

The Naturalism Question in Feminism

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Abstract

The subject of this essay is to what extent a feminist should embrace naturalist commitments. I characterize naturalism as involving two commitments: a rejection of normativity and a commitment to philosophy as a descriptive discipline consisting of empirical questions to be answered by empirical methods. I argue that a feminist should not be a naturalist about normativity because feminists need to engage in an inherently normative enquiry. On the other hand, a naturalist move, wherein one offers a causal explanation to undercut a normative claim, is an essential part of a good ideology critique, which is a feminist staple. As feminists believe that our lived experiences and social and material conditions are relevant to our theorizing, empirical questions should play an integral role in normative enquiry, but since philosophy is not exhausted by such empirical enquiry, philosophy isn't an empirical science.

Keywords: feminism, naturalism, normativity, ideology critique

Introduction

The Age of Aquarius is over. Despite the popularity of supernatural phenomena in film and television, we live in an era when a naturalist worldview is dominant in the academy. While such a worldview rejects spiritual phenomena, it is quite unclear what else it entails. In fact, on closer inspection, what goes by the label 'naturalism' often turns out to be whatever the particular philosopher takes for granted that is consistent with a belief in the value of scientific enquiry. This might incline us to think there is no real question, nothing at stake, in a debate over naturalism. But we would be mistaken. Not only is there a real question; it is exceedingly important, especially for philosophical projects that ultimately have a practical aim, such as feminist philosophy.

While feminist philosophy is not a homogenous field and what goes on under the label 'feminist' is as diverse as what gets labeled 'naturalist', it has a single practical aim, which is to end the oppression of women. Feminists and philosophers committed to ending other kinds of oppression are natural allies and many feminists believe that working against sexist oppression can only be done in conjunction with working against other kinds of oppression. Others focus exclusively on sexist oppression. That does not matter for our discussion here. The naturalism question is equally important for all anti-oppression projects.

What is the naturalism question in feminism? It is this:

To what extent should a feminist embrace naturalist commitments?

This essay is dedicated to clarifying what is at stake in answering this question. My aim will be to isolate naturalist claims that are contested within feminism, to isolate, if you will, the naturalism question in feminism. This will not be a comprehensive survey of various feminist philosophers' stance towards naturalism, but rather a critical engagement with contested naturalist commitments from a feminist perspective.ⁱ

We begin by discussing what is meant by “naturalist commitments”.

Naturalist Commitments

While most feminists who embrace naturalism cite Quine as their inspirationⁱⁱ, we do well to start with Hume on inductionⁱⁱⁱ to get a sense of what the key naturalist commitments come to. After all, the position Quine advocated had its roots in Hume, or as Quine put it, “the Humean predicament is the human predicament”^{iv}. What I shall do is tell a broadly Humean story about the naturalization of normativity. My very brief story begins with Hume's skepticism about inductive inference and generalizes to other phenomena where one might expect to find a correct/incorrect distinction, including other epistemic phenomena, but also, moral, social, aesthetic, and so on. I don't offer this as the historically correct view of Hume; it may be a portrait of an ancestor who exists only in our family lore.

Hume argued^v that we cannot justify rationally our inductive inferences. For instance, there is no rational principle that can get us from “in human memory, the sun has risen every morning” to “tomorrow the sun will rise” and hence when we draw that inference, we do not do so on the basis of a *rational* ground, but a *non-rational* one, namely, habit or custom.

It would be mistaken to say that induction is *justified* by reference to habit or custom. That we are in the habit of doing something cannot ground our claim to its *rightness*. Custom may offer a *causal explanation* of how we came to have a belief, but it is not a *rational justification* for that belief.. Does this then mean that we cannot say that some inductive inferences are right and others wrong? Yes, in the absence of a further story that justifies our habits, we cannot say that one inference is better than another. We can only say that we draw certain inferences, not others. From now on, I will reserve the word “justification” for the *normative* notion of that which grounds our claim to the rightness of our beliefs or actions. We can then say that the upshot of Hume's argument is a naturalism about the normativity of inductive inferences: there is no such thing as the right or wrong inferences, there is no epistemic normativity in the domain of inductive inferences.

