University of Alberta

Calibrating Intuition

A Defense of Standard Philosophical Analysis

by

Justin Jalea

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Philosophy

Fall 2009
Edmonton, Alberta

Examining Committee

Dixon, Peter (Department of Psychology)

Hunter, Bruce (Department of Philosophy)

Morton, Adam (Department of Philosophy)

Welchman, Jennifer (Department of Philosophy)

~ To my family, Raymond, Aida, Gracia, Patrick and Cheryll – philosophers, artists and musicians ~

Our "intuitions" are simply opinions; our philosophical theories are the same. Some are commonsensical, some are sophisticated; some are particular, some general; some are more firmly held, some less. But they are all opinions, and a reasonable goal for a philosopher is to bring them into equilibrium.[1] *~ David Lewis*

Of course, we are often unable to answer an important philosophical question by rigorous argument, or even to formulate the question clearly. High standards then demand not that we should ignore the question, otherwise little progress would be made, but that we should be open and explicit about the unclarity of the question and the inconclusiveness of our attempts to answer it, and our dissatisfaction with both should motivate attempts to improve our methods.[2] *~ Tim Williamson*

---

[1] Lewis, David (1986) *Philosophical Papers* Vol. 1. Oxford University Press: New York: NY.

[2] Williamson, T. "Must Do Better" To appear in P. Greenough and M. Lynch, eds., Proceedings of the 2004 St. Andrews Conference on Realism and Truth (Oxfrod: OUP).

ABSTRACT

Intuition has fallen from grace. Its authority to act as a source of evidence in philosophical discourse has recently been called into question by philosophers and cognitive psychologists alike, who claim that because of the many difficulties that plague intuition, it should not hold the evidential role it does presently. This is exceedingly troubling, since appeals to intuition are pervasive throughout, and infiltrate every level of, philosophical discourse. This paper explores the extent of intuition's infiltration in philosophy and whether intuition is warranted in those positions. I argue that by focusing on virtues exhibited by philosophical methodology, many of the arguments made against them are defused. In spite of this, we can largely carry on utilizing the methodology which houses intuitions – Standard Philosophical Analysis – while continually attempting to revise and refine that methodology.

(1) An account of the metaphysical nature of intuition is given and explicated, demarcating it as a unique mental phenomenon.
(2) An examination of the classic arguments against intuition is presented. Calibration – the need to provide non-epistemically circular justification – is applied to intuition, showing that intuition fails in being able to be appropriately calibrated.
(3) Standard Philosophical Analysis (SPA) is shown to involve an eventual appeal to unrefined folk intuition. The scrutiny that exemplifies SPA is lost on, arguably, SPA's most cherished characteristic.
(4) SPA exhibits virtues that defeat many of the arguments made against intuition.
(5) Contrary to what is commonly believed, it is shown that the construction of philosophical theories does not involve appeals to intuition to justify them.
(6) Progress in SPA is best understood through the virtues exhibited by SPA and by the commitment of the philosopher to meticulousness and continued improvement.

PREFACE

Intuition has been indispensible in philosophical methodology. In all aspects of philosophical discourse – from forming syllogisms, to defense and refutation of philosophical positions, and even in theory construction – intuition is said to play a central role. However, recent scrutiny by philosophers and psychologists alike has seriously called into question the value of appealing to intuition as a method of doing philosophy. They argue that because intuition is unable to act as a reliable source of evidence, we must give up the practice of appealing to it if the respectability of philosophical discourse is to be maintained. Some philosophers have come to the defense of intuition, arguing from a variety of perspectives, generally holding that all hope is not lost for intuition in philosophy despite being unable to provide independent justification for its reliability. I join the philosophers on this side of the debate – for the most part.

Now although I intend to argue in support of intuition and philosophical methodology in general, I do so in the recognition that there are objections that cannot be ignored simply because they cannot be explained away. That is to say, there are certain arguments made against intuition that must be respected if the general concern surrounding them is to be truly rectified. So rather than defending intuition outright, I intend to take a middle-route; arguing that in order to truly gain traction on the problem intuition faces presently, we must respect those concerns – on either side of the debate – we cannot presently explain away.

Despite the goal I set for myself here, I present an argument in defense of the practice of appealing to intuition in philosophy. Turning our attention away from the concerns surrounding intuition and focusing it on the virtues exhibited by Standard Philosophical Analysis (SPA) will defuse many of the concerns surrounding appeals to intuition. Moreover, it will restore confidence in the act of appealing to intuition, showing that even in spite of being unable to provide justification for intuition apart from appealing to it, we can be confident that our work is not done

carelessly and in vain. Philosophy can have a sense of progress if we commit to being vigilant in the desire to improve its methodology.

This paper proceeds as follows. I intend to first present and elucidate what I believe to be the most accurate and exhaustive account of the nature of intuition. It is important that we do our best to lock down as firm an account of the nature of intuition as possible, since much of the difficulty surrounding intuition stems from a misconception of what intuition is. Apart from this, defining the features of intuition will help defeat some of the arguments made against it, of which there are a number. Chapter 2 will elucidate the many diverse skeptical arguments against intuition. Most important is elucidating the argument from *calibration*. It states that since it is impossible to provide a non-epistemically circular way of justifying intuition, intuition has no place in philosophical discourse. Not until the third chapter do I address this worry. There I will first bring to light another argument that attacks philosophical methodology directly; showing that there is an eventual appeal to unrefined "folk intuition" that escapes the meticulous scrutiny that characterizes, and is cherished by, philosophical methodology. In fact, it is meant to show that there is an inevitable appeal to folk intuition in philosophical discourse, which fuels the position that intuition should not even minimally hold the evidential role it presently does in philosophy.

At this point, after having painted a grim picture of intuition, I will argue that all hope is not lost. Philosophical methodology is not completely condemned by this argument, or by the other arguments presented in the second chapter. By (i) focusing on the virtues exhibited by Standard Philosophical Analysis, and (ii) restricting the authority of intuition to act as evidence, I believe we can restore a great deal of trust in the practice of appealing to intuition as a method of doing philosophy. In addition, I will show how appeals to intuition are absent when constructing philosophical theories – the upshot being that even if theories are intuitive and involves premises that are based on intuition, they are not justified *because they are intuitive*. To conclude, in Chapter 4 I

will present those arguments whose force cannot be ignored despite the frustration they generate for those who wish to circumvent them. It is in balancing these arguments, while continually attempting to improve upon them that this frustration can be defeated and a sense of progress seem possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude to Adam Morton – a true mentor and advisor – who continues to be a source of great inspiration. This paper would not have materialized without his valued insight and constant support. Also, my sincere thanks goes out to Peter Dixon, Bruce Hunter and Jennifer Welchman for helpful questions and comments. Finally, thank you to Denis Arseneau for precise and diligent editing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1
What is Intuition?

1.1 The Nature of Intuition

If A=B and B=C, then A=C. It is impossible for it to be both raining and not raining at the same time in the same place. 1+1=2. No sphere is a cube. The mind cannot exist without the body. Setting cats on fire just for the fun of it is wrong.

The above propositions all have something in common: they elicit intuitions. That is to say, some psychological state is produced in the reader that inclines her to consider the above statements either true or false. (I would think for most, it is the truth and not the falsity of these statements which strikes the reader.) But what are these elusive yet powerful entities; powerful enough not only to incline us to consider some proposition true or false, but to then *believe* that they are true or false? This will be one of the questions that will guide our inquiry in this chapter. Another, which is more important for our purposes, is questioning their role in philosophy. We proceed now to deal with the first.

As there is no consensus regarding the nature of intuition, I will present what I believe to be the most complete and coherent account and offer amendments and additions as I proceed. In Chapter 2 of his book – *Intuition as Evidence* – Pust compiles a list of desiderata that any account of intuition should satisfy. The following is a revised version and explication of that list.[3]

(1) Intuition is a psychological state.
(2) Intuition is distinct from and prior to knowledge.
(3) Intuition is directed at, and contains, propositional content.
(4) Intuition is an occurrent or episodic psychological state.
(5) Intuition is fallible.
(6) Intuition is not the result of conscious inference.
(7) Intuition is distinct from perceptual or memory states.

[3] Pust (2000) 43-46

(8) Intuition comes in degrees.

(9) Philosophical[4] Intuition involves an apparent necessity of some kind.

(1) Intuition should be understood as a genuine psychological state. Some, like Sosa, have been tempted to label intuition as simply a kind of disposition, as is the case with appeals to linguistic dispositions – that is, the "what we would say" phenomenon common among philosophers. Pust argues that these expressions are, at base, descriptions of psychological states, owing to the fact that their attractiveness is a result of them *seeming* true or correct to us – where *seeming* here is understood as some kind of psychological state.

(2) Intuition has traditionally been understood by analogy to perception. Phrases such as, "it is through the mind's eye that we gain insight" or "the truth rises before one's eyes", are common when describing intuitive judgments. However, the analogy to perception does not seem to properly capture the mental and psychological phenomenon of intuition. In perception, there is the *object* of perception, say a blue balloon, the *belief* that there exists a blue balloon, and mediating the two, the *experience* of seeing a blue balloon. However, this three-step model seems to fail when applied to understanding intuition. For one, there does not seem to be the intermediate step of something like a mediating experience between intuition and belief. There is just (i) the fact that 1+1=2 and (ii) the belief that 1+1=2.[5] Although the analogy fails, intuition can, and often does, collapse into belief. However, intuition remains sharply distinct from belief.

In his paper, *Intuitions and Truth*,[6] Sosa argues for the distinction and priority of intuition to both belief and knowledge. Since intuition and belief conflict on many occasions, they must be distinct. For example, I may *believe* that the product of 15984 and 2873 is 45922032, by having just

[4] This is a point of contention that will be taken up below. Calling the intuitions used in philosophical inquiry "philosophical" is misleading, since it implies that there is a phenomenological distinction between intuitions in philosophy and those external to it. I will show that no such phenomenological distinction exists and that intuitions simply present themselves in varying degrees of necessity, but not that there is a phenomenological distinction between them. However, we will see that philosophical intuitions differ from other types, but not because they involve an apparent necessity.

[5] Example borrowed from Sosa (2007).

