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Intuition as a Source of Evidence in Philosophy: The Minimal View

La intuición como fuente de evidencia en filosofía: La visión mínima

Kamil Cekiera
University of Wrocław, Poland
kamil.cekiera@uwr.edu.pl
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9047-2196

Abstract

In the past two decades, there has been a sudden increase of inquiry within the branch of analytic philosophy on the nature and role of intuition in philosophy. Philosophers began to investigate what intuition is, how it should be defined, what role it plays in philosophy, what its epistemic status is and many more. There is also a growing number of philosophers arguing that the whole debate rests on a mistake: intuition in philosophy plays no role whatsoever and philosophers do not use it as (a source of) evidence for their philosophical claims. This strategy is often conducted by differentiating among the two senses in which intuition is supposed to play an evidential role in philosophy. Intuition, thus, can be understood as a state of intuiting something or a propositional content that is intuited. Intuition in the first sense, the argument goes, cannot be treated as evidence as it would present the risk of psychologizing evidence in philosophy. If, however, we take intuition as evidence in the second sense, there is nothing distinctive about it: ultimately, all evidence in philosophy is of propositional nature, regardless of the intuitiveness of a given proposition.

In my paper, I argue that this strategy fails and propose, instead, the view on intuition that, firstly, explains why the aforementioned distinction does not render the intuitiveness of the content irrelevant to its epistemic status, secondly, is in accord with the current findings in psychology, and, thirdly, is minimal enough to allow the different views of intuitions to be incorporated under that umbrella. In particular, I argue that it is an intuitive judgment, characterized by its non-inferentiality and defeasibility, that serves as evidence for particular philosophical claims, while its source is an intuition understood as a state of non-propositional character that can be examined empirically.

Keywords: intuition, epistemic status of intuition, evidence, source of evidence.

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Resumen

En las dos últimas décadas, se ha producido dentro de la filosofía analítica un aumento repentino de la investigación sobre la naturaleza y el papel que juea la intuición. Los filósofos empezaron a investigar qué es la intuición, cómo debería definirse, qué papel desempeña en la filosofía, cuál es su estatus epistémico, entre otras cosas. También hay un número creciente de filósofos que sostienen que todo el debate se basa en un error: la intuición en filosofía no desempeña papel alguno y los filósofos no la utilizan como (fuente de) prueba para sus afirmaciones filosóficas. Esta estrategia se lleva a cabo a menudo diferenciando entre los dos sentidos en los que se supone que la intuición desempeña un papel evidencial en filosofía. Así, la intuición puede entenderse como un estado de intuir o como un contenido proposicional que se intuye. En el primer sentido, se argumenta, la intuición no puede ser tratada como evidencia, ya que presentaría el riesgo de psicologizar la evidencia en filosofía. Sin embargo, si tomamos la intuición como evidencia en el segundo sentido, no hay nada distintivo en ella: en última instancia, toda evidencia en filosofía es de naturaleza proposicional, independientemente de la intuitividad de una proposición dada.

En mi artículo, sostengo que esta estrategia fracasa y propongo, en su lugar, una visión de la intuición que, en primer lugar, explica por qué la distinción mencionada no hace que la intuitividad del contenido sea irrelevante para su estatus epistémico; en segundo lugar, está de acuerdo con los hallazgos actuales en psicología; y, en tercer lugar, es lo suficientemente mínima como para permitir la incorporación de las diferentes perspectivas sobre las intuiciones. En particular, sostengo que un juicio intuitivo, caracterizado por su no inferencialidad y revocabilidad, sirve de prueba para determinadas afirmaciones filosóficas, mientras que su fuente es una intuición entendida como un estado de carácter no proposicional que puede examinarse empíricamente.

Palabras clave: intuición, estatuto epistémico de la intuición, evidencia, fuente de evidencia.

1. Introduction

Arguably, one of the distinctive features of roughly the first two decades of the 21st century philosophy is the attention philosophers pay to metaphilosophical issues. While many areas of metaphilosophical inquiries were of philosophers' interest during that period, one that stands out as a particularly hot topic concerns the nature and role of intuition in philosophical practice. There have been tons of papers and although there seems to be no consensus on even how to define intuition, some very general strategies and the most popular approaches can be marked out. Particularly, when it comes to the question of the role of intuition, some philosophers claim that intuition has a heavy epistemic credence and can be often relied on, while others doubt that and call for a revision (or even rejection) of

intuition-driven methodologies of philosophy. Yet, for some others this whole debate seems to be utterly misguided as it is based on the assumption they deem false – that intuition plays any role in philosophy whatsoever.