Now that it is clear what naturalism about normativity with respect to inductive inferences is, we can generalize from this reading of Hume to what I call “naturalism about normativity” about other epistemic phenomena, be they practices, actions, or attitudes. We can then further generalize from the epistemic to other kinds of actions, practices, and attitudes, such as moral, political, social, or aesthetic:^{vi}

Naturalism about normativity with regard to X (where X is an action, attitude, or practice): There is no such thing as normativity with regard to X and no such thing as a justification for X: there aren't right and wrong practices, better and worse ones, just ones we engage in and ones we don't. Likewise, there is no justification for a particular action or attitude, just a causal explanation of it.

A philosopher may be a naturalist about all normativity, or only certain kinds of normativity. On my reading of Hume, Hume is a naturalist about epistemic norms relating to inductive inferences, in the sense that traditionally epistemic practices, including inductive inferences, had been thought to be grounded in reason, and certain inductive inferences thought to be better justified rationally than some other ones. Hume thinks that there is no such epistemic normativity, as the traditional understanding would have it. And if there isn't, how are we to think of the task of epistemology? What are epistemologists left to do? We can do an empirical investigation into how we form beliefs—what our epistemic habits are—and epistemology then becomes a branch of psychology. This is precisely what the inspiration for the 20th Century version of naturalism, W.v.O. Quine, advocated in the influential essay “Epistemology Naturalized” (Quine 1969).

Naturalism in Quine's hands is characterized by a rejection of normativity and commitment to epistemology as an empirical science:

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. ...But a conspicuous difference between old epistemology and the epistemological enterprise in this new psychological setting is that we can now make free use of empirical psychology. (Quine 1969: 82–3)

Our main focus will be on the stance towards normativity, but towards the end we will discuss briefly the role of empirical enquiry in philosophical theorizing.

Feminist philosophers often focus on the question of normativity with respect to a particular domain or practice. But even those who advocate naturalism about normativity in ethics or political philosophy typically do so by appealing to the epistemic case (Jaggar 2000, Walker 2001). Naturalized epistemology thus provides the starting point for feminists who advocate naturalist approaches in other subfields of philosophy.

There are other theses that a commitment to naturalism might involve, but what I have called “naturalism about normativity” is the sticking point for feminists. It is both that naturalism about normativity seems to promise powerful critical resources in the fight against sexist oppression, because the justification for oppressive institutions and practices is undercut, but it also leaves feminists with few resources to construct a theory of what makes an action or practice right or wrong.

Let us see what naturalism about normativity in its crudest form can offer to a critical project of fighting sexist oppression, and why it falls short of supporting a normative theory.

Naturalism about all normativity in feminist hands

Feminist philosophers have been attracted to the critical potential of naturalism about normativity, and for good reason. In broadest terms, a critical move that relies on naturalist commitments is part of an ideology critique: the justificatory story that is offered to underwrite sexist attitudes, actions, practices, or institutions are undercut. The structure of the criticism is this: A claim to the effect that a certain attitude, action, or practice is justified is undercut by showing it to lack such justification, because hope for justification in that realm of human inquiry and conduct is misplaced. The claim of *rightness* is undercut, and thus the justificatory story—the ideology—is rendered null and void^{vii} and the process of liberation from such oppressive attitudes, actions or practices can begin.

But even though naturalism about normativity with regard to a certain phenomenon is a powerful critical tool and especially useful for feminists engaged in ideology critique, its critical potential vanishes for the philosopher who rejects all normativity. This is an important point and worth going through in detail.