[6] In Greenough *Truth and Realism* (2007) 208.

checked and re-checked my arithmetic with a reliable calculator, but not have the *intuition* that it is. By the same token I may regard something as intuitive but not believe it. Returning briefly to perception, a commonly cited example that demonstrates this is the Müller-Lyer illusion. In this illusion, the perceiver is presented with two parallel congruent line segments which are made to appear incongruent by the addition of arrows at the ends of each segment: on one the arrows point in, and on the other they point out. Having measured the lines I believe them to be congruent. Yet the intuitive appeal that they are incongruent remains quite forceful even after systematically determining that they are not. Indeed, it still *seems* to me that the two lines are incongruent. By way of these examples then, belief and intuition are distinct. Moreover, the claim that intuition is distinct from knowledge is shown by implication from our having established that intuition and belief are distinct. In Sosa's (2006) words: "Intuitive belief is based on intuition but goes beyond it, and in turn constitutes intuitive knowledge only if all goes well." (212)

Since the statement that "intuition is prior to belief and knowledge" is itself so intuitive, I need not say much (I am fully aware of the irony). We need simply look at the causal order of how we come to be said to *know* something. To use the model of perception once again: we first have the *fact* that the object is in front of me, the *experience* of it, the *belief* that it is in front of me, and finally (skeptical head-shaking aside) the *knowledge* that the object is in front of me. The same kind of process is true of intuition and the beliefs that result. In this way intuition is prior to both belief and knowledge.

(3) Now, despite being prior, intuition can give rise to belief. The probative force of intuition is often sufficient to warrant the belief that some proposition is true. The sheer intuitive appeal of the proposition 'if A=B, B=C, then A=C' is so forceful that the reader almost immediately assents to its truth. Here we've come to another obvious, but noteworthy feature of intuition: it is directed

towards, and realized in, the conscious consideration of a proposition.[7] So, when I have the intuition that 'setting cats on fire just for the fun of it is morally impermissible' is true, the source and content of that intuition is the proposition 'setting cats on fire just for the fun of it is morally impermissible.' An intuition is not without some proposition under consideration. Put more formally, S has the intuition that *p*, or as intuiting that *p*, where *p* is understood to be some proposition. Further, being realized in considering propositions, intuition must be some kind of conscious state as opposed to some act of the subconscious mind.[8] In Sosa's (2007) words: "[Intuition] is a conscious phenomenon that requires conscious consideration of a proposition." (52)

(4) We have already established that intuition should be considered a psychological state and not simply a dispositional one, since dispositional states do not account for the phenomenology involved in appeals to intuition. It should be added, however, that intuition is *occurrent* or *episodic*. This is not to deny that there is a sense of "intuition" that refers to dispositional states not at the agent's immediate attention. However, these "non-occurrent intuitions are not evident to us."[9] In order to consider them "intuitive" one must bring them to the forefront of one's attention.

(5) Another important and somewhat distressing feature of intuition is that it can be false. This is evidenced by paradoxes of all sorts, such as the liar and sorites of ancient times, or the time paradoxes that plague us presently. In these instances, the intuitive appeal to assent to what ends up being false, even after careful and exhaustive examination, is quite strong. Despite that, we are inclined towards belief from those intuitive judgments. The fact that intuition can be false serves, for some, as a reason to reject the practice of appealing to intuition. This issue will be taken up in detail in the next chapter. For now, it is enough to point out the fallibility of intuition.

(6) From introspection is seems clear that intuition is not the result of any conscious inference or reasoning. When confronted with the proposition that no sphere is a cube, one

[7] This is only one of the ways intuitions are used in philosophy. Others will be discussed in Section 1.3.
[8] Intuition is sometimes also used to refer to the unconscious act of knowing how to act in, or judge, some situation.
[9] Pust (2000) 44

immediately assents to its truth, only if that person fully understands the terms involved. One may take this to be a concession that there is indeed some quick and subtle inference happening; for the agent must understand the terms, cross-reference them against each other, as it were, and then conclude that the statement is true. So the statement that intuition is not the result of conscious inference does not deny that there are unconscious processes at work. What it does deny is that inferences of this kind are not part of the first-person analysis of intuitions that philosophers consider.

There is a second reason for considering intuition not to be the result of conscious inference or reasoning. As Cohen (1986)[10] correctly points out, intuitions can serve as ultimate justifying premises only if they are non-inferential and admit of no further inferential support. Philosophy treats intuition as basic, foundational entities[11] that, in order to be philosophically potent, must not be the result of conscious inference.

(7) The promise of perception is that it supposedly shows the observer what *actually* is the case. Intuition, on the other hand, often appeals to what is *possibly* or even *necessarily* the case. Intuition is therefore distinct from perceptual states.

As for memory, it is possible to remember some proposition without finding it intuitive. To borrow an example from Pust: although I may remember that some Gettier case is not a case of knowledge, I may not have the relevant intuition. Moreover, when experiencing an intuition for the first time, I am surely not remembering the proposition I am considering. Rather, I go on to consider it in further detail which is phenomenologically distinct from recalling that same proposition.

(8) I would think that one would consider 1+1=2 to be more intuitive than the result that knowledge does not reduce to justified true belief because of barn facades or painted mules. In this

[10] Cohen, L. J. (1986). *The Dialogue of Reason*. New York: Oxford University Press.
[11] The claim that philosophy treats intuition as basic foundational entities will be taken up in what follows.

sense, intuition comes in degrees. A simple fact about intuition is that some are stronger – that is, more intuitive – than others. This point plays a significant role in determining how intuition factors into an understanding of philosophical methodology proper. I will examine this point in detail in the final chapter.

(9) The claim that intuition, as used in philosophy, involves an apparent necessity of some kind will be discussed at length in the next section, where I examine the multiple ways philosophers use intuition. For now I will say that upon reflection intuition does seem to involve an apparent necessity, so that the intuition generated in the "intuiter" (i.e. the agent generating the intuition) carries with it the sense that the truth of the proposition in question could not be otherwise. These "philosophical" intuitions, as Bealer classifies them, are the proper object of philosophical inquiry and should be set apart from other types.[12] In any case, the account of intuition I've sketched here respects this necessity claim.[13]

I believe this list to be, although maybe not exhaustive, as complete as possible and will certainly serve our purposes here. To put things more formally, Pust presents the following account of intuition that respects all the above desiderata.

> [A1] At t, S has a rational intuition that p IF AND ONLY IF (a) at t, S has a purely intellectual experience, when considering the question of whether p, that p; and (b) at t, if S were to consider whether p is necessarily true, then S would have a purely intellectual experience that necessarily p.[14]

We will use this as our guiding schema for the nature of intuition. We need not scrutinize the details of this formulation.[15] What is important is having a basic understanding of intuition that distinguishes it from other types of mental phenomena that may distract from the issue. This is not to say, however, that the above characterization completely locks down a single conception of

[12] Different types of intuitions will be discussed in section 1.2.
[13] Requiring that "philosophical intuitions" are necessary is a point of issue that will be discussed in detail below.
[14] Pust (2000)
[15] Cf. Pust (2000) 46, where he deals with two objections raised to this view: (i) that no necessity can be involved in many of our concept application intuitions because they are linguistic or metalinguistic in form, and (ii) [A1] excludes many relevant philosophical intuitions, which do not, at least at first, seem necessary.

intuition. In fact, there are multiple uses of "intuition" that refer to seemingly different mental phenomena. Are these multiple instances of intuition just the same phenomenon under the auspices of different names, or is there a genuine distinction to be made between them? This will be the concern of the following section.

1.2 Kinds of Intuition

As was mentioned in the previous section, it seems as if there are a variety of different intuitions. This fact confuses matters quite a bit, especially when attempting to answer the question of which types of intuition should play a role in philosophical inquiry and for what reason. It is important, therefore, for us to be aware of the different senses of intuition at work and establish which count as proper objects of our concern.

"Physical intuition", "epistemic intuition", "rational intuition", "a priori intuition" and "folk intuition", are some of the varieties of intuitions that appear in the literature. What will expose the differences and similarities between these seemingly different instances of intuition is the work they do in philosophical discourse. In what follows, I will merely point out and describe these similarities and differences, grouping or separating kinds of intuition where necessary. Not until section 1.3 will I discuss the nature of the work they do in philosophy.

In the history of philosophy intuition has, on many occasions, been likened to something akin to commonsense. Both Saul Kripke (1980) and Ernest Sosa's (2007) accounts seem to make out "intuition" as being interchangeable with "commonsense". Krikpe often identifies intuition with claims that ordinary folk would readily assent to, while Sosa aligns intuition with a type of competence in relevant subject matter to which the agent is well versed. Moore, Reid and Poincaré, to name a few, also express intuition in terms of commonsense, in the same sense Sosa does. [16]

[16] Symons 2-4

In the philosophical literature we come across intuitions that adopt the name of the field to which they are related – epistemic, metaphysical, ethical etc. Despite their different names they all refer to the same mental phenomenon. The intuition we share with Theatetus that knowledge is not simply true belief, or the intuition that water on Twin Earth is XYZ, are just the sort of mental phenomenon that fits our definition of intuition sketched above. When presented to the intuiter, these propositions strike with an apparent necessity and an immediacy to assent to their truth. So we will group intuitions named for the field in which they are found together and label them the same mental phenomenon that accords with the schema of intuition presented above. But this is not the extent of different uses of intuition.

There are some, like George Bealer, who claim that there are so called "a priori" or "rational" intuitions that are the proper objects to conduct philosophical inquiry, and differ from other kinds of intuitions in other disciplines or in everyday life. Bealer refers to these as "philosophical intuitions." (This, however, is a bit misleading, as it implies there is only one use of intuition in philosophy. But this is not the case. Intuitions are supposedly used in a variety of different ways in philosophy. This will be the topic of the following section.)

Philosophical intuition[17] is distinguished from other types of intuition because of its strong connection to the deductive sciences. It may be helpful here to contrast philosophical intuition with what Bealer calls physical intuition. As its name implies, physical intuition concerns physical phenomenon. For instance, an architectural engineer has the intuition that if a cathedral facade is not properly buttressed the building will eventually split in two, or the homebuilder's intuition that if a building's foundation is undermined it will fall.[18] Now the difference between the intuitions of the architectural engineer and those of the philosopher is found in the phenomenological 'feel' of those intuitions. According to Bealer, the intuitions philosophers are primarily concerned with are

[17] We will ignore the question of how philosophical intuition, for Bealer, comes into being until the next section, where we discuss the philosophical method in dealing with intuitions.
[18] Examples borrowed from Bealer (1993).

independent of experience and more importantly "present themselves as necessary." That is to say, philosophical intuition *seems necessarily true.*[19] So for the engineer and homebuilder, the intuition that their respective structures will collapse if not properly supported may in fact be vivacious, but does not seem to them as necessarily being the case. So for Bealer, the necessity that accompanies philosophical intuition is lost on other types of intuition.

