

Introduction to the Monographic Section: The Role of Intuitions in Analytic Philosophy

*Introducción a la sección monográfica:
El papel de las intuiciones en la filosofía analítica*

David Bordonaba-Plou

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, España
davbordo@ucm.es

The utilization of intuitions stands out as a widely employed approach in many different areas within philosophy. In the context of analytic philosophy, it is widely acknowledged that intuitions are fundamental for the practice of analytic philosophy. Various scholars substantiate this perspective (see Goldman, 2007; Weinberg, 2007; Williamson, 2007, p. 2; Baz, 2012, p. 87; Koopman, 2012; Kornblith, 2014) and encapsulated in the “Thesis of Centrality”: “contemporary analytic philosophers rely on intuitions as evidence (or as a source of evidence) for philosophical theories” (Cappelen, 2012, p. 3).

However, since the emergence of experimental philosophy in the early 21st century, there has been a dispute within analytic philosophy on the role of intuitions. Experimental philosophy (see Knobe, 2007; Knobe and Nichols, 2007; Rose and Danks, 2013; Hansen, 2014, 2015; Hansen and Chemla, 2015) involves the application of quantitative methods¹ to resolve philosophical problems. Advocates of experimental philosophy have called into question the reliability of intuitive judgments made by analytic philosophers. Simply put, for experimental philosophers, the so-called “method of cases” (Machery et al., 2004, p. B8), the method most used in analytic philosophy, is an unreliable methodology because we are uncertain about the extent to which the intuitions that one or more philosophers have about

¹ These methods come, especially, from cognitive science (see Nadelhoffer and Nahmias, 2007, p. 123; Knobe and Nichols, 2017), but recently some analytic philosophers have advocated the use of corpus methods (see, for example, Bluhm, 2013, 2016; Hansen and Chemla, 2015; Caton, 2020; Tallant and Andow, 2020; Bordonaba-Plou, 2023).



Received: 25/11/2023. Final version: 11/01/2024

eISSN 0719-4242 – © 2024 Instituto de Filosofía, Universidad de Valparaíso

This article is distributed under the terms of the

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 Internacional License



CC BY-NC-ND

a real or hypothetical case are widespread. Edouard Machery, Ron Mallon, Shaun Nichols, and Stephen P. Stich conducted a notable study titled *Semantics, cross-cultural style*, which showed that intuitions about the reference of proper names can vary depending on culture. More specifically, the study showed that Eastern people tend to have descriptivist referential intuitions, while Western people tend to have historical-causal referential intuitions. This finding challenged the previously accepted Kripkean perspective.

In response to the challenges posed by experimental philosophy, some authors defended that analytic philosophers do not rely on intuitions as a form of evidence. Following Nado (2016, p. 782), I will call them “intuition deniers” (see, e.g., Williamson, 2007; Deutsch, 2009, 2015; Cappelen, 2012; Molyneux, 2014). Their strategy was to deny that analytic philosophers use intuitions as evidence to defend their theories. Although the position was initially met with a certain skepticism, it has steadily garnered adherents over time, and today, it is known as the *Deutsch-Cappelen view*, which “denies the widely shared presupposition that intuitions about cases play a crucial evidential role in philosophical practice in the first place” (Horvath, 2022, p. 2). In essence, the Deutsch-Cappelen view denies the Thesis of Centrality. The intuition deniers tend to argue that analytic philosophers rely on formal or informal arguments, analogies, or other forms of reasoning instead of intuitions to defend their theories (see Deutsch, 2010, 2015; Horvath, 2022; Sękowski, 2022).

Another issue of particular interest when we think about the role of intuitions in analytic philosophy is the very nature of intuitions. The most dominant position highlights the propositional nature of intuitions. In this line, intuitions are doxastic states such as judgments or beliefs (Devitt, 2006; Sosa, 1996, 2007; Earlenbaugh and Molyneux, 2009). However, some defend that intuitions are more like intellectual seemings (see Bealer, 1999; Chudnoff, 2011; Brogaard, 2014; Bengson, 2015), i.e., intuitions are defined not by their content but by the experiential or phenomenic character associated with them.