Consider a form of ideology critique which involves undercutting the story used by an employer to justify a certain hiring for positions. This is a critique that is epistemic, as opposed to moral, in that the claim at issue is a claim about the employer's judgments of competence of candidates. In this scenario, the employer judges a male candidate to be better qualified than a female one, based on the evaluation of their CVs. The feminist critiques the employer's claim that the male is more competent than the female, by referring to studies of implicit bias. These studies have shown that when one candidate is found more competent than another it is often (subconsciously) based on various associations employers have with the markers on the candidates' resumes. For example, studies have shown that people evaluate CVs with a male name at the top more favorably than an identical CV with a female name and are more likely to hire the male (Steinpreis, Anders, and Ritzke, 1999).^{viii} While the employer is *caused* to favor one candidate over the other, the employer is not rationally justified in doing so; so the claim that the employer hired the best qualified candidate is undercut. They hired the one they were psychologically compelled to hire. The claim that the hiring is *right* is undercut, and so is the ideology accompanying the hiring.

But what exactly have we accomplished in this manner? In what sense is the ideology "undercut"? Did we show that the ideology was *incorrect*? And more to the point, did we show that the hiring was therefore *wrong*?

For the hiring to be wrong it minimally has to be that the judgment of competence was wrong. The latter is an epistemic matter, the former moral. Do we have any ground to stand on if we want to claim that the hiring was *wrong*? The structure of the argument is this:

1. if there is no epistemic justification in the realm of hiring, then it's not the case that a judgment of competence is epistemically right
2. if it's not the case that a judgment of competence is epistemically right, then it's not the case that the hiring was morally right
3. there is no epistemic justification in the realm of hiring

4. it is not the case that the hiring was morally right

But the following argument works just as well:

1. if there if there is no epistemic justification in the realm of hiring, then it's not the case that a judgment of competence is epistemically wrong
2. if it's not the case that a judgment of competence is epistemically wrong, then it's not the case that the hiring was morally wrong
3. there is no epistemic justification in the realm of hiring
4. it is not the case that the hiring was morally wrong

The real critical bite of naturalism about normativity here thus seems to be not that a certain hiring practice was biased or wrong, but that the claim to its being the right hiring was wrong. According to the feminist critic, the employer is not *entitled to claim* that the hiring is *right*. They are not entitled to it, because there is no such thing. Hirings are not the kind of thing that can be right or wrong. It is a category mistake to say that a hiring is right.

But isn't the aim of the feminist to criticize the hiring practices, and not just the discourse about it? For that is all we seem able to do: criticize discourse. We then become the talk police: "You shouldn't say this or that kind of thing!" And why not? You would be committing the gravest sin of all: the category mistake!

Matters are worse still for the feminist who rejects all forms of normativity. For how would we even be able to engage in the ideology critique at all? How could we even accuse the employer of committing a category mistake? How could we assert that the employer is wrong in claiming that the hiring was justified? The critique of the employer that claims it is wrong because it is a category mistake goes like this:

1. employer claims that a is F
2. it's not the case that a is F, because asserting that a is F is a category mistake
3. employer is in error in claiming that a is F

The kind of normativity the feminist critic needs to make this argument is minimal, but still a species of normativity. We need the notion of a category mistake, the principle that one is in error when one asserts the false, and simple propositional logic.

1. employer asserts that a is F
2. if S asserts P, and $\neg P$, then S is in error in asserting P [one is in error when one asserts the false]
3. $\neg(a \text{ is } F)$ and $\neg(a \text{ is } \neg F)$ [Category mistake]
4. employer is in error in asserting that a is F [from 1, 2, 3]

The main point of interest here is the principle that one is in error when one asserts the false. This is not to be confused with norms of assertion, Gricean or other ones (cf. Grice 1989) for it is not about whether the speaker is praiseworthy or blameworthy, but rather whether they are correct or incorrect in their assertion. Do they assert the facts as they are? We obviously have to rely on the notion of truth and falsity, which not everyone will like, but we also have to take on board some standard of correctness: a contemporary of Pericles is incorrect in asserting that the Earth is flat, although they are not blameworthy; in fact, given their evidence, they are entitled to assert that the Earth is flat. Nevertheless they are incorrect, because the Earth isn't flat.