At first glance Bealer's account of so called "philosophical intuition" seems misguided. For starters, classifying philosophical intuition as *a priori* and restricting them to permit only of philosophical use implies that they are not open to being falsified, or even open to being merely susceptible to empirical findings. However, this is not the case. To take an example from the history of philosophy: Medieval thinkers held that a projectile, once fired, obtained property *p* in order to sustain its trajectory through space – a very intuitive claim to explain how objects like cannonballs remain temporarily airborne. However, we know now, through empirical investigation, that the extension of the initial force that causes the projectile to be propelled ceases after launch. The object does not obtain a new property. Inertia explains the continued movement of the projectile, not some property attached to it. Examples of this kind abound in the history of philosophy. Empirical findings continue to bear on "philosophical intuition" even today, informing philosophers' intuitions or inciting them to revise or reject them. Moreover, philosophers working in certain fields, such as philosophy of physics or biology, appeal to concepts that are based in empirical findings. To say that the intuitions from which they most certainly derive are *a priori*, therefore, seems mistaken.

Lastly, the distinguishing feature of philosophical intuition– its modal aspect – is, as far as I can gather, marked by its unique phenomenological 'feel'; that is, it *presents* itself as necessary. For Bealer then, the intuition of a philosopher, say that some logical law holds, seems *necessary* to him, while the intuition that a poorly supported building will crumble seems only *possible* to an engineer.

[19] Bealer (2004) makes a distinction between epistemic and metaphysical modality, which allows him to say that truths of logic and mathematics do not simply *seem* necessary but rather *are* necessary.

But this point is backed only by appeal to introspective investigation. It is surely not impossible for the intuitions of the architect or homebuilder to present themselves as necessary to them. One can imagine a person who has a great deal of experience with structures who will *necessarily* intuit that a building will collapse if its foundation is undermined. I take this to be a point to which most can relate. We have everyday physical intuitions that, I believe, present themselves as necessary. For instance, if I am holding a ball palm facing down and intend to release it, it necessarily appears to me that the ball will fall and not simply remain suspended in thin air. Now, having taken an introductory philosophy course, I understand that the act of releasing a ball does not *necessitate* the ball's immediate plunge – as the law of gravity could be rescinded at any moment (thank you Hume). However, it may still appear to me as necessarily being the case that the ball will immediately fall to the ground if I let go of it, even in spite of my knowing the problems surrounding inductive reasoning. Only when I have my sceptical hat on do I even entertain the idea that a ball will not fall to the ground when released.

Now one could argue that since the ball's resulting fall is not itself a necessary occurrence (the situation in turn constituting the content of the resulting intuition) the intuition itself could not appear necessary; and perhaps this is exactly Bealer's point. Perhaps he means to say that only those intuitions that result from necessary propositions can produce necessary philosophical intuitions.[20] However, we have established that it is only through introspection that we are able to distinguish what seems necessary and what doesn't. And in light of the examples above there seems to be no reason to believe that there is a necessary connection between whatever modal content the intuition may contain and the resulting intuition. The claim here is simply that there seems to be a disconnect between the content of the intuition and its phenomenal feel, such that the modal character of the

[20] I confess to not fully grasping Bealer's characterization of philosophical intuitions as being a priori and necessary. However, if this is his claim then it has the unwanted implication that only a very small number of intuitions would count as 'philosophical.' In fact, as far as I can tell this would only apply to the field of logic, which neglects the supposed numerous other uses of intuitions across other philosophical fields.

former need not match the latter. Further, let the reader recall that intuitions are occurrent *unreflective* entities. I would think that for most, it is only upon reflection that we even begin to consider that a ball will not fall to the ground when released from any height. Ignoring any constant solipsism then, I find it at least possible, given the reasons above, that non-philosophical intuitions can present themselves as necessary. Philosophical intuition should therefore not be separated *phenomenologically* from other types of intuitions by labelling the former necessary and the latter as merely possible. We should understand intuitions of all kinds to *present* themselves in varying degrees of modality.

I have just argued that Bealer's separation of philosophical intuition from other types of intuition based on their phenomenological quality is mistaken. However, there is a separation to be had. It concerns how philosophical intuition comes into existence. It is only after subjecting intuitions to what Bealer calls the "Standard Justificatory Procedure" do philosophical intuitions come to be. Where Bealer understands philosophical intuition to stand out because of its distinct phenomenal quality, I will refer to "philosophical intuitions" as those that have had the privilege of passing through the Standard Justificatory Procedure. In spite of this difference, I agree with Bealer that a special kind of intuition is at work in philosophy (but not the only kind). Philosophical intuition will be the primary focus for the rest of this discussion. And since considering philosophical intuition concerns philosophical methodology in general, we first turn to discuss the role of intuition in philosophy in general, where I give a brief sketch of the philosophical enterprise and explore the primary use of intuition in philosophy: as evidence.

1.3 Intuitions in Philosophy

"[w]hen contemporary analytic philosophers run out of arguments, they appeal to intuition." ~ Tim Williamson

The autonomy of philosophy has remained intact primarily because of the rigor of its methodology. For most this systematic rigor is akin to what is undoubtedly the current prevailing

methodology for seeking truth: the scientific method. Philosophy has done well to align itself as closely to science as possible, at least in form.

The practice of analytic philosophy can be crudely sketched as follows. Philosopher x has a flood of intuitions that come in varying degrees of intuitiveness – some are more attractive than others. The philosopher then subjects the intuitions to a dialectical critique in hopes of eliminating unfounded and perhaps biased intuitions. He then proceeds to construct a theory which accounts for the intuitions that survive that dialectic. Repeating step two, he "tests" that theory subjecting it to yet another dialectical process by appealing to other intuitions, as is demonstrated in the use of counterexamples. The final step is really an ongoing one, where the entire process is repeated until equilibrium is reached. Borrowed from Pust, I will refer to this method as the Standard Philosophical Analysis (SPA). To neatly summarize this method, SPA is as follows:

(1) Canvassing intuitions
(2) Subjecting those intuitions to dialectical critique
(3) Constructing theories that systematize the surviving intuitions
(4) Testing those theories against further intuitions
(5) Repeating the process until equilibrium is reached.[21]

As we can see, intuitions infiltrate every level of philosophical discourse: as starting points, in theory construction and revision, and even theory refutation.[22] In all these instances, however, there is something common in the way intuition is used. It is used as a kind of *evidence* in philosophy in the same way empirical data is used in science.

Consider theory construction in philosophy. Typically, philosophers strive to form a theory that is expressed in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. The theory attempts to uncover the nature of x by showing what all other x's have in common and only what x's have in common. In arguing in support of that theory, the philosopher attempts to show – often through the use of an

[21] Feltz 132
[22] (3) is a point of importance. I will take this up in Chapter 3 where I argue that intuition does not actually play a role in the construction of philosophical theories.

actual or hypothetical situation – that the theory implies the "correct" verdict regarding x. The "correct" verdict is usually the one that directly accords with our *intuitive judgements* about the case.[23]

Consider now how a philosopher attempts to test or refute a theory. When subjecting the theory to a philosophical dialectic the philosopher typically does the following: (i) searches for logical inconsistencies, (ii) checks x against other closely held beliefs, and (iii) attempts to find cases where x meets the necessary and sufficient conditions set out by the theory but does not match our intuitions about x. The most notable step here is (iii). This is often expressed in terms of a hypothetical situation – a thought experiment – that shows the necessary or sufficient conditions set out by the theory to in fact not be necessary or sufficient. These "counterexamples" abound in philosophy. Their ability to plunge entire theories into disrepute most certainly derives from the way in which we regard the entities these hypothetical situations are designed to solicit; namely, intuitions.[24] It is in these instances that the true authority of intuition becomes apparent in philosophy, which Goldman (2007) quite accurately express when he says: "It was the fact that almost everybody who read Gettier's examples shared the intuition that these were not instances of knowing. Had their intuitions been different, there would have been no discovery." Goldman's point acknowledges the true authority of intuition in philosophy. Moreover, it identifies, arguably, the most common role of intuition in philosophical discourse.

In all the steps of SPA described above, intuition has a common role: it acts as a kind of *evidence* in the same way observation and empirical facts do in scientific inquiry. I take this point to be an obvious one.[25] The question now becomes a normative one, as to whether intuition should in fact

---

[23] Pust (2001) 3

[24] Williamson (2003) cautions against the philosopher's impulse to allow so readily that intuitions trump theory. He argues that despite the intense intuitive attraction counterexamples produce, in certain cases the theory under fire fulfils other equally valuable criteria we should take into consideration. A theory is reputable if the following criteria are met: (1)it is able to withstand counterexamples; (2) it must not have too many theoretical consequences which are unacceptable; (3) the concepts involved in the theory should be theoretically significant and should be analysed in other theoretically significant terms; and (4) it must be theoretically simple. "Knowledge as Justified True Belief" does well on (2), (3) and (4), but not (1). And this is not enough of a reason to reject the theory. Of course, he spells this out in more detail. The point, however, is to show that the authority of intuitions should not be the 'end-all', so to speak, in philosophical analysis, since there are other theoretical desiderata that should be given consideration.

[25] Cf. Pust (2000) for a detailed discussion of 'intuitions as evidence'.

hold the esteemed position it does presently. As of late, many have called into question the status and reliability of intuition, arguing that philosophy cannot continue with business as usual. Appeals to intuition are plagued with difficulties not easily circumvented. As we will see in the following chapter, the concerns surrounding intuition are disconcerting to say the least. The attacks seem to culminate in the inability of intuition to be properly tested, demarcating philosophy from science in a most serious way: if we have no way of confirming the credibility of intuition, how then are we to have confidence in its outputs? Put differently, how can we be confident that intuition is a reliable source of evidence in spite of these difficulties? It is worth noting again that I do not intend to directly argue against the claim that intuition is an unreliable source of evidence, since, as we will see, a direct assault is indefensible. Rather, even in spite of the concerns surrounding intuition we can have faith in the process that has revealed intuition to be fallible and that has incited its own revision in light of that fact; namely, philosophical methodology.

In this chapter I presented what I consider to be the most complete and accurate account of the nature of intuition. The purpose was to define and explicate important metaphysical features of intuition that will have implications for the arguments made against them. Moreover, it generally helps to lock down a single conception of intuition as an element fundamental to philosophical discourse. We will now turn to examine and discuss the arguments that call into question the proper place of that fundamental element.

Chapter 2
Fallibility, Unreliability, and Skepticism

2.1 Common Problems

Suppose you have a heap of sand composed of approximately four-million grains. Suppose you carefully remove just one of those grains. Surely the four-million so odd grains of sand that remain constitute a "heap." Now suppose you remove another single grain, and then another, so on and so forth. When you get down to the last several grains of sand, can those grains still be considered a heap of sand? If not, then when did the heap stop being a heap? Did it cease being a heap when half the grains or two-thirds the amount were removed?