Philosophers denying intuition any role in philosophy, which – following Nado (2016) – I will dub Intuition Deniers, very often argue for that claim differentiating between two senses in which intuition is supposed to play an evidential role in philosophy. Intuition, thus, can be understood either as a state of intuiting something or a propositional content that is intuited. According to the Intuition Deniers' argument (see especially Williamson, 2007; Deutsch, 2015), intuition in the first sense cannot be treated as evidence as it would threaten the risk of psychologizing evidence in philosophy. If, however, we take intuition to be evidence in the second sense, there is nothing distinctive about it: ultimately, all evidence in philosophy is of propositional nature, regardless of the intuitiveness of a given proposition.

In this paper, I am going to argue that such an argumentative strategy fails as the aforementioned distinction does not render the intuitiveness of the content irrelevant to its epistemic status. Instead, I will propose a broadly non-inferential view on intuition that explains why intuition is, in fact, treated as (a source of) evidence in philosophy and is coherent with current findings in cognitive science and psychology, while at the same time is minimal enough to serve as an umbrella term for a variety of diverse theories of intuition in philosophy. For that purpose, I will proceed as follows. In the second section I will briefly sketch what the whole debate is about. In the third, I will present the Intuition Deniers' charge of psychologizing the evidence in philosophy. My answer to that challenge will be presented in the fourth section. In the last two sections I will propose my own view on the evidential role of intuition. In the fifth I will argue for the view that while the propositional content of intuition is used as evidence in philosophy, the state of intuiting is the source of that evidence. Finally in the sixth, I will present my minimal view on intuition in philosophy.

2. Intuition in philosophy

The notion of intuition has been of philosophers' interest for centuries.[1] Even a quick glance suffices for realizing that the term was used to cover a comprehensive and often inconsistent range of phenomena: some took it to be a form of direct comprehension of things, others as a kind of non-discursive cognition or as grasping of self-evident propositions. The list could be considerably extended – as rightly observed by Jaakko Hintikka, when we take a look at the old-time philosophers' works, "what is remarkable about their usage [of the term 'intuition'] is its broad scope" (Hintikka, 2003, p. 169).[2] The ambiguity of the term, further

[1] For an overview of different perspectives on intuition in the history of philosophy see e.g. Anderson (1926), Kal (1988), Osbeck and Held (2014, part I), Piętka (2015), Preston (2015).

[2] To be accurate, Hintikka's remark concerns mostly scholastic philosophers, but the quote can arguably refer to philosophers working both before and after the scholasticism as well.

enhanced by the different meanings "intuition" has in science, pseudo-science, and ordinary language, calls for special care when we try to understand how the notion is understood in contemporary (analytic) philosophy.

For the last two decades or so, there has been an outburst of metaphilosophical papers on intuition in philosophy. Regardless of the question (interesting in itself) about the roots of such a sudden concern,[3] it is important to point out what kind of phenomena are taken to be paradigmatic examples of intuition. In the relevant context, a typical instance of intuition is a (spontaneous) verdict or judgment on a given thought experiment.[4] To illustrate it with a typical example, in his famous 1963 paper, Edmund Gettier comes up with two thought experiments to argue against the account of knowledge as justified true belief. He presents two stories in which the protagonist has certain justified and true belief but judges that the protagonist nevertheless lacks knowledge. As there are not any additional pieces of evidence to support that conclusion,[5] it is standardly assumed that such judgment is based on intuition and thus intuition plays a crucial evidential role here.

The general structure of similar usages of thought experiments in philosophy can be reconstructed as proceeding in the following four steps:[6]

1. Given concept C / relation or property C being introduced
2. Stating the set of jointly necessary and sufficient conditions of falling under the concept C / being in the relation or having the property C (or simply: the definition of C)
3. Hypothetical scenario S in which the conditions stated in the step 2 are met
4. Actual question of the thought experiment: does C applies to S?

[3] The scope of this paper does not allow to address that question with proper attention. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out two important dates: the publication of a very influential monograph *Rethinking intuition* containing many wide-commented papers (see DePaul and Ramsey, 1998), and the rise of the so-called experimental philosophy movement, which provoked many discussions on the role of intuition in philosophy – in that respect, the paper *Normativity and epistemic intuitions* (see Weinberg, Nichols and Stich, 2001) is usually considered a pioneering one.