But a philosopher who rejects all normativity ought not like the principle that one is in error when one asserts the false. On their account, it isn't the case that there are certain assertions that are correct and others incorrect; there are just the ones we do make and the ones we don't. Such a philosopher not only cannot criticize the employer's hiring of the candidate, but cannot engage in discourse criticism either, since rightness and wrongness with regard to claims and assertions are misplaced. But the philosopher who rejects all forms of normativity cannot even make sense of the notion of misplacement, since that notion presupposes that there things that are *correctly* placed, and others that are misplaced. By hypothesis, the philosopher who rejects all forms of normativity cannot make sense of a correct/incorrect distinction, and thus this line of argument isn't available to them. The naturalist worldview, in which there are no norms, thus depicts a world in which there is no legitimate criticism either. It is also a world without injustice and oppression, since it is a world entirely devoid of value. Meanwhile, pain and suffering continues.

Obviously, it isn't by itself a good argument against naturalism about all normativity that if we feminists embrace it, then we don't have any critical tools by which to argue for a better world. But this is as good a point as any to linger with the aim of feminist theorizing and what the methodology thus has to be. We start with the widespread lived experience of oppression and mistreatment and look for theories that can explain those lived experiences and the suffering that accompanies it. Such theories are inherently normative since the naturalistic worldview leaves no room for harm and suffering. Only in the face of very strong arguments to the effect that our phenomenology is in radical error (which includes the claim that we are not suffering after all, contrary to our immediate evidence) should we abandon our attempt to make sense of that phenomenology and seek theories that can make the situation better. But no argument has been presented that would force us to abandon our quest. And that is why we feminists should reject a worldview that banishes all normativity.

Evolutionary psychology (cf. Driscoll 2013) provides interesting case studies, given the foregoing discussion. According to evolutionary psychology, social phenomena are caused by biological phenomena. For instance, the prevalence of domestic violence is causally explained by reference to genetic factors in males and the gendered division of labor explained causally by reference to biological differences between males and females. Apart from the various other theoretical criticisms that can be levied against such views—not least of which is the availability of superior alternative explanations (cf. Fehr 2011)—, we note a striking feature of such explanations. They are offered as justificatory stories (ideologies accompanying the practices) in the face of criticism of these practices as unjust. But if the social is causally determined by the biological, there are no such things as justifications, and hence a justificatory story is unavailable. And the worldview we are offered is the foremen-

tioned world without norms. It is a world without suffering and oppression^{ix}, to be sure, because nothing in that world is bad or good. It is, also, a world that leaves us without hope that anything will ever get better. As we saw above, we have reasons to reject this worldview.

Pragmatic normativity?

Let's go back to Hume on induction and ask: is there any way to distinguish between the habits we engage in so we can say that some of those habits are better than others in a way that suffices for feminist aims? There are two kinds of attempts to make sense of some habits being better than others, the first that some are somehow more *reliable*, and the second that they are somehow more *useful*. I'm taking the first notion to be a non-normative, naturalistic notion and thus not of use to the feminist, given the foregoing discussion, but what about the latter?

Nelson Goodman, in "The New Riddle of Induction" (Goodman 1955) follows Hume in rejecting a rational justification for inductive inferences. He then goes one step further and argues that some inferences are better than others because of their track record.^x Their track record shows that certain kinds of inferences have been useful in the past, while others have not. In that sense, some inferences are better than others. Importantly, we cannot say that they have a better track record because they are truer or more accurate; that would be to build an epistemic notion of correctness into the notion of *usefulness*, which we won't want to do. Goodman rejects epistemic normativity in the traditional sense, but he allows for some sort of normativity, namely a pragmatic kind.