Paradoxes of vagueness of this kind have been causing headaches since ancient times. We need not consider the paradox any further, lest we suffer more headaches. For our purposes, it is enough to demonstrate one of the ways in which our intuitions are prone to fallibility. In this instance our intuitions are systematically led astray by the vagueness inherent in the propositions involved in the paradox. The intuitions generated by the series of propositions – which in this instance may look like (i) four million grains together makes a heap, (ii) taking one grain away will leave a heap, and (iii) three grains doesn't make a heap – seem to conflict. Each of the propositions seems individually plausible, but conjointly cannot be true. The intuitions that result provide no clear indication of the truth of the proposition under consideration. It may be intuitively clear that four-million grains minus one can be considered a heap or even two-million; but as the paradox progresses and grains of sand decrease so does faith that the intuitions are providing accurate answers to those propositions.

Intuitions being misled in this way are not isolated to ancient paradoxes. Fallacies of logic and probability such as affirming the consequent and the Gambler's Paradox, respectively, continue to mislead our intuitions, provoking an intuitive response that under reflection reveals it to be

glaringly false. What is troubling here is that intuitions can retain their intellectual attractiveness (inclining the intuitier to assent to the truth of its content) yet the content of that intuition can be false.

Unfortunately, however, this is not the only way in which our intuitions are said to be fallible. Sinnott-Armstrong has demonstrated that intuitions can be fallible in another way: 'clouded emotions' and 'mistaken heuristics' also contribute to intuitions' fallibility. For instance, George has the intuition that Indian cuisine is superior to English cuisine because George is ethnically part Indian and so has a preference for it. Or, someone who is agoraphobic has the intuition that fatalities occur more frequently when one is in public than when one is in their home.[26] In these instances, the intuitions that are generated are influenced by factors that should not contribute to the targets of those intuitions. That is to say, when considering a proposition the intuitions that result should not carry the personal biases of the intuiter. Certainly it's not impossible that in some instances these intuitions turn out to be true (i.e. English cuisine doesn't even compare to Indian cuisine). However, this does not dispel the worry that intuitions influenced by factors irrelevant to the target of those intuitions should not be trusted.

2.2 Empirical Evidence and Arguments

Another closely related worry is that of influence produced by the cultural, educational and socio-economic background of the intuiter. Much empirical research has been done of late that quite convincingly demonstrates that intuitions are influenced or even determined by these factors. One upshot of a study, "Semantics and Cross-Cultural Style" (2008), conducted by Machery et al. shows that intuitions generated from thought experiments are culturally determined. The main target of their study is to provide empirical evidence against proponents of appeals to intuition; demonstrating that intuitions are not shared universally, blocking arguments that seem to lean on the

[26] Examples adapted from Liao (forthcoming).

ubiquity of intuitions – that they are shared universally is often taken to be a testament to their truth. I will discuss this point in more detail below. The study proceeded by presenting students of both Western and East Asian descent with variations of the "Jonah" and "Gödel-Schmidt" thought experiments found in Kripe's *Naming and Necessity*, along with descriptive and causal-historical theories of reference. Malchery et al. found that Western students responded with causal-historical intuitions, while East-Asians exhibited descriptivist intuitions. Apart from other conclusions Malchery et al. drew, they primarily intended the study to demonstrate that intuitions differ across, but are consistent within, given cultures. The fact that intuitions are often shared between people of the same culture, but not across different cultures, suggests that intuitions are contingent on the surrounding of the intuiter. For the same reasons the trustworthiness of intuitions is at best questionable should personal biases influence them, so too are intuitions that result from cultural biases.

It is therefore difficult to see how appeals to the universality of intuition supports ties to truth that intuitions purport to contain. And further, if it is indeed true that philosophical methodology relies on appeals to intuition in this way – by appealing to the fact that many people share them – then Machery et al. and others such as Stacey Swain, Joshua Alexander and Jonathan Weinberg[27] have damaging evidence against intuition specifically, and SPA (Standard Philosophical Analysis) in general.

Probably the most forceful aspect of intuition that demonstrates its authority is that intuitions are shared. The more people who hold them the more strength intuition seems to posses. Again, Goldman's expression that "Had their intuitions [regarding Gettier cases] been different there would have been no discovery"[28] demonstrates this quite readily. And although I do not share Goldman's position that shared intuitions (even ones that are shared among many people) lead to

[27] Swain, S et al. (2008) "The Instability of Philosophical Intuitions: Running Hot and Cold on Truetemp." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.
[28] Goldman (2007) 2

philosophical discoveries, his point about the use of intuition in philosophy seems true. Among other things, intuition derives a great deal of force from the fact that many people share them. In spite of this, the empirical research that seems to demonstrate that in fact intuitions are not shared ubiquitously flies in the face of, arguably, intuition's most authoritative characteristic.

2.3 Conflict and Disagreement

"...agreement is neither necessary nor sufficient for an intuition to be correct." ~ S. Matthew Liao

In the same way "agreement" seems to act to confirm that intuitions are not biased, some understand "disagreement" to tell against the reliability of intuitions. Conflicting intuitions seem to cast doubt on an understanding of intuition as reliable indicators of truth, implying such truth is not reliably accessible through appeals to intuition.

Conflict comes in many forms. We have already seen that intuitions that result from biases and verbal disagreements tend to produce conflict. According to Liao, conflicts of this kind should not concern us; as once biases and verbal disagreement are identified they tend to resolve themselves.[29] However, there are other more concerning kinds of conflict that come in the form of what Liao refers to as *internal* and *external* conflict. Having an intuition about some proposition is not always so clear-cut. We often have conflicting intuitions when considering the same proposition. Consider ethical dilemmas. For many, topics such as euthanasia, capital punishment and abortion, often produce, within a person, more than one intuition that conflict with each other – simultaneously confirming and denying the rightness of the proposition under consideration. Instances such as these are *internal* conflicts. *External* conflicts refer to instances where different people's intuitions conflict. This phenomenon is quite common which compounds the problems surrounding intuitions.

[29] I believe this point deserves much more consideration than Liao gives it. (Of course his concerns are primarily not the same as those here.) I intend to develop this point in much greater detail below, arguing that we need not worry about most of the concerns surrounding intuition.

The concern surrounding conflict culminates in instances of *genuine conflict*. Conflicts are considered genuine when all that can be done to remove biases, mistaken heuristics, clouded emotions, verbal disagreements and so on, has been done, yet the conflicting intuitions remain. In these instances, both intuiters have the same information yet their interpretation concerning that information differs to the extent that the truth of one entails the falsity of the other and vice versa. Consider any example where consequentialist and deontological concerns are manifest; where one is in a position to be able to save the lives of ten people, or the life of a single individual, but not both. All other things being equal, some will have the intuition that they should preserve the lives of the ten, while others believe that it does not matter what choice is made so long as some action is taken to preserve life. The conflict between these intuitions does not seem to have arisen from any of the "contaminants" of intuitions listed above. In such instances, it would seem that both parties are justified in holding their respective positions but that both cannot together be true.

Conflicts of this kind present an exceedingly difficult challenge for intuitions, and intuitions in philosophy more specifically. These intuitions have had the benefit of exposure to critical analysis – weeding out biases and so on – yet still produce intuitions that completely undermine the position of the other and vice versa. What is to be done in instances such as these where intuitions are at a stalemate? I will elucidate attempts to deal with such difficulties in the following chapter. I will attempt to show there that holding on to intuitions in genuine conflict is justified – i.e. there is no need to explain them away, as it were. This will become much clearer after I elucidate the benefits of subjecting intuitions to critical analysis, also to be found in the following chapter.

Having established that intuitions are not ubiquitously shared seems bad enough, but in the face of genuine conflict the problem is obviously worse. Not only do the intuitions in question entail each other's falsity, but both have been subjected to the rigours of SPA yet remain opposed to one another. Relying on intuitions in light of this difficulty seems misguided, and seems to place the

burden of proof on the defender of intuition to provide reasons for considering it reliable. But no such reasons seem to be in sight.

2.4 Worse: The Calibration Requirement

"If you believe in intuition, and think my premises are intuitive, you should believe my conclusion. If you do that, you have a reduction against intuition on your hands." ~ Robert Cummins

The prospects for a defense of intuition look grim. The ways in which intuition is said to be fallible are many and detrimental. However, it may still be possible to argue for the reliability of intuition. One obvious way of doing this is through an inductive argument, showing that the faculty in question has been successful in producing true beliefs in the past and will continue to do so. Pust presents this argument in the following way:

> X produced the belief that p1 and p1 [or ~p1].
> X produced the belief that p2 and p2 [or ~p2].
> ...
> _____
>
> X is reliable to degree N (where N is the number of cases in which X produces a true belief divided by the total number of cases considered.)[30]

If the outputs of X have a high enough rate of success (i.e. produce a high number of true beliefs), then it would seem to be good evidence in support of the reliability of X. The problem here is that this line of argument can only rationally ground our belief that X is reliable if there is independent access to the domain picked-out by X. For, as Pust (2000) accurately puts it, it is "obviously question-begging to rely on the very source in question to certify its own reliability." And when applied to intuition such independent access is not obviously possible. There always seems to be a reduction to intuition in order to justify intuition. This is simply because the domain picked out by intuition seems only accessible by intuition. Other belief-forming mechanisms, such as perception,

[30] Pust (2000) 102

do not seem capable of entertaining the topics discussed in much of philosophical discourse. Responses to Gettier-cases, Twin Earth scenarios, and laws of logic are not something we perceive with our sensory faculties. Other epistemic mechanisms such as memory and introspection also do not seem capable of accessing the domain picked out by intuition. If this is so, and if there are no other relevant epistemic mechanisms in sight, then intuition seems to be stuck in what Alston (1993)[31] refers to as "epistemic circularity" – where rational belief of the conclusion of an argument requires that the conclusion already be believed. In this way, an eventual appeal to intuition in order to justify the reliability of intuition is epistemically circular.

It is obvious then that we require some method of testing intuition that is independent of appeals to intuition. In other words, we need to *calibrate* intuition. Calibration is the scientific method of ensuring the reliability of instruments without making appeal to those instruments to conduct the test. An example would be pointing a microscope at an object whose color, size and other details are known to the naked eye to see if they match the outputs of the microscope. Cummins holds that epistemic mechanisms should also be calibrated in this way; seemingly making matters even worse for intuition. For now it seems impossible to provide a positive account of the reliability of intuition. The reason being that, if in discerning whether an intuition is reliable itself reduces to an appeal to an intuition so on and so forth, the problems concerning those appeals applies to each stage of that regress *ad infinitum.* And if reliability requires calibration, intuition is at a loss; since it seems there is no route to check intuition independent of appealing to it. His argument can be stated as follows:

1. A belief-forming technique, process or source is epistemologically legitimate only if it can be "calibrated" (i.e. inductively shown to be reliable on the basis of some epistemological access to the target phenomena independent of the source the reliability of which is in question). (Premise)
2. Intuition cannot be calibrated. (Premise)

[31] Alston, W. (1993) "Epistemic Desiderata." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 53: 527-551.

