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 methods 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).
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; Chudnovff, 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...

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


*RHV, 2024, No 24, 1-7*


