COMMON SENSE AND A PRIORI EPISTEMOLOGY

Some philosophers have adopted both a commonsense approach to the theory of knowledge and held that some epistemic principles are knowable a priori. Roderick Chisholm is a prominent example of a philosopher who does both. In The Problem of the Criterion, Chisholm holds that in attempting to discover criteria of evidence we should begin with particular commonsense examples of knowledge, such as I know that I have two hands and I know that there are other people.1 According to Chisholm, our knowledge of these particular epistemic facts does not depend upon our knowing criteria of evidence or knowledge. Moreover, we may reject various criteria of evidence and knowledge because they do not fit with these particular epistemic facts. Thus, according to Chisholm, we may reject the empiricist criterion of knowledge held by Locke and Hume because it implies that we do not know things that we do in fact know, because it conflicts with our commonsense epistemic beliefs.

But can one consistently accept both an a priori epistemology and a commonsense approach to the theory of knowledge? Commonsense epistemic beliefs such as, "I know I have two hands" and "I know there are other people who think" are beliefs about contingent propositions. It is only contingently true that I know such things. How can one take such contingent commonsense beliefs as data for answering the traditional question, "What makes justified beliefs justified?" and hold that the answers to this question are general principles known a priori?

Whether an a priori epistemology fits with a commonsense approach depends on the nature of a priori knowledge and justification. I will argue that some accounts of a priori justification, such as Chisholm's own account, and thus some forms of a priori epistemology are incompatible with a commonsense approach. Indeed, given some accounts of a priori justification it is simply not plausible to think that any substantive epistemic principles are knowable a priori. There are, however, "modest"
accounts of *a priori* justification that are compatible with a commonsense approach. I shall also argue that some forms of *a priori* epistemology compatible with a commonsense approach are also compatible with certain forms of epistemic naturalism. In this respect, a commitment to a commonsense approach in epistemology supports a rapprochement between *a priori* epistemology and certain forms of epistemic naturalism. In this section, however, I want to describe briefly what I take to be characteristic of "*a priori* epistemology" and a commonsense approach to the theory of knowledge.

One traditional task of the theory of knowledge is to tell us what makes a justified belief justified. In other words, one traditional task of epistemology is to discover substantive epistemic principles, principles that tell us under what conditions a belief is justified. Ostensible examples of such principles are the following:

1. If S has a headache and considers whether he has a headache, then S is justified in believing that he has a headache.
2. If S seems to remember that *p* and has no ground for doubting that *p*, then S is justified in believing that *p*.
3. If S perceptually takes that *p* and has no ground for doubting that *p*, then S is justified in believing that *p*.

Some philosophers, including Chisholm, have thought that these or similar principles are necessarily true. They maintain that these principles are not true in virtue of their "logical form" but represent synthetic necessary truths knowable *a priori*. In *The Problem of the Criterion*, Chisholm tells us, "the criteria that we formulate, if they are adequate, will be principles that are necessarily true."

Let us say that an "*a priori* theory of knowledge" or an "*a priori* epistemology" accepts the following two theses: (a) human beings can have *a priori* grounds or reasons for accepting substantive epistemic principles, and (b) human beings can be justified in believing or know substantive epistemic principles *a priori*.

There are several points worth making about these theses. First, thesis (a) does not imply that *a priori* grounds or reasons must be indefeasible or that the beliefs based on those grounds must be certain. Though
some views of *a priori* justification imply that beliefs having basic *a priori* justification must be certain and indefeasible, others do not. Thus it is not an essential feature of *a priori* epistemology that basic *a priori* justification is certain and indefeasible. Second, in stating the first thesis, I have referred to "*a priori* grounds or reasons." Among those philosophers who agree there is *a priori* justification it is not clear that there is any consensus about what confers, if only defeasibly, *a priori* justification. Thus, it is not clear whether one’s belief that *p* has (defeasible) *a priori* justification in virtue of one’s having a *sui generis* propositional attitude toward *p*, one’s having a certain disposition to believe *p*, one’s belief originating in a properly functioning faculty of reason, etc. I shall use the notion of "*a priori* grounds and reasons" broadly enough to cover these various possibilities. Third, I assume that *a priori* justification or knowledge would require that (i) there be *a priori* grounds or reasons and (ii) these grounds or reasons be undefeated. If this is so, then thesis (b) is stronger than (a). Thesis (a) simply says that we can have some *a priori* ground or reason for accepting substantive epistemic principles. Thesis (b) tells us that human beings can have such grounds undefeated. Fourth, one might hold that an *a priori* epistemology is committed only to thesis (a), only to the view that one can have some *a priori* ground for accepting some substantive epistemic principles. Perhaps this is so, and surely some philosophers would reject even this more modest claim. Still, it seems that if one wants to defend the possibility of an *a priori* theory of knowledge, then one wants to hold the stronger claim that there are some substantive epistemic principles that we can be justified in believing *a priori*. So I shall assume, perhaps controversially, that an *a priori* epistemology holds both (a) and (b). Finally, nothing in this description of *a priori* epistemology implies that it is a "first philosophy" or that whatever one is justified in believing, one is justified in believing in virtue of having deduced it from self-evident epistemic principles. (Indeed, the principles given above are incompatible with such a view.) Nothing in it implies that the *a priori* epistemologist must "start from zero" in trying to discover the correct epistemic principles or that he must begin his epistemological inquiries free of any assumptions.4