3. Intuition is epistemologically illegitimate. (From 1 & 2).[32]

This is not to say that there is no hope of calibrating intuitions. One simply needs non-intuitive access to the targets of those intuitions. Empirical investigation provides such a route. For instance, the intuition one might have about how an arch will collapse if the keystone is removed can be checked against scientific facts about the nature of gravity and tension, etc. However at this point, according to Cummins, intuition becomes epistemologically useless to philosophy. If there is a theory settled enough to provide an adequate test to calibrate intuition, then the theory is settled enough to supplant it. Cummins colourfully expresses this when he says: "Philosophical theory in such good shape is ready to bid the Socratic midwife farewell and strike out on its own in some other department" (1996a).

To my knowledge there has been no argument successful in completely circumventing this calibration requirement when applied to intuition. In other words, there has been no argument successful in providing a *positive* account of the reliability of intuition.[33] However, I believe that considering the calibration requirement a knock-down argument in favour of ridding ourselves of appeals to intuition is altogether misguided, since it forces us into global scepticism. The reason is simply that the "calibration requirement" is not isolated to intuition. In the same way, and for the same reasons, it is reasonable to demand intuition be calibrated, it is reasonable to demand all epistemic mechanisms be calibrated. However, as many have been at pains to show, there is no non-epistemically circular way of showing any of our epistemic mechanisms to be reliable to the degree

[32] His complete argument, including his claim that intuitions which have been calibrated by a theory secure enough to support it are epistemically unnecessary, is as follows:

(1) Belief-forming technique, process of source is epistemologically legitimate only if it can be "calibrated" (i.e. inductively shown to be reliable on the basis of some epistemological access to the target phenomena independent of the source the reliability of which is in question). (Premise)
(2) Philosophical intuition either can be calibrated or cannot be calibrated. (Premise)
(3) Intuition regarding domain D could be calibrated only if we had an independently justified theory of D. (Premise)
(4) If we had an independently justified theory of D, then we would have no epistemological need of intuitions to justify a theory of D.
(5) If philosophical intuition can be theoretically calibrated, then it is epistemologically unnecessary for the justification of philosophical theory. (From 3 & 4)
(6) Philosophical intuition is either epistemologically unnecessary or epistemologically illegitimate. (From 1 & 5). (Pust 2000)

[33] Cf. Pust (2000), in particular 74-123, for an extensive discussion of this point.

the calibration requirement demands.[34] If this is so and if we insist epistemic mechanisms need to be calibrated in order to be considered reliable, then global skepticism of all our epistemic faculties is not far behind.

Moreover, it would be inconsistent to demand that only intuitions be calibrated and not, say, sense perception. To be 'selectively semi-skeptical' towards intuitions, as Pust puts it, is being unduly partial. If we are to be consistent, then the calibration requirement must be applied to all epistemic mechanisms. But if we do that, and it is indeed true that they suffer epistemic circularity, it seems we have no good reason (i.e. no non-epistemically circular reason) to consider any of our epistemic mechanisms reliable. The proponent of the calibration requirement then seems to overstate his case. Consistency demands that all epistemic mechanisms be calibrated. But as we've seen, this way lies the "cognitive paralysis of global scepticism" (Pust 2000).

At this point it is important to notice that the scare of global skepticism does not circumvent the calibration requirement; that is, the worry that appeals to intuition are epistemically circular stands even in the face of complete skepticism. It seems that if one seeks an account of intuition that demands reliability from a source independent of intuition he will be disappointed. If this is the case, we must address the concern of how to proceed in the face of calibration. In the following chapter I propose that calibration is not a concern that warrants much attention. In other words, we need not worry too much about calibration. Focusing our attention on the virtues exhibited by SPA will allow us restore faith in intuition even in spite of not being able to conquer calibration.

2.5 Implications and Conclusions

In this chapter I have endeavoured to show that there are genuine concerns regarding appeals to intuition. The implications for philosophy are obvious and troubling. We have seen that intuition faces a number of troubling difficulties. In section 2.1, we saw that intuitions are prone to

[34] Cf. Reid, T. (1895b). Essays on the Intellectual Powers of the Human Mind. And for a discussion of those who argue against the viciousness of such circularity see: Lehrer, K. (1989). *Thomas Reid* (New York: Routledge)

fallibility, often masked by the force of their phenomenological feel. Only through careful analysis are these fallacies revealed. In section 2.2, we uncovered that intuition is often (or possibly always) influenced by the environment of the intuitier. The inability of intuitiers to escape their own perspectives makes it difficult to place objective weight on intuition, since in the face of empirical evidence, intuition appears to be relative with respective to the position of the intuiter. The empirical evidence seems to block those philosophers who argue by way of intuitions through expressions such as "intuitively, it would seem to us that..." or "we would agree that...." For indeed "we would *not* all agree that..." and "intuitively it would *not* seem to all of us that...." Disagreement seems to be just as common as agreement, which again, undermines the force of appeals to intuition that lean on their supposed ubiquity. As discussed in section 2.3, disagreement can amount to stalemates where both sides seem warranted in holding their respective intuitions. This is especially concerning since in these instances all that can been done by way of critical analysis, refinement, and reflection has been done yet the conflict remains. Some take this to show that no objective truth is accessible through intuitions, even ones that have had the benefit of refinement. Finally in section 2.4 we saw what appears to be the most damaging attack on intuition, which suggests that no positive account of the reliability of intuition is possible. The calibration of intuition requires access to the domain picked out by intuition independent of appealing to it. As we've seen, it is possible to provide such calibration. However, once calibrated, intuition becomes epistemologically inert, having no use in philosophy. And even though calibration leads to the threat of global skepticism, the calibration requirement still stands, insisting that intuition suffers epistemic circularity.

Defenders of appeals to intuition have their work cut out for them. The arguments made here, and one I will bring to light in the following chapter, seriously undermine appeals to intuitions in philosophy. The general argument is simple: if we have good reason to think intuition unreliable then we should certainly not consider it a form of reliable evidence or rely on it as a heuristic tool in

our methodology. Many have taken up the fight to respond to such arguments as those explicated above, of which I consider many to be rather successful. I have chosen not to include their responses in this discussion. I will attempt to provide a defense of my own that has the possibility of dealing with calibration. Moreover, I believe it has the added feature of generally reaffirming confidence in the practice of analytical philosophy, showing that the arguments against intuition are not as bad as they seem.

We now move to consider the role of intuitions in philosophy more closely. As we will see, if we turn our attention to the virtues exhibited by SPA, we will understand the arguments against intuition to be not as damaging as they presently seem. Moreover, philosophers can be confident in continuing their practice, while acknowledging that revisions may be necessary. We turn now to consider these claims.

Chapter 3
Standard Philosophical Analysis

Part 1

3.1 Philosophy and Methodology

Despite common perception, philosophy and science aren't that dissimilar. In fact, the respectability and authority of philosophy has been maintained in modern days by the nature of its methodology, which mirrors that of scientific inquiry. Scientific inquiry begins with the encounter of some, as of yet, unexplained phenomenon. A theory is then constructed to account for and explain all instances of that phenomenon. Among other criteria, it attempts to explain the phenomenon's interactions with other phenomena and to predict how that phenomenon will act in the future. A "good" scientific theory is one that accomplishes these tasks successfully, all the while being as simple as possible – having the least ontological commitments, avoiding unnecessary premises, least background assumptions, etc. To put it slightly more formally: A scientific theory should define how x is similar to all other instances of x (including yet-to-be discovered instances of x) and how only x's are similar to one another. It should be able to capture the general in the particular while exhibiting all the virtues mentioned above. Philosophical theories aim to do no less. In fact, philosophical theories have the same target scientific theories have: to explain some phenomenon in the world. And indeed, a "good" philosophical theory carries all the hallmarks of any "good" scientific theory.

Despite their similarities, however, philosophy and science differ in an important aspect: what is considered as evidence proper. While science appeals to empirical data, philosophy appeals to a mixture of empirical data and intuition. There is not usually a balance between the two. In certain fields, epistemology and ethics for instance, intuition has a much more prominent role than empirical findings; while in most philosophies of natural science the opposite is the case. Moreover, intuition is used as a heuristic tool and accomplishes the same task in philosophy that calibrated

instruments do in science. As we will see, intuitions are used to test and evaluate theories, while also providing initial starting points for inquiry.[35]

As I've already stated, the most obvious way intuition serves philosophical inquiry is akin to the role empirical observation plays in science: as a type of *evidence*. To continue the comparison with the natural sciences: in the same way Rutherford's observations of particles reflected from thin sheets of metal acts as evidence against the theory that atoms are not indivisible, but rather made of even smaller parts; the intuition that Jim should not sacrifice his integrity even at the cost of the lives of twenty innocent individuals acts as evidence against the theory that one should act to maximize aggregate pleasure and minimize aggregate pain.[36] The concept of *evidence* is elusive here. (This elusiveness is owed, I believe, to the ambiguous nature of intuition, and moreover, to our confidence in evidence we can see and touch, which is lacking in dealings with intuition. We are convinced empirical observations are simply more apparent and less susceptible to doubt than intuition. This is not to suggest that empirical evidence is infallible or free from doubt, since time and again it has been thrown out or reconsidered based on new findings.) In any case, my point here is simply one of form: intuition acts as evidence in philosophy as empirical data acts as evidence in science.

Despite "intuition as evidence" being ubiquitous in philosophical inquiry, distinctions need to be made, or so I will argue, in the nature of those appeals at respective points in SPA. Depending at which point of SPA a philosopher is engaged in, the intuition he appeals to actually refers to different phenomena, so that there is no act of appealing to a single unchanging phenomenon known broadly as intuition. Both the nature of intuition and the act of appealing to it differ depending on the stage of SPA in which one is engaged.

---

[35] Some may not agree with the place and weight I've assigned to empirical evidence in science; ignoring the importance of theoretical understanding and foundational assumptions. My goal is simply to bring out the analogy between intuition and empirical data.
[36] It is not clear that Williams' case was designed to show this or even that most people react in this way. I am simply using this as an example of the way intuition is oftentimes used in philosophical discourse.

This will become clear through examining the difference between "philosophical intuitions" (in the sense I am using it[37]) and "folk intuitions". The upshot of making such a distinction is twofold: (i) to show that folk intuitions are more pervasive in SPA than is otherwise thought, and (ii) to bring to light another concern surrounding appeals to intuition in SPA. In the end, however, I intend to argue that many of the arguments made against intuitions (including the one I will elucidate in what follows) are defused if we turn our attention to the virtues exhibited by SPA.

In what follows, I intend to distinguish the differences in appeals to intuition in the various stages of SPA, skipping stage (3) – theory construction – until section 3.6 where I argue that despite what is commonly believed, appeals to intuition are not used to justify theory. First, however, let us take a more detailed look at the stages of SPA.