We can follow Goodman and ask whether we can make use of pragmatic normativity to distinguish among inferences we make. Would it be sufficient for feminist purposes to be able to say of certain inferences or actions that they are more or less useful or more or less prudential for us? We would deny that there is a sense of "epistemic" that is distinct from the pragmatic and the prudential, such that it is epistemically better to draw one inference rather than another, or better to act in a certain way. But we could draw distinctions among phenomena on pragmatic grounds. Could we, for example, critique the employer's hiring, if we relied only on pragmatic norms? We would then say that the employer's judgment of the candidates was not epistemically in error, but pragmatically inferior: it would have been more prudential to have judged the candidates equally qualified, given their CVs, than it was to judge them unequal. Again, we cannot explain utility in terms of a judgment's correctness; we can only rely on the track record in our claim for usefulness. This means that if there is no track record, we have no argument. This also means that if bias is somehow prudential or useful, if it's prudent not to recognize the qualifications of a candidate, for example, that's ok (and there can be little doubt that throughout human history bias has been useful to many). This pragmatic notion has little bite in the face of injustice: whatever is more useful is better; there is no other sense of "better" or "worse". The right is held hostage to what is useful.

From the aforementioned considerations we can see that feminists are not helped by an appeal to a pragmatic notion of normativity, even though we might on occasion be able to give a pragmatic argument against an unjust arrangement.

Naturalism about some kinds of normativity

I have given an argument that relies on the lived experience of women and others who suffer oppression against naturalism about all normativity. Philosophers who aim to end all forms of oppression have strong reasons to reject the view of the world that has no norms. This is a world that has no reasons, only causes; no justifications of any kind, only explanations. We have also seen that the feminist cannot make do with only pragmatic norms. It is now time to turn to a more tempered embrace of naturalism about normativity and its possible usefulness for feminists in particular.

A tempered naturalism might reject some forms of normativity, say inductive or aesthetic, while endorsing others, say, epistemic or moral normativity; the tempered feminist naturalist might reject some entities or alleged norms while endorsing others that are central to her case against gender injustice.. Alternatively, the feminist thinker might reject naturalism, *per se*, but appeal to naturalist explanations to undercut certain claims; naturalistic explanations would thus form part of an ideology critique. Let me address each in turn.

Naturalism about a specific kind of normativity

Given the feminist aim of critiquing gender injustice, is it open to feminists to be naturalists about a certain kind of normativity, say, epistemic or moral? Not, I claim, if we want to be able to criticize moral or epistemic wrongdoing. If we reject epistemic normativity we cannot account for such things as epistemic injustice and incorrect judgment; if we reject moral normativity we cannot legitimately say that it is morally bad for a husband to beat up his wife or molest his children. It is worth lingering with this point. In each case, it isn't that we are embracing a worldview devoid of value, but we are embracing a worldview devoid of a particular kind of value, be it epistemic or moral.

Consider, for example, the employer's judgments of competence. If we want to be able to say that the employer's judgment was *in error*, that it would have been *correct* to judge the candidates equally competent, given their identical CVs, then we need epistemic normativity. And if we are persuaded by Miranda Fricker (Fricker 2007) that there is a distinct type of epistemic injustice, as in the case where markers on the candidate's body or CV are associated with a stereotype of a social group that biases employers' judgments of competence, then we need to be able to legitimately say that the judgment was wrong, epistemically, as well as morally.

Similarly, if we want to advocate for laws that prohibit and prosecute child molestation or sex trafficking because such behavior is morally wrong, we need moral normativity. Again, in the absence of a strong argument to the effect that the lived experiences of millions of people is somehow in error, those lived experiences are the starting point of our theorizing.

Perhaps there are domains of human life the feminist would be happy to allow are devoid of norms. Perhaps aesthetics is such a domain. We need not settle that here. But domains in which injustice against women and other oppressed groups is to be found, are domains in which the feminist needs norms and so must reject naturalism about those norms.

In this last section I will argue that naturalistic explanations can provide a heuristic device used as part of an ideology critique.

A naturalist move as part of an ideology critique

Consider some classic cases of sexist claims that feminist have fought against:

1. Women are better at caring for children and therefore should stay at home and take care of children.
2. Women are inferior intellectually and resources should not be spent to educate them.
3. Women are unable to make their own choices and therefore should not be allowed to vote.
4. Women who have children are scatterbrained and should not be hired for jobs.
5. Battered women lack the courage to leave their husbands and deserve what they get.
6. Women are helpless and need a man to take care of them.
7. Girls are worse at mathematics than boys so resources shouldn't be spent to educate them in mathematics.