[4] The label "thought experiment" is meant to be understood broadly, that is to cover all instances of the so-called method of cases, and not in a more restricted manner characteristic for some thought experiments' theoreticians (e.g. Bealer, 1998) who take thought experiments to be akin to the real (that is, empirical) ones.

[5] Although Deutsch (2010; 2015) claims that in fact in his paper Gettier *does* argue further for that conclusion, the standard interpretation is that Gettier *does not* provide any further argumentation. For the lack of space, I will not dwell on why I disagree with Deutsch and, instead, I will just assume that, in this case, the majority's view prevails.

[6] For more on that model, see Cekiera (2023).

The outcome of a thought experiment hinges crucially on step 4 – that is, on the verdict on the actual question of a thought experiment. Moreover, intuition is taken to be a source of such judgment; hence intuition is decisive of success of a given thought experiment or lack thereof.

Now, although most philosophers tend to agree with that general picture of the intuition-induced method of philosophy, they remain quite diversified as to what is the nature of intuition in question. As Serena Maria Nicoli nicely sums up:

> (…) in spite of the disagreement on the characterization of 'intuition', a common ground for those interested in methodological questions may be identified. What they all acknowledge is that (1) verdicts expressed at the end of the so-called thought experiments (TEs) are examples of the kind of judgements we are interested in, and that (2) philosophers, whether legitimately or not, do in fact use 'judgements about cases' to build, support or attack theories. (Nicoli, 2016, p. 10)

Thus, a common ground is the paradigmatic examples of the use of intuition and its epistemic role for (de)constructing philosophical theories. What philosophers differ about is how to characterize intuition properly. One popular answer is the one assumed by Nicoli: that intuition is a kind of judgment or broadly some type of propositional attitude. For instance, some take intuition to be tantamount to just certain belief or opinion (e.g. Lewis, 1983, p. x; Van Inwagen, 1997, p. 309; Sorensen, 1992, p. 43), while others claim that intuition should be defined in terms of an inclination or disposition to believe (e.g. Sosa, 1996; 1998; 2007; Earlenbaugh and Molyneux, 2009, p. 36). Such doxastic accounts may also include competence-based understandings of intuition. According to that view, formulating an intuitive judgment is just to exercising one's conceptual competence (e.g. Ludwig, 2007; 2010; Sgaravatti, 2015). Thus, confronted with thought experiment, a competent speaker will formulate an appropriate intuitive judgment on the basis of her understanding and conceptual competence. As a consequence, in the case of conflicting judgments, only one intuition will be a genuine one: "there might be a conflict of judgments about the case, but there cannot be a conflict of intuitions" (Ludwig, 2010, p. 436).

Another group of theories takes intuition to be of non-doxastic nature, one that is more akin to *sui generis* experience than to proposition or propositional attitude. According to that view, what distinguishes intuition is its accompanying phenomenology (e.g. Chudnoff, 2013; Bengson, 2015; Koksvik, 2017). Intuition, therefore, does not only represent things as being in a certain way, but also (intellectually) presents them to be in such a way. Moreover, although intuition is not of a propositional character, it provides a justification for holding certain belief (cf. Chudnoff, 2013, Part II). In a similar vein, some philosophers (see, for example, Bealer, 1996; 1998; 2008) – take intuition to be simply a kind of intellectual seeming that justifies one in judging something to be the case.

This very much perfunctory outline of different possible views on the nature of intuition in philosophy is far from being exhaustive. Instead, it is meant to indicate that regardless of

what exactly one takes intuition to be, it will eventually come down to one of the two broad groups. Either intuition is of a propositional nature (be it a judgment, belief, disposition to belief or some other form of propositional attitude) or experience-like (intellectual seeming or phenomenological insight as characterized by presentational nature of intuition). This distinction bears on a different one, that Intuition Deniers often use to challenge the idea of evidential status of intuition.

3. The intuiting and the intuited

It is often claimed that there is an ambiguity in the assertion 'intuition is used as evidence in philosophy'. It can be understood either as a claim that the fact that someone has an intuition is taken as evidence or that the propositional content of such intuition is the evidence for a given theory or claim. Sometimes the distinction is labelled as the one between the intuiting and the intuited (Pust, 2001, p. 230; 2019) or between the state and the content (Deutsch, 2015, p. 36). Such two senses of intuition go, of course, in pair with two understandings of the nature of intuition as sketched in the previous section.[7] The distinction has, however, far-reaching consequences for the discussion of the role of intuition in philosophical practice.