Turning from *a priori* epistemology, let us consider briefly the commonsense approach to the theory of knowledge. I suggest that there are three main characteristics of the commonsense tradition in philosophy.
First, in answering certain philosophical questions, commonsensism holds that it is appropriate to take as data certain ordinary, yet widely and deeply held, beliefs. Among the beliefs that commonsensism takes as data are beliefs about the world around us, e.g., that there are other people who think and feel, that the earth has existed for many years, that there are tables, etc. In addition, it takes as data various *epistemic* beliefs about what we and other people know or are justified in believing, e.g., that we know that earth has existed for many years, that we know that there are other people that think and feel, that we know there are tables, etc. Thus, Chisholm says it is characteristic of commonsensism to begin with the assumption that “we do know most, if not all, of those things that ordinary people think that they know.” And Chisholm cites with approval G. E. Moore’s comment that, “There is no reason why we should not, in this respect, make our philosophical opinions agree with what we necessarily believe at other times. There is no reason why I should not confidently assert that I do really *know* some external facts, although I cannot prove the assertion except by simply assuming that I do. I am, in fact, as certain of this as of anything; and as reasonably certain of it.”

Second, the commonsense philosopher takes these beliefs as data without having any proof for them. He holds that it is appropriate to take these beliefs as data even though one has not proved or given any argument for them. It is these commonsense beliefs that are the starting points of philosophical inquiry and reflection and not the premises from which one might seek to prove them. Thus, whatever feature makes it appropriate for such beliefs to serve as data does not depend on one’s having proved or argued that these beliefs are true.

There is a third characteristic that is equally important, though hard to explain in any very precise fashion. The commonsense tradition is not committed to the view that our commonsense beliefs are immune to revision, but it does assign our commonsense beliefs a great deal of “weight” or importance. I know no clear or simple way of explaining how much weight the philosophers in this tradition assign to these beliefs. We might try to put the point by saying that the commonsense philosopher finds a heavy presumption in favor of such beliefs and holds that the grounds for abandoning them should be clear and compelling. Of course, the commonsense philosopher accepts this much. But it is not clear that accepting this claim would distinguish him from the follower of Zeno who...
abandons many commonsense beliefs on hearing the master's arguments. It is not therefore a sufficient condition for being a "commonsensist" that one take one's commonsense beliefs as starting points or assume as a provisional starting point that we know pretty much what we think we know. Perhaps we might say simply that when our commonsense beliefs conflict with one another or with a philosophical theory, the commonsense philosopher seeks to resolve the conflict in the way that does the least violence to the body of his commonsense beliefs. The commonsense philosopher thus seeks to be conservative in his revisions of his commonsense beliefs.

In describing a commonsense approach to the theory of knowledge, it is tempting to think of it as a kind of "method" whose followers begin with some criterion for identifying the "commonsense beliefs" and then reject various principles inconsistent with the beliefs picked out by this criterion. Undoubtedly certain ways of describing a commonsense approach to epistemology foster this view. Thus, if we say that a commonsense approach is one that holds that our epistemic principles must be compatible with our commonsense beliefs, then one might naturally expect that a proponent of such an approach had some criterion of identifying commonsense beliefs. Such a temptation, though natural, should be resisted. Some philosophers who take a commonsense approach, such as Roderick Chisholm and G. E. Moore, do not begin, or finish, with a criterion or definition of a commonsense belief. Of course, they reject various views because they are not compatible with particular propositions which we may call commonsense beliefs because these beliefs are ordinary and commonplace and deeply and widely held. But clearly Chisholm and Moore do not begin by identifying a criterion for something's being a commonsense belief, and it is not essential for their approach that they do so.