Whether intuitions are used as evidence or not, or what their nature is, are still unresolved questions and, if so, will be resolved with time. However, I think the several disputes reflect the relevance of intuitions in analytic philosophy. Another mark of the fundamental importance of intuitions for analytic philosophy is the great diversity of topics in which they appear in a recurrent way. For example, if we consider only the recent philosophy of language, intuitions are relevant for studying a huge array of topics: the reference of proper names (Machery et al., 2004; Mallon et al., 2009; Deutsch, 2009; Martí, 2009; Machery, 2012; Sytsma and Livengood, 2011; Machery, Sytsma and Deutsch, 2015), the meaning of natural kind terms (Braisby, Franks and Hampton, 1996; Häggqvist and Wikforss, 2015; Fernández Moreno, 2021a, 2021b), retractions on epistemic modals (Knobe and Yalcin, 2014; Khoo, 2015; Katz and Salerno, 2017; Beddor and Egan, 2018; Marques, 2018), retractions on taste judgments (Dinges and Zakkou, 2020; Kneer, 2021; Almagro, Bordonaba-Plou and Villanueva, 2023), linguistic intuitions (see Devitt, 2006; Maynes, 2012; Maynes and Gross, 2013), predicates of personal taste and faultless disagreement (Lasersohn, 2005; Stojanovic, 2007; MacFarlane

2014), intuition talk (Andow, 2015; Bordonaba-Plou, 2021), the norm of assertion (Turri, 2013; Kneer, 2018; Marsili and Wiegmann, 2021), or dual character concepts (Knobe, Prasada and Newman, 2013; Del Pinal and Reuter, 2017; Liao, Meskin and Knobe, 2020).

This monographic section includes groundbreaking works that explore the role of intuitions in various domains within analytic philosophy. The papers introduce novel perspectives or adopt innovative approaches that shed light on traditional problems associated with intuitions in analytic philosophy. *Kamil Cekiera* puts forth a minimal view of intuitions that enables a coherent understanding without forsaking the distinction between intuitions as states and intuitions as propositional contents. Specifically, he contends that intuitions are intuitive judgments, i.e., propositions that gain their justificatory power through the process of intuiting. *Esteban Céspedes* advances a non-representationalist interpretation of intuition, aiming to resolve the circularity between mental and theoretical representations. *David Bordonaba-Plou* conducts empirical research on the interplay between intuition talk and reasoning markers. His findings reveal a correlation between these two types of terms. *Carolina Scotto* identifies a new linguistic intuition called “iconic intuitions”. Then, she argues that iconic intuitions do not conform to standard characterizations; they neither possess a doxastic nature nor resemble intellectual seemings. Instead, she posits that they exhibit qualities akin to perceptual seemings. *Alison Jaggar* and *Theresa Tobin* examine the methodologies used by analytic philosophers to demonstrate the role of intuitions as evidence in moral judgments. Their argument underscores the relevance of intuitions in moral knowledge while emphasizing the necessity for democratic reasoning processes to counteract potential epistemic injustices. *Kiichi Inamori* supports one of the most relevant and central arguments in the debate on intuitions, the expertise defense. Through an examination of the experimental philosophy on free will, Inamori concludes that the rigorous training undergone by philosophers during their education equips them with the proper kind of intuition about this subject matter. *Tabitha Prusseit* examines the status of intuitions in decision-making by considering an ecological approach. She defends that intuitions are intentional feelings based on experiential knowledge that constantly refer to an appropriate environment and are directed towards a decision that results in an action. *Luis Carrillo* connects the holistic and inferential conception of beliefs defended by Donald Davidson with the existence of intuitive beliefs. To this end, the author embraces the theory of the extended mind, illustrating how the intuitive agent can acquire that which he cannot acquire by his inferential authorship.

References

- Almagro, M., Bordonaba-Plou, D. & Villanueva, N. (2023). Retraction in public settings. *Synthese*, 202, 137. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-023-04348-3>
- Andow, J. (2015). How “intuition” exploded. *Metaphilosophy*, 46(2), 189-212. <https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12127>