3.2 Standard Philosophical Analysis

It is worth restating the sketch of philosophical methodology presented in section 1.3.

(1) Canvassing intuitions
(2) Subjecting those intuitions to dialectical critique
(3) Constructing theories that systematize the surviving intuitions
(4) Testing those theories against further intuitions
(5) Repeating the process until equilibrium is reached

Recall that the questions that require consideration are the following: (i) Is intuition the same phenomenon being appealed to in each stage of inquiry? (ii) Does intuition serve the same role in each stage of inquiry? We will see that the answer to both questions is "no". To see this, let us now turn to consider the individual stages of SPA in more detail, using the following example to aid us.

Traditionally, for someone to be said have "knowledge" the following conditions must obtain:

i. *p* is true
ii. S believes that *p*
iii. S is justified in believing that *p*

[37] See in this paper page 11.

Although no longer fashionable, the theory of "Knowledge as Justified True Belief", at least prima facie, captures intuitions about knowledge. That is to say, the conditions of the theory *seem* true when applied to whatever we understand knowledge to entail. Also, for our purposes here, it represents a typical philosophical theory that purports to explain some phenomenon, providing conditions which define true instances of that phenomenon, while also distinguishing it as a unique phenomenon in its own right.[38]

(1) SPA starts with the consideration of some concept – in this case knowledge – and attempts to define conditions for when the concept applies; that is, when an agent is said to have knowledge and when she doesn't. Considering which propositions are true and which apply to the concept under consideration is initially a matter of considering the intuitiveness of those propositions. This need not be a lengthy process. Often certain propositions leap out at us, as it were, and seem to require no further consideration beyond their initial attraction. Conditions i. and ii. in our example are just such propositions. That someone is said to have knowledge when the proposition under consideration is true, and that the person believes it, seems to go without saying. This is not to suggest one cannot or should not provide some sort of justification for accepting their truth.[39] However, the intuitive strength of the propositions at least provides *prima facie* evidence for the truth of its content; at least enough to indicate the propositions under consideration to be promising lines of inquiry. Having gotten something right, as it were, the philosopher then moves to test the intuitions he has determined to be promising.

(2) Subjecting intuitions to a dialectical critique in order to test their mettle is a trademark philosophical practice. How is this accomplished? One obvious way is to test for logical inconsistencies both internal and external to the concept under consideration. Should some intuitive

[37] Cf. Nozick, R. (1981) *Philosophical Explanations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
[39] Justification offered for such propositions will undoubtedly be itself reduced to intuitions as some foundational basis upon which the premises rest. This point will be taken up later in this chapter.

proposition fail to be consistent in its mere formulation or inconsistent with established logical principles, it is immediately discarded. This process is, at times, not so straightforward. Often some intuitive proposition (or a set of propositions) seems logically consistent yet requires deliberation to expose an inconsistency. Should the intuition under consideration survive this initial process, it is then subjected to a dialectical critique where one purposefully seeks to discredit it. Likewise, one attempts to dispel those objections with rejoinders on behalf of the initial intuition. In performing this back-and-forth one looks for other evidence to support their respective arguments. Those looking to discredit one of the propositions might appeal to other deep-rooted intuitions and show that they conflict. In philosophies tied to the natural sciences, one may look for empirical evidence to discredit the initial intuitive proposition. In any case, this dialectic continues until an acceptable equilibrium is reached between established beliefs, other cherished bodies of knowledge, and very deep intuitions.

To skip stage (3) and turn our attention to stages (4) and (5), we can see that they are akin to stage (2). The only difference is that they apply to theories and not to single intuitions.

(4) Consider how we test for theories. In the same way we check for logical consistency of singular intuitions we check for validity and soundness of entire theories. Moreover, in the same way we actively seek out evidence to disprove or at least call into question intuitions, so too do we search for the proverbial black swan to disprove a theory. At times we even fabricate hypothetical scenarios to accomplish this task. Those arguing against "Knowledge as Justified True Belief," for instance, may appeal to Gettier cases to show it fails to capture whatever is meant by "Knowledge." Ethics, epistemology and metaphysics corner the market when it comes to creating unusual and unrealistic scenarios to show theories contain an inconsistency of some kind. Whether it is barn facades, water on Twin Earth, or dying violinists, *counterexamples* are designed to produce intuitions that act as evidence against whatever truth a theory purports to carry. Should the intuitions be strong enough

and enough people share them, then the theory the counterexample targets is considered to be in most cases successfully undermined. Testing for philosophical theories is a matter of subjecting it to a dialectical critique. It is only through considering objections and replies do we rule out falsehoods. (4) is identical to (2) in that respect.

(5) As in the natural sciences, theories are never conclusive; they are only provisionally held to be true. The best they can hope for is that they not infringe on deep-rooted beliefs and are harmonious with other bodies of knowledge.[40] So too is it the case in SPA, where the recognition that the theories in question are only provisionally held to be true is captured in the final step of philosophical inquiry. (5) is a dialectical end-point where a general coherence and consistency of belief and theory is reached. They are not affirmed absolutely. The best hope is for them to be in equilibrium with one another; none entailing the falsity of another, while seeking ways to support each other and continually attempting to refine them at all levels. The role of intuition here seems to be one of indication. Intuition seems to be responsible for indicating when an acceptable level of consistency has been reached.[41]

We can now make generalizations about intuition's role in the various stages of SPA we've explored thus far. As we've seen, intuitions are a kind of *initial evidence* and are appealed to in the early stages of SPA when philosophers entertain concepts and seek out conditions that attempt to define them. Further, they act as *heuristic devices* (as in (2) and (4)) that serve to test other intuitions and theories in general – the force of their appeal indicating some inconsistency they, or the theories in which they are found, contain. In these roles, intuition continues to be a kind of *evidence*, fulfilling all the criteria of intuition set out in Section 1.1. In section 1.2, however, we saw that intuitions come in a variety of assortments – "physical", "philosophical" and "folk" to name a few. The task at

[40] This of course excludes paradigm shifts, where a new theory completely undermines the truth of another and supplants it as the going theory.
[41] Cf. Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy "Reflective Equilibrium" (2003) http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reflective-equilibrium

hand is to uncover which are at work in SPA. Is there one type of intuition that pervades all the stages in SPA, or is it a mixture?

Surely "philosophical intuitions" are the intuitions that concern us here. After all, the intuitions used in philosophical analysis have been subjected to a dialectical critique in order to rule out falsity and inconsistency. More than this, the intuitions appealed to in philosophy are metaphysically distinct from other types of intuitions as a result of their having been subjected to a process he refers to as the Standard Justificatory Procedure (SJP). Recall that SJP separates intuitions as used in philosophy from other types of intuitions, in particular, what is commonly referred to as "folk intuitions." Folk intuitions are those intuitions that are uninfluenced by any dialectical process in the way philosophical intuitions are. SJP purports to "refine" folk intuitions, transforming them into intuitions suitable to be used in philosophical analysis. SJP involves a familiar process:

(1*) Canvassing intuitions
(2*) Subjecting those intuitions to dialectical critique
(3*) Testing those theories against further intuitions
(4*) Repeating the process until equilibrium is reached[42]

The process of refining intuitions is simply the general overall process of SPA applied to single intuitions.[43] This process should come as no surprise. Philosophy is characterized by the application of a dialectical critique in order to refine all aspects of its subject matter. Intuition, being as pervasive as it is in philosophy, surely should not escape this.

The question at hand is: What kind of intuition is at work in the various stages of SPA: folk intuitions or philosophical intuitions? I will argue that in fact many steps in SPA make appeals to unrefined folk intuitions that have not undergone a dialectical critique. In particular, appeals to intuition in stages (2) and (4) specifically involve folk intuitions, not philosophical intuitions.[44] Only after having gone through a dialectical critique do philosophical intuitions take shape. And upon

[42] Feltz 126
[43] This is Bealer's (1996) own characterization and one that I believe is accurate.
[44] Whether this poses a genuine concern to philosophy will be discussed below. Prima facie the accusation that intuition escapes the scrutiny so cherished by philosophy seems dire, but in fact this may not prove to be problematic should we appropriately restrict the authority of intuition.

closer inspection we will see that appeals to intuition in (2) and (4) of SPA have not been subjected to such a critique. The concern here is that philosophy, a discipline characterized by scrutiny and refinement, has embedded in its methodology an element that escapes that scrutiny and refinement.

I wish to state that my aims here are not simply descriptive. Apart from illustrating the various intuitions at work in SPA, I wish to question the act of appealing to intuition in general and specifically to "folk intuitions" as a method for philosophical analysis. Whether this actually poses a genuine concern is yet to be seen. For now it is difficult to see where folk intuitions derive their authority to act as evidence in philosophical discourse.

3.3 Folk Intuitions in Philosophy: SPA Revisited

We now turn our attention (2) and (4) in light of the claims just made. Perhaps it is best to start with (4). As we've seen, (4) is in essence a repeat of (2) on a larger scale.

(4) As was mentioned earlier, formulating counterexamples is among the most common methods for showing theories to be faulty. Producing counterexamples has one goal – to provide an instance where the necessary and sufficient conditions of a theory are met but that does not adequately capture the concept in question; in other words, to provide an instance of F that is not a G. Consider the following Gettier case as an example.

> Suppose Cheryll works with officemates Jen and Denis. Having worked with Jen for many years Cheryll has good evidence for believing Jen owns a Ford. Denis also owns a Ford. But because he is a newcomer to the office Cheryll does not know he does, since she knows little to nothing about him. Suppose further that, unbeknownst to Cheryll, Jen has recently sold her car. Now, given the nature of the scenario just described, does Cheryll know that one of her officemates owns a Ford?

According to Getter, this is a case of justified true belief, but not knowledge. If knowledge is indeed reducible to justified true belief, then in this scenario Cheryll has met all the requirements: She is justified in believing that someone in her office owns a Ford, and it is also true that someone does, namely Denis. But despite fulfilling the criteria set out by the theory that "Knowledge as Justified True Belief", Cheryll still does not *know* that someone in her office owns a Ford, or so our intuitions

tell us. Counterexamples such as these are meant to elicit just such intuitive responses. In many instances it leads one to infer that the theory has failed to account for its claim that all instances of F's are G's, that is, all instances of justified true belief are knowledge.[45]

But what is the nature of the intuitions elicited here? More precisely, are the intuitions that counterexamples elicit the unreflective entities that were described above? Or are they the reflective entities that have undergone some kind of scrutiny? Put simply, are they "folk intuitions" or "philosophical intuitions"?