Commonsense and two views of a priori justification

Let's begin by considering the following Chisholmian view about a priori justification. Suppose we say that S has "basic" a priori justification for believing $p$ iff $p$ is axiomatic for S. Let us say that $p$ is axiomatic for S iff (i) S accepts $p$ and necessarily (ii) $p$ is true and (iii) for every $x$, if $x$ accepts $p$, then $p$ is certain for $x$. On this view, basic a priori justification has two important features. First, whatever is axiomatic for a
person is certain for that person. Certainty is understood here as the very highest level of epistemic justification. Second, as long as one believes what is axiomatic one is justified in believing it. In other words, provided that S believes what is axiomatic for him, there is nothing that he can know or believe that will make him not justified in believing it. In this respect, belief in what is axiomatic is indefeasible, in that one cannot be unjustified in believing p as long as one believes p.

If we think of basic a priori justification in this way, then it is doubtful that we have basic a priori justification for believing substantive epistemic principles. This is so for two reasons. First, however plausible epistemic principles such as (1) - (3) seem, they are not certain for us. They lack the certainty of “2 = 2” or “All men are men.” Second, we do not typically think that the epistemic principles at which we arrive through philosophical reflection are indefeasible. Even as we accept them we remain open to the possibility of counter-examples. Thus, it does not seem that the epistemic principles we accept are axiomatic for us. Now, if we think of basic a priori justification as belief in the axiomatic, then it does not seem that we should accept both (i) that substantive epistemic principles can enjoy basic a priori justification and (ii) a commonsense approach to epistemology. This is because what is axiomatic is indefeasible and the commonsense approach to epistemology regards epistemic principles as being at least in principle defeasible by appeals to what we think we know. It is characteristic of a commonsense approach to epistemology to reject proposed epistemic principles if they do not fit with our commonsense beliefs.

Could we keep the notion of basic a priori justification as belief in the axiomatic, but hold that substantive epistemic principles enjoy non-basic a priori justification? But what is non-basic a priori justification that p? Presumably, it would involve inferring that p from what has basic a priori justification, which in this case would be from those things that are axiomatic for us. But this does not seem very promising, for what are the axiomatic premises from which we can infer (1) - (3) or any substantive epistemic principle? Perhaps we can deduce these principles from premises that are both necessarily true and certain for everyone who accepts them. It is unclear, however, what those premises might be. Moreover, we should note that many of those who have thought that
epistemic principles are known *a priori*, including Chisholm, have not claimed that they are known in this way.

If we want to accept both an *a priori* epistemology and a common-sense approach to epistemology, then we should abandon the Chisholmian view that basic *a priori* justification must be certain and indefeasible. Several recent writers have urged just this. This view also has distinguished historical precedents. Bertrand Russell suggested that intuitive warrant comes in degrees, and A. C. Ewing held that basic *a priori* judgments need be neither certain nor indefeasible. But among the clearest opponents of the view that basic *a priori* justification must be certain and indefeasible is Thomas Reid. Reid asks us to consider the case of a mathematician who, having completed a demonstration, submits it to the examination of a fellow mathematician he takes to be a competent judge. Reid writes, “Here I would ask again, Whether the verdict of his friend, according as it has been favourable or unfavourable, will not greatly increase or diminish confidence in his own judgement? Most certainly it will and it ought.” According to Reid, the level of justification the mathematician’s belief enjoys can be affected by the testimony of his friend. Even though he might have *a priori* grounds for accepting the conclusion, the warrant these grounds confer on his conclusion can be defeated or undercut by the testimony of others. In the preceding example, Reid deals with the non-basic *a priori* justification one has for accepting the conclusion of an argument. However, similar conclusions apply to the level of justification for noninferential *a priori* beliefs. Reid concedes that honest disagreement about “first principles” is possible. “A man of candour and humility will, in such a case, very naturally suspect his own judgment, so far as to be desirous to enter into a serious examination, even of what he has long held as a first principle.” I take Reid to hold that knowledge of such disagreement can lower the credence we ought to place in that judgment. For Reid, then, empirical or non-*a priori* considerations can lower or defeat the justification of some things we have *a priori* grounds for accepting.