This is so because some Intuition Deniers take that distinction to undermine the significance of intuition in philosophy. Roughly, they argue as follows. If intuition is used as evidence in philosophy, it is either the intuiting or the intuited that is putative evidence. If it is the latter, then the claim becomes trivial: philosophy is a discursive practice, hence obviously a bulk of philosophical evidence will consist of propositional content of a various sort. The fact that particular content is intuited remains irrelevant to the truth or falsity of a given proposition. On the other hand, if it is the former, then it risks the charge of psychologizing evidence. That objection was formulated most vocally by Timothy Williamson, according to whom contemporary analytic philosophers

> think that, in philosophy, ultimately our evidence consists only of intuitions (…). Under pressure, they take that to mean not that our evidence consists of the mainly non-psychological putative facts which are the contents of those intuitions, but that it consists of the psychological facts to the effect that we have intuitions with those contents, true or false. On such a view, our evidence in philosophy amounts only to psychological facts about ourselves. Nevertheless, they do not want the psychological fact that we have an intuition that P to be perfectly neutral with respect to the nonpsychological question whether P, for that leads to skepticism about philosophy. If we merely seek the best explanation of our having the intuitions, without any presumption in favor

[7] It is not meant to claim that those two distinctions are tantamount to each other. It is rather a trivial observation that they are crisscrossed: philosophers claiming that intuition has a non-doxastic nature will be more interested in the state (the intuiting), while those holding that intuition is of doxastic character will arguably focus on the content (the intuited). Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing the need to clarify this point.

> of their truth, we may find a psychological theory to explain them, but how are we to answer the questions about a mainly non-psychological universe that grip many metaphysicians and other philosophers? (Williamson, 2007, pp. 235-236)

If Williamson is right, then relying on intuition as evidence makes e.g. the question "What is knowledge?" impossible to be answered in a different manner than the one that reduces it to the question of what we happen to think about the knowledge. The best way to avoid such consequence would be, thus, to give up on crediting intuition any evidential role in philosophy. In a similar vein, Deutsch (2015) claims that while intuition understood qua intuited content may very well be evidence in philosophy, it is not so if intuition is understood qua state of intuiting something.

Now, my goal in further parts of the paper is not to argue – in general or in detail – against the Intuition Deniers' claim against the evidential role of intuition in philosophy.[8] Instead, in the remaining parts of the text, I am going to challenge the appropriateness of presenting the aforementioned distinction as a sharp one, and propose a minimal understanding of intuition that would suffice to maintain the claim that intuition is, indeed, used as evidence in philosophy.

4. Intuition as justification

Philosophers stressing the distinction between the intuited and the intuiting tend to conceive of it as a sharp one. According to them, intuition is either a particular state – what renders it epistemically irrelevant (for the reason outlined in the previous section), or has a propositional character – as (virtually) any other form of philosophical evidence. On that view, the intuiting is epistemically disconnected from the intuited – and vice versa, intuited content is something quite separate from the state of intuiting it.

It is, however, quite a surprising way of thinking about evidence. As a mostly theoretical enterprise, philosophy does in fact rely on evidence of the propositional kind. Not every propositional content has, however, an equal evidential weight. An important and not trivial aspect of evidence in philosophy concerns the question of the justification for accepting certain proposition: what makes particular propositional content to be accepted as evidence. In the context of the use of intuition, such as in thought experiments understood in a way explained in the second section, very often the answer is that a given proposition is accepted because it is intuitive. In other words, intuited content is accepted *because* the fact that someone is intuiting it justifies her in accepting that content.

[8] Because of the scope of the paper, not because I hold with Intuition Deniers' view. The most compelling arguments for why Intuition Deniers are in error can be found in: Nado (2016, 2017), Climenhaga (2018), Chalmers (2014), Weinberg (2014), and Devitt (2015).

This conjuncture is hardly unusual. It suffices to think about multiple other kinds of propositional attitudes that can be interpreted in a similarly dual fashion. When I say that I have a certain desire, I can have in mind a particular mental state or propositional content of that desire. If I have the desire to go to a football game, the propositional content (as expressed e.g. by my utterance "I want to go to a football match") is justified by the mental state I currently have (my state of willingness to go to a football game). Moreover, such mental state also specifies the truth conditions of my utterance since the truth-value of the sentence "I want to go to a football match" is determined solely by my corresponding mental state.