Upon introspective analysis I believe one will discover that they are in fact folk intuitions and not philosophical intuitions. Upon reading the predicament in which Cheryll finds herself, an immediate and unmediated response to the situation is produced in the reader; inclining her to believe that Cheryll does not have knowledge even though she has justified true belief. That *immediate* and *unmediated* response is what concerns us here. The proposition under consideration "Does Cheryll have knowledge?" is met with the inclination to deny the truth of the proposition; an inclination that has surely not been considered beyond being initially understood. In that sense, we are dealing with folk intuitions here. I do not believe extensive argument is necessary, since I believe the answer is apparent. However, let us not be hasty in dismissing the possibility that philosophical intuitions are at work here.

One reason to think that the intuitions involved in counterexamples are in fact philosophical intuitions is the claim that counterexamples deal with philosophical concepts, and so only apply to those in the business of thinking about such concepts, namely philosophers. And whatever reactions philosophers have to cases designed to produce intuitions is a result of the conditioning they've undoubtedly undergone. Maybe not even realizing it, they respond to the hypothetical scenario with responses that have been moulded by whatever experience or theoretical understanding they have

[45] Gettier 121-3

had with the concept under scrutiny, directly or indirectly. The resulting intuition then is not so much unrefined as it is undefined by the philosopher considering the counterexample.

In response, one might point out that counterexamples can and do elicit intuitive responses even from philosophically laypersons. In fact, Stitch et al.[46] has presented Gettier-style cases to audiences not versed in philosophy. Although his study is intended to demonstrate the fallibility of appeals to intuition as evidence, (since such appeals are culturally and social influenced) it demonstrates that such intuitions are not the result of some implicit reasoning exclusive to those in the business.

In light of what was just said, I submit then that the intuitions elicited by counterexamples do not meet the conditions of "philosophical intuition" as described above, since they are not the result of deliberation and dialectical critique. Examining SPA in further detail reveals that the same is true of (2).

(2) As we've seen, having just canvassed for intuitions in stage (1) of SPA, the intuitions that at first blush seem most promising are subjected to a dialectic critique: on one hand, they are subjected to a barrage of arguments meant to undermine them; while on the other, a second set of arguments responds to those objections in the hope of salvaging the intuition under assault. Apart from checking for logical consistency or appeals to empirical facts, intuitions are tested by appeal to other intuitions. These 'tests' often take the form of counterexamples, but on a smaller scale. For example, if I am considering whether my intuition regarding the proposition "*p* must be true if S is to know that *p*" I might, as the objector, try to find a situation where the S knows *p* but *p* isn't true. Failing to find such a situation, I can make one up; so long as it is a logically possible scenario. In this instance, the effect is the same as that found in stage (4). The intuitions that are generated are taken in their raw form, so to speak, and are not the product of a dialectical critique.

[46] Cf. Swain, S., Alexander, J., and Weinberg, J. (2008). "The Instability of Philosophical Intuitions: Running Hot and Cold on Truetemp." In *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research.*

Having established that many stages in SPA make appeals to intuitions that are not the result of a dialectical critique, the following question must be addressed: Should such appeals to unrefined folk intuitions as a philosophical method be brought to a halt or at least altered or curtailed in some fashion?[47] Placing our trust in their authority to provide reliable sources of evidence seems misguided. The reason is simply that they have not undergone the dialectical process that characterizes the methodology we value so dearly. As such, it is difficult, if not impossible (because of calibration)[48] to point to the source of their authority besides our inability to appeal to anything more basic. Regardless, the problem we face at hand seems to make matters even worse for intuition. Not only do folk intuitions bear the brunt of the criticisms against intuition in general, they seem to lack refinement of any kind. Prima facie this seems quite damaging. Philosophy prides itself on the rigor of its methodology; scrutinizing all aspects of the dialectic process in which it engages. But now we've come across a pervasive and truly important (and possibly essential)[49] element in philosophical analysis that escapes this scrutiny. What justification then, can be offered to place trust in the authority of these intuitions as they appear in SPA?

What I intend to show in what follows, is that the justification some like Cummins demand is not unreasonable when applied to intuition, but that it does not generate enough of a worry for us to stop appeals to intuitions altogether. The reason is simply that the force and authority of intuition in philosophy should be understood as being minimal. More importantly, however, our attention should not be directed at intuition per se, but rather the method exemplified in SPA which takes

[47] Many think they should. I have already mentioned Stitch as an example of one who warns against the use of intuitions in philosophy. Robert Cummins is another who takes a strong position against the use of intuition in philosophy altogether, as they cannot be appropriately calibrated.
[48] Cf. Pust (2001) 104-108.
[49] Cummins (1996) believes something should replace intuition even in philosophical fields where empirical findings seem to have no hold. He colourfully says, "I have given up on Twin Earth in the theory of content. Maybe moral philosophers should give up on Trolleys." However, he provides no substitute for intuition in philosophical discourse. To me this is an implicit admission that intuition has privileged access to certain domains of knowledge. To respond to Cummins then: It would indeed be prudent of moral philosophers to give up on Trolleys should something more stable come to light. However, in the absence of such options it seems unduly hasty to ignore appeals to intuition. This point will be addressed at length below.

intuition as inputs. It is the ongoing meticulous rigor of SPA to which we should turn our attention to when presented with the worries surrounding intuition.

Again, however, it must be recognized that the epistemic circularity that the need for calibration brings is not defeated in light of the arguments here. However distasteful that may be, we must respect and be sensitive to that fact but not allow it to completely undermine all progress. I will discuss this point further in the final chapter. I intend to offer a way of understanding how we can still have progress in light of that difficulty.

Part 2

3.4 Virtues

So we've seen that SPA inevitably relies on appeals to folk intuition, which are not the refined entities we would want them to be. More than this, the concerns presented in Chapter 2 combine with the calibration requirement to make a serious case against appeals to intuition as a way of doing philosophy; since there is an inevitable regress to folk intuitions which escapes philosophical rigour.

Despite these concerns, I hope to show we needn't worry too much. Indeed we should acknowledge the concerns surrounding intuitions, but at the same time not allow that we become stalled worrying that philosophical methodology is fraught with appeals to intuition that *seem* indefensible and unjustifiable. To accomplish this we must turn our attention away from intuitions per se and direct it towards SPA in practice.

Recall that SPA is most notably characterized by the application of a dialectical critique. It is this dialectical method that we must turn our attention to in order to overcome the arguments that target intuitions. We can turn to three positive features of this dialectic process that can give us traction against these arguments: (i) s*elf-analysis,* (ii) *self-correction,* and (iii) *continuity.*

(i) *Self-Analysis*: Apart from the empirical research done by those like Wisniewski (1998) who have shown intuitions to be less than steadfast, doing philosophy in the way outlined by SPA has also revealed intuitions to be fallible. Self-analysis is embedded in the process of philosophical analysis. It was upon reflection, and reflection alone, that discoveries about the fallacious nature of intuition were uncovered. The recognition that intuitions are subject to personal biases and environmental influences was the result of careful deliberation concerning the nature of intuitions and the intuiter who generates them. Critical examination exemplified by SPA is responsible for giving us a clear picture of the fallacious nature of intuition, of which we are still discovering new concerns. The process whereby we subject intuition to the rigours of critical analysis typified by SPA has allowed us to identify its failings. In this way, we know now not to trust certain intuitions in certain situations. Although we are still faced with these problems we've uncovered, we should acknowledge that SPA has brought these concerns to light, and has alerted us that something must be done to ameliorate them. So although SPA is the distant target of many of the arguments made against intuition, we should recognize the ability of SPA to identify these concerns.

(ii)*Self-Correction*: Moreover, SPA has allowed us not only to identify the concerns surrounding intuition; it has allowed us to correct them. From the fact that we know personal biases accompany many of the intuitions we elicit, we can remove those irrelevant factors and consider the proposition anew. For instance, knowing that my intuitions about the proposition "Asian cuisine is superior to English cuisine" are most likely tainted by my upbringing, I can reconsider the proposition with that in mind. The process of critical reflection has allowed for this possibility. Upon consideration I know that I am partial to certain cuisine due to my ethnic heritage. Because of this, I know to either not trust my intuitions concerning these proposition (because I may not be able to shake the initial attractiveness), or am able to revise my intuitions to exclude irrelevant factors like personal biases.

(iii) *Continuity*: What is arguably the most virtuous aspect of SPA is its commitment to continuity: the dialectic is an *ongoing* one. This continual and persistent process of refinement has allowed intuition to not be taken as authoritative based solely on its initial attractiveness. The dialectic continues beyond that initial attractiveness to ensure that the intuition is not marred by factors irrelevant to its content. Upon further and more detailed scrutiny we may wish to rescind our faith in the initial intuition and do our best to ignore its attractiveness, because we've discovered it is the result of some bias or other irrelevant factor. The initial intuition is just that – initial – and should be understood as such.

In this sense, folk intuitions have a very short half-life, so to speak. The initial folk intuition that Cheryll does not have knowledge but has justified true belief only retains its status as a folk intuition for a very short period. Applying SPA, in particular SJP, reforms that intuition into a *considered judgment*. The initial intuition is gone. Its attractiveness may remain, but whatever authority it later has is not based solely on that attractiveness. The process of SPA has guaranteed that biases and other unwanted contaminants are marked and/or rectified. Moreover, SPA demands that intuitions be compared and contrasted against other more secure evidence, if it is available. If it is not, no matter. The intuition will continue to do the work it can in its present state, while remaining open to the fact that it may turn out to be fallible in a way not yet considered.

The goal of the philosopher is to ensure that this dialectic does not cease; to continue to revise and refine its inputs. I believe we can say that SPA exhibits the aforementioned virtues without fear of reprisal. I am optimistic. I believe there are positive aspects of SPA we can extol without giving into too serious cynicism. On the hand, however, we should be wary of the concerns presented above and take them seriously; but not so seriously that we should completely overturn the method that continues to identify problems it encounters and resolves the arguments made against it.

3.5 Reparations

We can see now why most of the arguments made against intuition are not as forceful or fatal as they seem. In sections 2.1 and 2.2 we explored common ways in which intuition is prone to fallibility. However, they do not completely undermine our practice of appealing to them, since we have methods for dealing with them. Indeed we may, even upon consideration, still be prone to consider the intuitions generated by the Gambler's Paradox to be appealing. But in these instances we at least know not to trust those intuitions. With that knowledge, we restrict the authority of those intuitions to act as evidence one way or another; and indeed it should be restricted in those instances. We can then consult other forms of evidence that we've determined to be more secure. In any case, if we appropriately examine the intuitions we elicit, and take the proper precautions by doing our best to scrutinize them, we needn't completely throw them out, especially when other evidence is not available.[50]

We've so far seen that the method of critical analysis typified by SPA adequately deals with arguments that target unrefined folk intuitions. However, what is to be done when these intuitions have been subjected to SPA yet we have reason to doubt them? In section 2.3 we elucidated that *genuine conflict* poses a grave threat to intuition and SPA in general. What is most concerning – which we can now have a greater appreciation for – is that these intuitions have had the benefit of extensive critical reflection yet the conflict remains. I turn to Liao (forthcoming) to address this issue.