Of course, it isn’t only empirical considerations that can lower or defeat *a priori* justification. Plantinga calls our attention to the various assumptions that lead to Russell’s paradoxes, such as that every property has a complement, that there is a property of self-exemplification, etc. Each
of these propositions has a certain degree of plausibility for us. Indeed, it is precisely because the initial assumptions seem so plausible, that each has “a ring of truth” to it, that their paradoxical implications seem so startling. Yet once we see what they imply, it is reasonable for us to reject one or more of these assumptions. Our justification for believing them is undercut or defeated by seeing what they imply.

Recently, Donna Summerfield has defended what she calls “modest” a priori knowledge and justification. Someone has modest a priori justification for believing if he has an a priori justification for believing p and that justification is defeasible. Summerfield holds that a priori justification must be justification that is “independent of experience,” but she distinguishes between two ways in which the justification for a belief may be independent of experience. She writes:

the apriorist’s claim that X has some beliefs that are warranted independently of their relations to experience is ambiguous as between (1) At t, X has some warranted beliefs whose warrant does not, at t, depend on, in the sense that it derives from, the warrant of any empirical belief(s) X has at t or the warrant provided by any experiences X has at or before t, and (2) X has some warranted beliefs which would (other things equal) remain warranted no matter what other empirical beliefs X forms and no matter what other experiences X undergoes.15

As Summerfield points out, “To hold (2) is to hold that there are some beliefs that are indefeasible in the face of experience, but to hold (1) is to hold something much weaker. And yet, (1) articulates a perfectly good sense in which a belief might be warranted independently of experience.”16 According to Summerfield, (1) provides us with a sense in X’s belief that p might be justified independently of experience even if there are possible experiences X might have that would defeat X’s justification for believing p. In such a case, X’s justification for believing p depends negatively on X’s not having the defeating experiences, but it does not depend positively on X’s experiences or empirical beliefs.

Perhaps we may illustrate the difference between positive and negative dependence by considering X’s belief that there is something red before him. X’s justification might depend positively on X’s perceptual experience of something red before him, and negatively on his not being justified in believing that he has an eye disease that causes white things to appear red to him or on his not being justified in believing that he is
looking at something white with a red light shining on it. If X were justified in believing that he had such an eye disease, then his justification for believing that there is something red before him would be defeated, so the justification for his belief depends negatively on his not being justified in holding that defeating belief. But there is intuitively a difference between the way in which his justification for believing that there is something red before him depends on his perceptual experience and his not having this defeating belief. One difference is that his perceptual experience is a reason for him to believe there is something red before him, but this is not true of his not believing that he has such an eye disease. The fact that one is not justified in believing that one has such a disease is not a reason to believe that there is something red before one.

If we accept the modest view that basic a priori justification can be defeasible and less than certain, then an a priori epistemology looks more plausible and more amenable to a commonsense approach. This is so for two reasons. First, our contingent, commonsense epistemic beliefs may serve as data in the sense that they may defeat our justification for holding various epistemic principles. We may reject, as Chisholm does, the empiricist criterion of knowledge because it is defeated by our being justified in believing various epistemic facts such as “I know I have two hands.” Second, we may consistently hold that some epistemic principles, such as (1) - (3) or similar principles, are justified a priori and still remain open to the possibility of counter-examples and revisions because they do not fit with common sense, empirical facts about what we take ourselves to know and which we take to have greater weight than the proposed principle. We may hold that our justification for believing these principles is a priori in the sense that our justification for believing them does not positively depend upon our being justified in believing various contingent, commonsense epistemic propositions. But we may allow that our justification for believing these principles negatively depends on our not being justified in believing contingent commonsense propositions that would defeat our justification for accepting those principles.

*Common Sense, A Priori Epistemology, and Naturalism*

If some forms of a priori epistemology are compatible with a commonsense approach, then I suggest that some forms of a priori epistemology are compatible with some forms of “naturalism”. Let us say that moderate
naturalism is the view that observation and the methods of the empirical sciences may be relevant to the discovery of the correct epistemic principles. How is moderate naturalism related to the sort of *a priori* epistemology described above, one compatible with a commonsense approach to epistemology? The sort of *a priori* epistemology we have been considering recognizes that basic *a priori* justification could be defeated by both *a priori* and empirical considerations. If this is so, then *a priori* epistemology does not in principle rule out the possibility that one’s *a priori* grounds for accepting an epistemic principle could be defeated by observation or the discoveries of empirical science. After all, if we should reject a proposed epistemic principle because it does not fit with what we ordinarily take ourselves to know, where this may be some empirical contingent fact such as our knowing that there are other people that think and feel, why should a proponent of *a priori* epistemology reject the possibility that an epistemic principle could be overturned by the observations of empirical science? An *a priori* epistemologist with a healthy respect for the commonsense tradition need not reject moderate naturalism. Thus, it seems a mistake to see *a priori* epistemology and a moderate naturalistic approach as irreconcilably opposed. In short, a commitment to a commonsense approach to epistemology supports a form of *a priori* epistemology compatible with moderate naturalism.