Similarly, the state of intuiting something can be treated as a prima facie justification for accepting the intuited content. Some philosophers indeed suggested thinking about the evidential role of intuition in philosophy in this way. For instance, Johnnie R. R. Pedersen defines intuition as follows:

> S intuits that P $\equiv_{df}$ P is the content of a spontaneously occurring mental state (that is, one not formed through overt reasoning) that S finds prima facie plausible. (Pedersen, 2015, p. 110)

The reason why prima facie provision is emphasized is that intuition is treated as fallible. Someone may intuitively believe that P, but faced with prevailing evidence to the contrary, give up on believing that P. The state of intuition, thus, provides a justification for an intuitive proposition, but only a defeasible one.

The problem is, of course, that such definitions as Pedersen's one are in scarcity in philosophical papers. Regarding the first-order philosophy, philosophers generally do not specify what exactly they have in mind when they talk about intuition. Worse still: very often, no overt intuition-talk is present in the texts and it is a matter of (metaphilosophical) interpretation to indicate that intuition plays an evidential role in a given paper.

Confronted with a particular philosophical text, we are by and large left with certain explicitly expressed propositions that constitute putative evidence for a given philosopher's theory or claim. While that much can be said in agreement with philosophers like Williamson or Deutsch, it is undoubtedly a trivial observation. What is nontrivial is the issue of the grounds we have for accepting a given proposition, i.e. what justifies that proposition. Commonly philosophers easily come up with a variety of justifications for the beliefs they hold. It is important, however, to distinguish between (again) two senses of justification. In one sense, justification can be understood as something that makes certain proposition justified. In the other, justification is a reason one presents to others in order to convince them that certain proposition is justified. Borrowing terminology from Pryor (2014), we can call the former justification-maker and the latter justification-shower.

In many cases, justification-maker will be identical to justification-shower. Justification-maker for the belief that my armchair is comfortable is simply that I enjoy sitting on it.

Asked for a reason why I take my armchair to be a comfortable one, I will answer in the same way, that is, justification-shower for that belief will also be that I enjoy sitting on it. Sometimes, however, two senses of justification will be clearly separate. If I am falsely accused of committing a certain crime, justification-maker for the belief that I am innocent is just the fact that I did not commit the crime. However, while standing trial, that would not be enough to justify my innocence. I would have to present some additional evidence to convince the court that I did not commit the crime – that is, I would have to present some justification-shower that differs from justification-maker.[9]

Even if philosophers are very keen on providing justification-showers for their claims, there still is a question of justification-makers for those claims. Why focusing solely on justification-showers, presented usually in the form of arguments, does not suffice to evaluate a claim's correctness is nicely explained (though in a slightly different context) by Jennifer Nado:

> It may well be that philosophers standardly try to justify their intuitively-held beliefs via argument. The trouble is that arguments – even good arguments – are cheap. The fact that someone has come up with a good argument for a claim doesn't (more's the pity) guarantee that the claim is correct. As every philosopher knows, for any given philosophical problem there tend to be good arguments for multiple different solutions. Intelligent people can generally quite easily produce convincing arguments in favor of *whatever* position they are currently inclined to hold. Unfortunately, they rarely invest nearly as much effort into attempts to produce arguments for the views they are *not* currently inclined to hold. (Nado, 2016, p. 797)

If we agree with that much, what follows is that to assess philosopher's justification for a belief she holds, we need a broader story about the grounds for accepting that belief. In other words, we need to understand the etiology of a given belief: on the basis of what one comes to accepting a certain intuitive proposition.

5. The source of evidence

So far, I have argued that even though it is the intuited propositional content that (occasionally) is treated as evidence for a particular philosophical theory or claim, the epistemic credence of such evidence cannot be accurately assessed without paying sufficient attention to the grounds one has for accepting the intuitive proposition in question. The notion of grounds is, however, a bit obscure, especially if we want to focus on the connection between the state of intuiting something and the acceptance of the intuited propositional content.

[9] I owe this example to Adriano Angelucci.