- Baz, A. (2012). *When words are called for: A defense of ordinary language philosophy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bealer, G. (1998). Intuition and the autonomy of philosophy. In M. DePaul, W. Ramsey (Eds.), *Rethinking intuition: The psychology of intuition and its role in philosophical inquiry* (pp. 201-240). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Beddor, B. & Egan, A. (2018). Might do better: Flexible relativism and the QUD. *Semantics and Pragmatics*, 11(7).
- Bengson, J. (2015). The Intellectual Given. *Mind*, 124(495), 707-760. <https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzv029>
- Bluhm, R. (2013). Don't Ask, Look! Linguistic Corpora as a Tool for Conceptual Analysis. In M. Hoeltje, T. Spitzley, W. Spohn (Eds.), *Was dürfen wir glauben? Was sollen wir tun? Sektionsbeiträge des achten internationalen Kongresses der Gesellschaft für Analytische Philosophie e.V.* (pp. 7-15). DuEPublico.
- Bluhm, R. (2016). Corpus Analysis in Philosophy. In M. Hinton (Ed.), *Evidence, Experiment and Argument in Linguistics and Philosophy of Language* (pp. 91-109). Peter Lang.
- Bordonaba-Plou, D. (2021). An analysis of the centrality of intuition talk in the discussion on taste disagreements. *Filozofia Nauki*, 29(2), 133-156. <https://doi.org/10.14394/filnau.2021.0008>
- Bordonaba-Plou, D. (2023). Métodos de corpus: un nuevo horizonte para la filosofía experimental del lenguaje. *Revista de Humanidades de Valparaíso*, 21, 107-128. <https://doi.org/10.22370/rhv2023iss21pp107-128>
- Braisby, N., Franks, B., & Hampton, J. (1996). Essentialism, word use, and concepts. *Cognition*, 59, 247-274. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277\(95\)00698-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277(95)00698-2)
- Brogaard, B. (2014). Intuitions as intellectual seemings. *Analytic Philosophy*, 55(4), 382-393. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phib.12051>
- Cappelen, H. (2012). *Philosophy without intuitions*. Oxford University Press.
- Caton, J. N. (2020). Using linguistic corpora as a philosophical tool. *Metaphilosophy*, 51(1), 51-70. <https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12405>
- Chudnoff, E. (2011). What Intuitions Are Like? *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, LXXXII(3), 625-654. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2010.00463.x>
- Del Pinal, G. & Reuter, K. (2017). Dual character concepts in social cognition: Commitments and the normative dimension of conceptual representation. *Cognitive Science*, 41(S3), 477-501. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.12456>
- Devitt, M. (2006). Intuitions In Linguistics. *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 57, 481-513. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjps/axl017>
- Deutsch, M. (2009). Experimental philosophy and the theory of reference. *Mind & Language*, 24(4), 445-466. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0017.2009.01370.x>



- Deutsch, M. (2010). Intuitions, Counter-Examples, and Experimental Philosophy. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 1(3), 447-460. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13164-010-0033-0>
- Deutsch, M. (2015). *The myth of the intuitive. Experimental Philosophy and Philosophical Method*. The MIT Press.
- Dinges, A. & Zakkou, J. (2020). A Direction Effect on Taste Predicates. *Philosophers' Imprint*, 20(27), 1-22.
- Earlenbaugh, J. & Molyneux, B. (2009). Intuitions Are Inclinations to Believe. *Philosophical Studies*, 145(1), 89-109. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-009-9388-4>
- Fernández Moreno, L. (2021a). Natural kind terms. In P. Stalmaszczyk (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of the Philosophy of Language* (pp. 283-299). Cambridge University Press.
- Fernández Moreno, L. (2021b). Language and metaphysics: the case of theoretical identities. *Synthese*, 198(Suppl 3), 831-848. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-017-1498-5>
- Goldman, A. I. (2007). Philosophical intuitions: Their target, their source and their epistemic status. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 4, 1-26. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401204651_002
- Häggqvist, S. & Wikforss, A. (2015). Experimental semantics: The case of natural kind terms. In J. Haukioja (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Philosophy of Language* (pp. 109-138). Bloomsbury.
- Hansen, N. & Chemla, E. (2015). Linguistic experiments and ordinary language philosophy. *Ratio*, 28(4), 422-445. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/rati.12112>
- Hansen, N. (2014). Contemporary ordinary language philosophy. *Philosophy Compass*, 9(8), 556-569. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12152>
- Hansen, N. (2015). Experimental philosophy of language. In *Oxford handbooks online*. Oxford University Press.
- Horvath, J. (2022). Mischaracterization reconsidered. *Inquiry*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2021.2019894>
- Katz, J. & Salerno, J. (2017). Epistemic modal disagreement. *Topoi*, 36, 141-153. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-015-9363-y>
- Khoo, J. (2015). Modal disagreements. *Inquiry*, 58(5), 511-534. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2015.1033005>
- Kneer, M. (2018). The norm of assertion: Empirical data. *Cognition*, 177, 165-171. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2018.03.020>
- Kneer, M. (2021). Predicates of personal taste: Empirical data. *Synthese*, 199, 6455-6471. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-021-03077-9>
- Knobe, J. & Nichols, S. (2007). An experimental philosophy manifesto. In J. Knobe, S. Nichols (Eds.), *Experimental Philosophy* (pp. 3-14). Oxford University Press.
- Knobe, J. & Nichols, S. (2017). Experimental philosophy. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy* (Winter 2017 Edition). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/experimental-philosophy/>