Of course, some philosophers sympathetic with a naturalized epistemology would reject both *a priori* epistemology and moderate naturalism. These “extreme” naturalists would reject the latter because it does not go far enough. For these naturalistic philosophers there is “only one kind of cognitive method—viz. scientific. . . .”17 These philosophers would reject certain traditional forms of epistemology because they are “epistemically and methodologically discontinuous with science, requiring instead special, *apriori*, non-natural methods.”18 For these extreme naturalists appeals to even defeasible *a priori* justifications are unacceptable, since they fall outside the scientific method.

There appear to be a variety of reasons one might find this extreme form of naturalistic epistemology attractive.19 One might think any appeal to empirical, *a posteriori* considerations, is simply incompatible with an *a priori* epistemology. One might think an *a priori* epistemology is incompatible with a commonsense approach that begins with what one ordinarily takes oneself to know. But if what we have said above is
correct, then these views are mistaken. It is clearly beyond the scope of
this essay to canvass all the arguments in favor of extreme naturalism, but
one obvious reason why one might reject an a priori epistemology is
simply that one thinks that observation and the methods of science are the
only sources of justification and knowledge that we have, that there is
"only one kind of cognitive method." Since a priori epistemology pre-
supposes some other source of justification, it presupposes a source of
justification and knowledge that we simply do not have and therefore
cannot give us any justified belief or knowledge about the correct
epistemic principles. An example of this position is reflected, I think, in
Mackie's well-known criticism of the claim that one can know objective
moral facts:

When we ask the awkward question, how we can be aware of this authorita-
tive prescriptivity, of the truth of these distinctively ethical premisses or of
the cogency of this distinctively ethical pattern of reasoning, none of our
ordinary accounts of sense perception or introspection or the framing and
confirming of explanatory hypotheses or inference or logical construction or
conceptual analysis, or any combination of these, will provide a satisfactory
answer; a 'special sort of intuition' is a lame answer, but it is one to which
the clearheaded objectivist is compelled to resort.20

Since the moral objectivist claims to have a source of justification that
does not fit one of these "ordinary" sources, Mackie finds his view unac-
ceptable. The a priori epistemologist, like the moral objectivist, claims to
have some source of justification, at least a defeasible ground, that does not
fit one of these sources of justification. Thus, the position of the a priori
epistemologist would surely strike Mackie as equally lame.

The claim that the only sources of justification are observation and
the methods of science is incompatible with a priori epistemology.
Indeed, such a claim might seem to beg the question against the position
of the a priori epistemologist. But here I think the commonsense approach
is on the side of a priori epistemology. I suggest that the view that our
only sources of justification are observation and the methods of science,
including those enumerated by Mackie, is deeply at odds with a com-
monsense approach to the theory of knowledge. Consider the following
propositions: (i) Necessarily, everything that is square has a shape, (ii)
necessarily, everything red is colored, and (iii) necessarily, nothing is red
all over and green all over at the same time. Each of these propositions is
something that we know and know with certainty. Each of these propositions seems at least as reasonable for us to believe as it is that there are tables and chairs, that there are other people, and that the earth has existed for many years. But (i) - (iii) are not justified for us by the methods of science or in any of the ways enumerated by Mackie. Therefore, it is false that observation and the methods of science, including those enumerated by Mackie, are our only sources of justification.

