemologists are advocating that epistemology should be severed from *apriori* philosophy and placed under natural science. However, we have contended that the scientific method has some inadequacies which renders it insufficient in addressing some epistemic issues. There are certain questions about knowledge as well as some problems and issues which can only best be tackled philosophically. This position of ours does not entail that there can be no meaningful scientific inquiry

into certain epistemic claims, issues or problems. Rather, the point being made is that there are certain normative, general, fundamental and abstracts issues regarding knowledge which are amenable to treatment only through philosophical means.

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