- Knobe, J., Prasada, S. & Newman, G. E. (2013). Dual character concepts and the normative dimension of conceptual representation. *Cognition*, 127, 242-257. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2013.01.005>
- Knobe, J. & Yalcin, S. (2014). Epistemic modals and context: Experimental data. *Semantics and Pragmatics*, 7(10), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.3765/sp.7.10>
- Knobe, J. (2007). Experimental philosophy. *Philosophy Compass*, 2(1), 81-92. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2006.00050.x>
- Koopman, C. (2012). Pragmatist resources for experimental philosophy: Inquiry in place of intuition. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 26(1), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.26.1.0001>
- Kornblith, H. (2014). Naturalism and intuitions. In *A naturalistic epistemology: Selected papers* (pp. 158-177). Oxford University Press.
- Lasersohn, P. (2005). Context dependence, disagreement and predicates of personal taste. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 28, 643-686. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-005-0596-x>
- Liao, S.-y., Meskin, A. & Knobe, J. (2020). Dual character art concepts. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 101(1), 102-128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/papq.12301>
- MacFarlane, J. (2014). *Assessment-Sensitivity: Relative Truth and its Applications*. Oxford University Press.
- Machery, E., Mallon, R., Nichols, S. & Stich, S. P. (2004). Semantics, cross-cultural style. *Cognition*, 92, (B1-B12). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2003.10.003>
- Machery, E., Sytma, J. & Deutsch, M. (2015). Speaker's Reference and Cross-Cultural Semantics. In A. Bianchi (Ed.), *On reference* (pp. 62-76). Oxford University Press.
- Machery, E. (2012). Expertise and Intuitions about Reference. *THEORIA. An International Journal for Theory, History and Foundations of Science*, 27(1), 37-54.
- Mallon, R., Machery, E., Nichols, S. & Stich, S. P. (2009). Against arguments from reference. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 79(2), 332-356. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2009.00281.x>
- Marques, T. (2018). Retractions. *Synthese*, 195(8), 3335-3359. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-015-0852-8>
- Marsili, N. & Wiegmann, A. (2021). Should I say that? An experimental investigation of the norm of assertion. *Cognition*, 212, 104657. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2021.104657>
- Martí, G. (2009). Against Semantic Multi-Culturalism. *Analysis*, 69(1), 42-48. <https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/ann007>
- Maynes, J. (2012). Linguistic Intuition and Calibration. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 35, 443-460. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-012-9122-0>
- Maynes, J. & Gross, S. (2013). Linguistic intuitions. *Philosophy Compass*, 8(8), 714-730. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12052>



- Molyneux, B. (2014). New arguments that philosophers don't treat intuitions as evidence. *Metaphilosophy*, 45(3), 441-461. <https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12094>
- Nadelhoffer, T. & Nahmias, E. (2007). The Past and Future of Experimental Philosophy. *Philosophical Explorations*, 10(2), 123-149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13869790701305921>
- Nado, J. (2016). The intuition deniers. *Philosophical Studies*, 173(3), 781-800. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-015-0519-9>
- Rose, D. & Danks, D. (2013). In defense of a broad conception of experimental philosophy. *Metaphilosophy*, 44(4), 512-532. <https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12045>
- Sękowski, K. (2022). Concept Revision, Concept Application and the Role of Intuitions in Gettier Cases. *Episteme*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2022.49>
- Sosa, E. (1996). Rational Intuition: Bealer on Its Nature and Epistemic Status. *Philosophical Studies*, 81(2-3), 151-162. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00372779>
- Sosa, E. (2007). Intuitions: Their Nature and Epistemic Efficacy. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 74(1), 51-67. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401204651_004
- Stojanovic, I. (2007). Talking about taste: Disagreement, implicit arguments, and relative truth. *Linguistics and philosophy*, 30(6), 691-706. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-008-9030-5>
- Sytsma, J. & Livengood, J. (2011). A New Perspective Concerning Experiments on Semantic Intuitions. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 89(2), 315-332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00048401003639832>
- Tallant, J. & Andow, J. (2020). English language and philosophy. In S. Adolphs, D. Knight (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of English language and digital humanities* (pp. 440-455). Routledge.
- Turri, J. (2013). The test of truth: An experimental investigation of the norm of assertion. *Cognition*, 129(2), 279-291. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2013.06.012>
- Weinberg, J. M. (2007). How to challenge intuitions empirically without risking skepticism. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 31, 318-343. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4975.2007.00157.x>
- Williamson, T. (2007). *The philosophy of philosophy*. Blackwell Publishing.