The above claims can all be put into the form of a deductive argument, with the recommendation as the conclusion. Arguments where the premises are false are of course easy to refute. The interesting cases are the ones where the premises may indeed be true. Consider 1, for example:

- a. women are better at caring for children,
- b. if women are better at caring for children, then they should stay at home and take care of children
- c. women should stay at home and take care of children

The premise, a., may be true in a society that confines women to the role of caring for children and where the upbringing of little girls is all geared towards that future role. But an exploration of why women are in general better at caring for children reveals the possibility that they may not be, if only sociocultural and material circumstances were different. In particular, had they been able to develop their other talents and engage in activities outside the home in that society, they might not have developed their skills at childrearing. So instead of justifying keeping women at home with the children, women's childrearing skills are shown to be possibly as a result of that setup.

Here we have a classic case of an ideology critique: we reject a justificatory story in favor of a possible causal explanation for the phenomenon and thus undercut the ideological basis for the arrangement in question. This is a classic case of ideology critique; it is also a classic case of a naturalist move: we look at the actual situation the people are in and offer a possible causal explanation for their predicament. The causal explanation undercuts the normative claim. Unlike in the case where we

reject normativity altogether, it isn't that the causal explanation undercuts the normative claim because normative claims are somehow misplaced, but rather that offering the causal explanation of the predicament in question shows that, minimally, the facts aren't all in. In some cases, we need to reserve judgment until we have controlled for all the variables; in others, empirical studies support a complete rejection of the recommendation.^{xi}

Here are similar ways in which the other claims can be countered.

2. Women are found to be inferior intellectually in certain societies or contexts because resources have not been spent to educate them.^{xii}
3. Women are unable to make their own choices in certain societies or contexts because they have not been allowed independence from fathers and husbands.
4. Women who have children are scatterbrained in certain societies and contexts because they have no help with childcare and are overworked and tired.
5. Battered women lack the courage to leave their husbands in certain societies and contexts because they lack social and economic support to do so.
6. Women are helpless in certain societies and contexts because they are prevented from developing their talents.
7. Girls are worse at mathematics than boys in societies and contexts because they are prevented materially and socially from developing their mathematical talents.

In each case there is a corresponding demand to rectify the situation. For example, there is a demand that the society in question provide support and education for women to develop their talents and foster their independence; also a demand that society make available childcare and support for mothers so they can participate fully in society.

These responses always turn on offering a causal explanation (and in some cases, an alternative explanation) of the truth of the premises of the argument that was offered, one that undercuts the justification of some arrangement, practice, or rights and privileges (or lack thereof). It is a naturalist move because we counter a normative claim with a causal explanation, but it is done as part of an ideology critique, and not because the normative concern is somehow misplaced. For instance, in the case of the claim that girls are worse at math than boys in some society, not only do we offer a possible causal explanation for that truth that suggests the possibility that it may not be true, if only circumstances were different. We actually provide empirical evidence that shows that girls, not only do not lag in math in some countries, they actually do better in some societies. Moreover, we can offer empirical evidence that shows that the greater gender equality in a society, as measured along several axes, the smaller is the gender gap in mathematics performance (Kane and Mertz 2012).

In offering causal explanations and empirical data as part of a feminist critique, feminists clearly side with Hume and Quine in insisting that empirical methods have a role to play in philosophy. Philosophy isn't an empirical science, *pace* Quine, but empirical methods and questions are relevant to normative enquiry. Feminists believe that the social and material conditions and lived experiences of

oppressed people are relevant to our theorizing. It is an empirical question what these are. Hence, empirical questions are relevant to our theorizing. But philosophy isn't exhausted by empirical enquiry, because empirical methods can never answer the question what it is that makes a certain attitude, action, or practice right or wrong. We need theorizing that is inherently normative to answer such a question.

