

## **Methodological naturalism in theories of reference**

Methodological naturalism is one of the most important views in the contemporary discussion on the methodology of philosophy. According to that stance, philosophy uses, or at least should use, the same methods as science. Generally, it means that philosophical investigations are entirely *a posteriori*, i.e. they depend on experience.

Most disputes on methodological naturalism concern the concept of intuition. The reason for this is that opponents of methodological naturalism claim that philosophical methodology differs from the methodology of science precisely because the source of evidence for philosophical views, in contrast to science, are *a priori* intuitions – purely rational. Philosophical considerations are then similar to mathematical or those from theoretical physics. This is a standard view on philosophical methodology. Methodological naturalists reply by defending one of two views. According to the first, intuitions do not play an evidential role in philosophy. According to the second, although intuitions do play an evidential role in philosophy, they are not *a priori* but depend on experience.

In discussions on intuition, insufficient attention is paid to the analysis of particular arguments and theories in which appealing to intuition plays an important role. Nevertheless, it is possible, that the role of intuition may vary across branches of philosophy and that intuition plays different role in ethical theories, different in metaphysical and different in considerations on the nature of language. That would mean that investigations on the methodological naturalism should be conducted locally, accordingly to particular branches of philosophy.

The aim of the project is to analyze whether, and if so, to what extent, methodological naturalism can be seen as a proper viewpoint for the theory of reference. One of the most important disputes in the philosophy of language concerns theory of reference, that is a theory explaining how expressions refer to their objects. Theories of reference are a grateful subject of methodological analysis because philosophers often refer to the intuitive logical value of certain statements, the intuitive cognitive value of certain expressions, or simply their intuitive reference while introducing such theories. An example of the intuition-talk is when Frege in “*Sense and reference*” states, that “(...)  $a = a$ , and  $a = b$  are obviously statements of differing cognitive value” or when Kripke, while arguing against descriptivism in *Naming and Necessity*, says what is the reference of the specific names in several situations.

The project will analyze the differences between the role of semantic intuitions and other intuitions in the philosophical methodology. The arguments formulated in existing theories of reference will also be analyzed. It will be determined what is understood as intuitive in arguments introduced within these theories. Moreover, the role of appealing to intuitiveness in theories of reference will be considered. In particular, it will be analyzed whether intuition is just a cause for formulating a certain argument, or whether intuitions justify certain theses. Finally, it will be examined whether the semantic intuitions that philosophers appeal to in the theories of reference are *a priori* or *a posteriori*. These analyzes will determine whether methodological naturalism is a proper account for theories of reference. They will also put the ground for future metaphilosophical disputes.