Of course, some philosophers might argue that (i) - (iii) can be known in one of the ways Mackie suggests. Some might suggest that (i) - (iii) are known on the basis of "conceptual analysis," that these propositions are analytically true or true in virtue of their logical form. They are thus quite unlike the synthetic principles the a priori epistemologist thinks we can know. Whether (i) - (iii) are analytically true, or true in virtue of their logical form, is an issue beyond the scope of this essay. However, there are good reasons to doubt that this is so. Still other philosophers might suggest that (i) - (iii) can be known because we have indirect observational evidence for them, that they are well-confirmed explanatory hypotheses. Thus, one might think, for example, that we are justified in believing that (iii) is true because it is part of the best explanation for what we observe, such as, e.g., that some particular thing, \( x \), is red all over at \( t \) and not green all over at \( t \) or, more generally, that we never observe anything that is red and green all over at the same time. There are at least two problems with this suggestion. First, it is not clear that (iii) would be part of the best explanation for what we observe. Consider any observation, \( O \), for which we might think that (iii) is part of the explanation. We could explain \( O \) by appealing to either (a) nothing is green and red all over at the same time, (b) it is nomically necessary that nothing is red and green all over at the same time, or (c) usually nothing is red and green all over at the same time. Since we can explain \( O \) without appealing to the strong modal claim in (iii), and since the best explanation would also seem to be one that did not invoke the strong modal claim, it would seem that we are not justified in believing (iii) because it is part of the best explanation for what we observe. Second, we know (i) - (iii) with certainty. These propositions have a degree of evidence and justification that is greater than that of any of the explanatory laws of the natural sciences and which could be afforded by indirect observational evidence. Thus, even if we allow that one could have some indirect observational justification for believing (i) - (iii), there must be some other source of justification for these propositions.
Now, if in fact (i) - (iii) cannot be known by the methods of science or in the ways suggested by Mackie, then we must ask ourselves which, on reflection, seems more reasonable, (a) that we know (i) - (iii) with certainty or (b) that the methods of science, including those enumerated by Mackie, are the only sources of justification. I believe that it would be in keeping with the commonsense approach to accept (a) and reject (b). I believe that it would be in keeping with the commonsense approach to hold that we know (i) - (iii) with certainty and to reject the philosophical thesis that our only sources of justification are observation and the methods of science and thus reject the view of justification to which some extreme naturalists appeal. To accept (b) and reject (a) would not be to give sufficient weight to the fact that we know (i) - (iii) with certainty.

If (i) - (iii) cannot be known by the methods of science or in the ways enumerated by Mackie, the extreme naturalist may, I think, consistently accept (b) and reject (a), the claim that we know (i) - (iii) with certainty. But while this might be a consistent position it is at odds with a commonsense approach. Thus, while a commonsense approach to epistemology is not compatible with some forms of a priori epistemology, it is also not compatible with certain views of justification favored by some extreme naturalists. If we accept a commonsense approach, then we should reject both views.

I have argued (a) that some forms of a priori epistemology that take basic a priori justification to be certain and indefeasible are incompatible with a commonsense approach to the theory of knowledge, (b) that a commonsense approach is compatible with other forms of a priori epistemology that allow basic a priori justification to be less than certain and defeasible by empirical considerations, and (c) that an a priori epistemology compatible with a commonsense approach is also compatible with a moderate naturalism that holds that observation and the methods of the empirical sciences may be relevant to the discovery of the correct epistemic principles. If this is so, then one might consistently embrace both a priori epistemology and moderate naturalism without abandoning a commonsense approach to the theory of knowledge.

Noah M. Lemos

DePauw University
Greencastle, Indiana
NOTES


8. Cf. Chisholm’s definitions of “is an axiom” and “is axiomatic for S” in the 3rd ed’n. of *Theory of Knowledge*, p. 28. I have combined the two here.


10. Russell writes, “It should be observed that, in all cases of general principles, particular instances, dealing with familiar things, are more evident than the general principle. For example, the law of contradiction states that nothing can both have a certain property and not have it. This is evident as soon as it is understood, but it is not so evident as that a particular rose which we see cannot be both red and not red.” Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), pp. 112–13. If the general principle is less evident than the particular instance, then the general principle is not maximally warranted.

11. Ewing writes, “Many philosophers have preferred to limit the term ‘intuition’ to cases of certain knowledge, but there are many cases where something presents itself to one intuitively as deserving a certain degree of credence but falling short of certainty or where an intuition has some value but is confused and inextricably blended with erroneous assumptions and inferences.” A. C. Ewing, *The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 49. He adds, pp. 50–51, “Arguments may well be available which without strictly proving either side to be wrong put a disputation into a position in which he can see better for himself whether he is right or wrong or at least cast doubt on the truth of his view.”

16. Ibid., p. 42.
17. Maffie, p. 298.
18. Ibid., p. 289.