The most natural – and somehow common – way to explicate that notion and make it more vivid is to say that while the propositional content of intuition is used as evidence, it is the state of intuiting something that is the source of that evidence. From an epistemological point of view, it is quite uncontroversial that certain mental states are sources of evidence for particular propositions. Think of perception, for example. If I want to claim that the table in front of me is not empty, evidence for such a claim may consist of the proposition "There is a laptop on the table". Although that evidence is strictly propositional, its source is a certain mental state: that of perceiving a computer on the table. I might come up with some additional evidence for my claim, but perception alone will suffice in most cases. At the same time, it is defeasible evidence: I might be wrong, e.g. because of the hallucination or because I did not realize from the distance that the laptop is in fact on the shelf behind the table. But unless I am presented with prevailing evidence to the contrary, I have prima facie evidence for my claim, one that has purely "psychological"[10] source.

Similarly, it is so with intuition as evidence. Although the actual evidence (the intuited) is of propositional nature (as expressed by philosophers in their texts), the source of that evidence is the state of intuiting something. The propositional content is not, however, independent from its source: in fact, accepting certain intuitive propositions is justified by the state of intuiting it. In that sense, the intuiting constitutes grounds for accepting the intuited. If all that is correct, then even though there is indeed a content–state ambiguity in the claim 'intuition is used as evidence in philosophy', the two understandings of intuition are interconnected and cannot be treated separately.

Now, if the source of evidence is significant for accepting its deliverance, one may wonder whether or not some propositional content is already accompanying the state of intuiting something. McGahhey and Van Leeuwen (2018) argue that, contrary to the majority view, in the process of intuiting something, there is no conscious propositional content involved. According to them, intuitions (in a state sense) are more akin to hunches or urgings, but are not formulated by any determined proposition. Even though the authors do not explicitly refer to the state–content ambiguity, their hypothesis fits nicely with the picture sketched above. They provide both textual arguments concerning particular philosophical thought experiments and a bulk of empirical studies from psychology and cognitive science to support their claim. For instance, McGahhey and Van Leeuwen observe that while the vast majority of philosophers share Gettier intuition, there is hardly any agreement on what an exact formulation is (that is, what is a propositional content) of that very intuition.[11] The fact that people share the intuition but vary on its verbal expression suggests, according to them, that intuition comes with no determined propositional content.

[10] I use that term here in the same sense as Williamson, quoted in the third section.

[11] In fact, some Intuition Deniers take that as an indication that actually intuition does not play any evidential role in philosophy (e.g. Cappelen, 2012, pp. 54-55).

Their general idea can also be supported from other empirical findings in cognitive psychology. For instance, Yaniv and Meyer (1987) experimentally demonstrated that intuitions are often accompanied by the "feeling of knowing" that cannot be easily verbalized – commonly referred to as the 'tip-of-the-tongue' experience. Similarly, Dane and Pratt (2007) indicate that while the process of intuiting is not conscious, it is not so with its outcome (which the authors refer to as 'intuitive judgment'). In their meta-analytic study of the various empirical evidence from the field of psychology and social cognitive neuroscience as regards the phenomenon of intuition, Hodgkinson, Langan-Fox and Sadler-Smith (2008, 4) emphasize exactly that aspect of the process of intuiting: "Intuiting is a complex set of inter-related cognitive, affective and somatic processes, in which there is no apparent intrusion of deliberate, rational thought", adding that what characterizes intuition in this sense is that it is often hard to verbally express it, as it presents more like a hunch than a determined proposition.

There are at least two upshots to be taken from those considerations. Firstly, it seems that the state–content ambiguity of intuition is well-supported both theoretically and empirically. And while these two understandings of intuition are in fact diverse, they are the two sides of the same coin. Secondly, the process of intuiting is partially an empirical matter, that can be studied (and indeed is) by means of i.a. psychology and cognitive science. The questions left for philosophers are those: how does it bear on the epistemic status of intuition in philosophy and how should philosophers understand intuition in their relevant domain.

6. Intuition in philosophy: The minimal view

The previous considerations lead to the following picture of the evidential role of intuition in philosophy. The claim that philosophers use intuition as evidence relies on the ambiguous understanding of "intuition". On the first reading, intuition is a mental state that is present e.g. when one reads a thought experiment. On the second, intuition is just a propositional content of that state, as expressed e.g. by the judgment on thought experiment ("in scenario S, it is not the case that C"). To avoid the charge of psychologizing evidence, one needs to admit that it is the latter that is used as evidence in philosophy. However, the etiology of the proposition matters: one's justification for accepting a given proposition crucially hinges on the reason one has for that acceptance. It is, thus, more accurate to say that while the propositional content of intuition is used as evidence in philosophy, the source of such evidence is the state of intuiting that content. What exactly the process of forming a given proposition looks like is an empirical matter, one that can be studied by means of e.g. psychology or cognitive science. What is important for philosophers is how the intuitive judgment is characterized and what its role is in philosophical practice.