Conclusion

The naturalism question in feminism is this: to what extent should a feminist embrace naturalist commitments? I have characterized naturalism as involving two commitments: a rejection of normativity and a commitment to philosophy as a descriptive discipline consisting of empirical questions to be answered by empirical methods. I have argued that a feminist should not be a naturalist about normativity because feminists need to engage in an inherently normative enquiry. On the other hand, a naturalist move, wherein one offers a causal explanation to undercut a normative claim, is an essential part of a good ideology critique, which is a feminist staple. As feminists believe that our lived experiences and social and material conditions are relevant to our theorizing, empirical questions should play an integral role in normative enquiry, but since philosophy is not exhausted by such empirical enquiry, philosophy isn't an empirical science.

ⁱ Many feminist philosophers have advocated naturalism in their subfield of feminist philosophy. Prominent here are Louise Antony (1994, 2000), Lorraine Code (1987, 1991, 1995, 1996), Lynn Hankinson Nelson (1990, 2003), and Elizabeth Potter (1995, 2001) in epistemology, Helen Longino (1990) in philosophy of science, Alison Wylie (1999) in philosophy of archaeology, and Alison Jaggar (2000) and Margaret Urban Walker (2001) in ethics.

ⁱⁱ Cf. Antony 1994, Jaggar 2000 and Walker 2001.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hume 1748, sections iv and v.

^{iv} Quine 1969, p 69.

^v The textbook interpretation goes like this: We are looking for the justification of our belief that the sun will rise tomorrow, given that it has risen every day in human memory. We rely on the sun's rising; what is our reliance based on? How do we get from:

1) In human memory, the sun has risen every morning.

to

C) The sun will rise tomorrow.

On Hume's view, statements come in two kinds: Relations of Ideas and Matters of Fact. Our belief in the truth of the latter is justified by an appeal to an empirical investigation of some sort, be it perception or testimony, or the conclusion of an argument with premises justified in that way. Our belief in a Relation of Ideas is justified by ascertaining that the negation of it yields a contradiction.

1) is a Matter of Fact, and our belief in it justified by an appeal to our own experience and the testimony of others. But how do we get from 1) to C)? We need the conditional, 2), to get there, but how is 2) justified?

1) In human memory, the sun has risen every morning.

2) If in human memory, the sun has risen every morning, then the sun will rise tomorrow.

C) The sun will rise tomorrow.

2) is not a Relation of Ideas, as its negation does not yield a contradiction, and it is not an ascertainable Matter of Fact, so our belief in it must rely on our belief in another statement. 3) will do:

3) The future will resemble the past.

But now we ask the same question: how is our belief in 3) to be justified? It is neither an ascertainable Matter of Fact, nor a Relation of Ideas, so our belief in it must rely on our belief in yet another statement. 4) will do:

4) In the past the future has resembled the past, so in the future the future will resemble the past.

And now we are in a pickle. Our belief in 4) is justified by our belief in 3), so 4) cannot underwrite our belief in 3). Our justification is circular.

^{vi} That naturalism and the scientific worldview have no room for normativity is a common theme. Cf. De Caro and Macarthur 2010; for early formulations, see Kim 1988 and Kornblith 1994; for feminist discussions see, e.g., Clough 2004, Tanesini 2010.

^{vii} I am using "ideology" here to designate the justificatory story offered to underwrite a phenomenon, be it a practice, attitude, or what have you. I do not mean to use it as a pejorative. While many justificatory stories are pernicious and mask an unjust arrangement, some are not.

^{viii} This kind of bias in hiring is documented and there is now a large body of literature on implicit bias. Most of the studies have focused on implicit bias related to gender or race. The results of the first study were published in Greenwald and Banaji 1995.

^{ix} I take both *oppression* and *suffering* to be normative notions.

^x In Goodman's view, certain predicates (e.g. "green" and "blue") are more "projectible" than others ("grue" and "bleen"), because of their track record.

^{xi} In the first kind of case, lack of resources and access and so on *might* be the explanation for the predicament; in the second kind of case is demonstrably is. The case of difference in math performance is an example of the latter. See Kane and Mertz 2012.

xii Mary Wollstonecraft argues something like this in Wollstonecraft 1792.

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