The question of the characteristics of intuitive judgment comes down to the question of what distinguishes it from other types of judgments. What is most often pointed to in this context is the distinctive feature of immediacy or directness of intuition. As observed by

Jenkins (2014, p. 94), there are at least two ways we can think of that property of intuitive judgments. The former concerns its non-inferentiality – the fact that the judgment is not a product of any overt inference or reasoning, and the second refers to its alleged obviousness or spontaneity. While the latter is of a phenomenological matter, the former may be dealt with either by psychology or epistemology. From the psychological perspective, what is interesting is the actual process of intuiting something – how it works, what it takes and what kind of cognitive mechanisms are responsible for it. As I have already pointed out, psychologists are indeed engaged in pursuing such studies. From the epistemological point of view, however, what is important is the context of the justification of judgments: whether or not they are inferentially justified.

What is called for here is, of course, justification-maker in the sense spelled out before. It does not matter, epistemically speaking, if one can come up with a post hoc inferential justification for an already accepted proposition. In particular, such justification can proceed abductively, as an inference to the best explanation. What distinguishes intuitive judgment, however, is that what makes it justified for a subject is not based on any conscious inference.[12] That justification is, at the same time, a defeasible one: it gives one the disposition to accept some proposition, but the stronger evidence to the contrary may overrule that inclination.

All that leads to the minimal view of the evidential role of intuition in philosophy. The claim that philosophers use intuition as evidence should be read that philosophers use intuitive judgments as evidence, and the source of that evidence is the state of intuiting something, one that is psychological and can be studied through empirical means. Even though such studies matter for the epistemic status of given intuition, from the epistemological point of view, what is important is that the outcome of the process of intuiting constitutes a defeasible justification for accepting a particular proposition.

The most obvious advantage of accepting the minimal view is that it provides a plausible response to the Intuition Deniers' challenge regarding the evidential role of intuition in philosophy. But there are, in my opinion, more reasons to accept the minimal view and consider it a viable alternative to the more prominent theories of intuition in philosophy. Firstly, it squares well with our common conception of intuition, yet is minimal enough to make room for multiple different theoretically detailed accounts of intuition. Secondly, it makes explicit how can subjectively experienced intuition be interpreted in the third-person scientific language. To that respect, it is compatible with empirical findings (particularly in

[12] One can argue that, regardless of the presence of explicit inference, one can have an intuition that is inferred implicitly. This line of argument against the non-inferential view on intuition is developed, for instance, by van Roojen (2014) and Balcerak Jackson (2018). Although the space does not allow to address that objection adequately, I will only emphasize that I focus solely on conscious, explicit reasoning. As much as the hypothesis of the presence of implicit, unconscious inference is an interesting and open empirical question to be studied e.g. by psychologists, from the epistemological point of view, it is the explicit inference (or lack thereof) that matters.

psychology) which, in turn, may potentially bridge it with the concept of intuition as used in empirical science. Nevertheless, the minimal view, as sketchily presented in this paper, if turns out successful, would have to be developed to fully achieve those further goals.

7. Conclusion

There is a far-reaching disagreement in philosophy as to the nature of intuition and its evidential role in philosophical practice. Regardless of how exactly one defines intuition, there is, however, a basic distinction between two senses of intuition: one that focuses on the state of intuiting something and the other that takes intuition to be characterized by its intuited propositional content. Correspondingly, there are quite different approaches to the studies on intuition. One is empirical, as regards the process of intuiting something, and the other epistemological, as with respect to the justification one has for accepting certain proposition.

In the paper, I have proposed a minimal account of intuition and its evidential role in philosophy, according to which intuitive judgments with particular propositional content are treated as evidence, while the state of intuiting that content is the source of such evidence. Intuitive judgments may, in turn, be identified by their non-inferentiality and dispositional character.

Even though the underlying process of accepting certain belief is opaque from the first-person conscious perspective and is a proper subject of empirical, psychological studies, it is tightly connected with its outcome. In fact, the eventual assessment of the epistemic credence of relying on particular intuitions may considerably hinge on the reliability of the process. As much as the process of intuiting something has no direct evidential role in philosophy, it would be highly unwise for philosophers to ignore what light empirical science sheds on the nature of intuition.

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