Liao holds that such conflicts are not as worrisome as some believe; since one is justified in holding their respective positions based on their refined intuition until more secure evidence comes along. One need not give up their position simply because it is in conflict with another *if* all that has been done to justify, refine and strengthen their position has been done. And of course this dialectic should not cease once a stalemate occurs: one should not settle. One should continue to revise and

[50] Recall the discussion in Chapter 2 where I elucidated that the domain intuition picks out often seems accessible only by intuition.

revisit their positions, and offer arguments to support and undermine their position and that of their opponent. Engaging in the dialectical process is what counts. And if one is still aggravated by this they should recall that the authority of intuitions here is minimal at best. The philosophical intuitions that support deontology and those that support consequentialism may one day be overturned, proving one, the other, or both to be false. For now though, continuing to subject both theories to the rigours of SPA should be the goal of the systematic philosopher.

I've argued here that the arguments made against intuitions are not as damaging as they prima facie appear, *if* we turn our attention to the virtues exhibited by SPA. Now, there is another reason to consider the arguments against intuitions to not undermine the entire philosophical enterprise, which concerns the construction of philosophical theories. In what follows, I will attempt to show that appeals to intuitions are not made to justify philosophical theories. And although philosophical theories contain intuitive premises, it is not the authority of the intuition that supports the theory. I present the following as somewhat of an aside, but one that may help restore faith in SPA.

3.6 Theory Construction

"Intuition must be taken seriously in the absence of substantial theoretical understanding, but once such theoretical understanding begins to take shape, prior intuitive judgments carry little weight unless they have been endorsed by the progress of theory." ~Hilary Kornblith

Constructing philosophical theories is a matter of constructing principles or conditions that account for the phenomenon in question. For Nozick (1981), for instance, we can say that someone has knowledge just in case that knowledge 'tracks' truths about the world, so that if *p* were or were not the case, S's belief that *p* would correspond. These conditions are not themselves intuitions despite being influenced by them.

This is best understood through examining their function in a theory. These conditions are successful only if they do what they promise: Only if the condition "if not-p, then S would not

believe p" successfully captures our intuitions about what knowledge should entail do we consider it of any epistemic worth. Determining whether it successfully captures our intuitions, however, is a matter of consistency between intuitions about knowledge and how well the condition in question is able to account for our intuitions about knowledge.

Determining how well a condition captures our intuitions is accomplished only by putting the condition to work. But this is work that is done either after or before the condition is formed – that is, steps (2) and (4) in SPA. The actual forming of the conditions is the result of considering necessity and sufficiency as related to the concept it is attempting to define. There is no appeal to intuition here. This is strictly a job for logic. The point here is simply that in the construction of theories, appeals to intuition are not made directly. More specifically, appeals to intuition are not used to formulate, and certainly not used to justify, the conditions of a theory. Formulating conditions for a theory is a matter of considering the logical consistency of the condition against the intuitions or factual evidence it attempts to explain. Making rules to define when a person can be said to have knowledge consists of understanding what an instance of knowledge involves, and generalizing it to include all instances of knowledge in a coherent manner. Logic is the tool that accomplishes this, not appeals to intuition, folk or philosophical.

Intuition, then, seems to take only a preliminary role in the construction of philosophical theories. The construction of the conditions or principles that make up a theory are not themselves intuitions, but rather logical propositions designed to capture what is generally understood to characterize the phenomenon (an understanding often attributed to having critically examined our intuitions regarding it).

The point of demonstrating this is to defuse the common conception that intuition pervades *all* levels of philosophical inquiry. Indeed, to some extent they do, as we've seen with most other stages of SPA. However, in the construction of philosophical theories – in the actual construction of

the conditions that make up the theory – appeals to intuition as a means of justification are not made. What are appealed to, rather, are logical principles – necessity, sufficiency, and consistency, to name a few. These principles only give us consistency and coherence, not truth; ensuring that our theories are valid, but do not confirm that they are sound. And although they do not give us truth, we can at least be sure our theories are well-formulated to support stronger more secure evidence should it come along and prove our theories true. We should, therefore, be confident that the arguments against intuition do not fully apply to the most important aspect of philosophical methodology.

3.7 Implications and Recapitulation

Standard Philosophical Analysis is not weakened by attacks on intuition. Although intuition is indeed pervasive throughout SPA and suffer many failings, those failings do not doom philosophical methodology. The arguments made against intuition, including the one elucidated in section 3.2, combine to seemingly destroy any hope of salvaging the authority – and indeed the respectability – of SPA as a method of inquiry. In particular we should be wary of any method that relies so heavily on appeals to unrefined folk intuitions that cannot, nor could ever be, properly tested.

In section 3.3 I argued that depending on the stage of philosophical analysis one is engaged in, the appeals to intuitions one makes refer to distinct mental phenomena. Specifically in stages (2), (4) and (5) of SPA, the intuitions appealed to there are what I've been referring to as "folk intuitions" – intuitions that have not been subjected to a process designed to rid the intuitions of whatever inconsistencies and biases it might contain. This distinction allowed us to see that an eventual appeal to an element that is not refined is inevitable in SPA. Despite these difficulties, I argued that we need not be overly concerned. I argued that SPA contains virtues that can help alleviate our worries, by acknowledging the work SPA has done, and continues to do – by

indentifying and rectifying the problems presented to it. Moreover, I argued that in the actual construction of the principles that make up a theory, appeals to intuitions are virtually nowhere to be found. Logical principles are employed to formulate the principles of the theory, and intuitions are certainly not sued to justify them.

The overall purpose of this chapter was to offer a way of dealing with the arguments made against intuition that also has SPA as their distant target. It may not have been obvious, but my approach was to take a middle path between defending SPA and intuition, while paying respect to the arguments which attempt to undermine them. The decision to take this middle-route as opposed to providing a complete defense of appeals to intuition in SPA, is simply that I believe a positive account of intuitions is (as of now) impossible given the calibration requirement. However, I do not believe that calibration should reduce us to the paralysis solipsism brings when considering appeals to intuitions in SPA; since SPA has virtues that have afforded us the opportunity to recognize, scrutinize and remedy the problems that plague it. What is important is to recognize that we can still have progress utilizing the method that is under fire. However, we must be sure to proceed in a way that is equitable to those arguments we cannot shake, so to speak. In spite of the arguments here, I believe we can largely continue utilizing SPA as we have, while at the same time staying vigilant to the need to improve and progress.

Chapter 4
Balance and Progress

"To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." ~Alfred Lord Tennyson

To recapitulate: On one side of the debate are the arguments that show intuition suffers many failings; combining into what appears to be strong reasons for throwing intuition into serious doubt, and along with it a long tradition of doing analytic philosophy. The most damaging argument seems to be that of *calibration*, which exposes the inability to provide justification for intuition that is independent of appeals to them. Caught in epistemic circularity, intuition cannot enjoy an account (i.e. a non-intuitive account) that can positively say they are epistemically trustworthy. On the other I've attempted to bring to light virtues demonstrated by SPA that, although subject to the critiques of intuition, circumvent many of the worries they bring.

Now, the purpose of this final chapter is to bring into balance the arguments on either side of this debate. In light of the arguments given above, a reasonable goal for us here is to outline those arguments that we cannot presently adequately dispel. Identifying these arguments will ensure us that our progress is informed by these "indicators" that something needs to be done, and that we can do better.

4.1 Deep Intuitions

There are some intuitions that cannot easily be denied. The truth they purport to carry is so apparent to us that attempts to deny them lead to contradictions we cannot seem to ignore. We require these intuitions foundationally and also heuristically to conduct any inquiry.

From Chapter 1 we know that intuitions come in degrees. And although a basic characteristic of intuition is that assent to the proposition in question is immediate, there are some intuitions where that assent is more forceful and resolute. In other words, some intuitions are more intuitive than others. And there are some intuitions that are so glaringly intuitive that they appear

undeniable. I would take it that the intuition regarding the law of non-contradiction – that the propositions (i) x is P and (ii) x is not P cannot be both simultaneously true – is an example of this. More accurately, the single proposition under consideration would be: it is impossible that at the same time x is P and x is not P (ceteris paribus). When considering this proposition, one immediately understands that they must remain mutually exclusive. The immediacy of its truth is apparent to the extent that not a hint of epistemic doubt accompanies it. Simply stated, instances of the principle of non-contradiction seem obviously true and virtually unshakable. Most laws of logic and mathematical propositions produce these deep intuitions in us. We cannot help but assent when confronted by them. Trying to deny them seems, at the very least, prima facie impossible: Attempting to deny that contradictory statements hold true together itself seems contradictory. (I am uncertain one could even entertain the idea.) And so we seem to be at an impasse if we are concerned with providing justification for these intuitions without launching into a vicious regress.

What, then, should be taken away from this fact about intuitions that run deep? Can we still demand justification for deeming them reliable? Should we demand it? I believe we should. Just because there are presently no justificatory methods in the offing does not imply once we get sailing we will not encounter them. By the same token, there is no reason to suspect once we set out looking we will find what we're looking for. But we must remain as receptive as possible to other forms of evidence that could serve to justify even these deep-seated intuitions, and moreover, we should actively seek them out.

However, we must keep in mind that the concerns surrounding intuitions, especially those that demand justification of intuitions apart from appeals to other intuitions, apply even to these very deep intuitions. It may be that these intuitions are also culturally dependent, or that their phenomenal qualities differ intersubjectively. And indeed we must recognize these as possibilities.

Despite this, however, the cost of yielding to these worries (especially calibration) may be too high when considering the use of deep intuitions in philosophical methodology. I take it that these deep intuitions serve two primary functions in SPA: (1) as *foundational evidence* – as in ethics – from which to start any dialectical process, and (2) as *heuristic devices* – such as logical principles – that serve as checks as balances to guide dialectical processes. The crucial role intuitions play in our methodology is apparent. In these instances the intuitions we appeal to – such as the law of non-contradiction – are those that, when confronted by them, we seemingly have no choice but to accept.

I understand (2) to require little argument since logical laws and principles are indispensable in analysis. They give only validity, not truth of content. As for (1) this seems like a good place to start an inquiry *when no other more trustworthy evidence is in sight*. If we can conclude anything from this discussion it is that intuitions are questionable sources of evidence. So if we have access to more stable forms of evidence we should certainly appeal to them in the place of intuition. Our intuitions about space and time should at the very least be informed, if not completely supplanted by, actually empirical evidence about space-time. This much is clear. However, many of the topics entertained in philosophy seem to only have intuitions at their disposal. It is difficult to imagine what would count strictly as empirical evidence in certain branches of metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Much of empirical science remains, as of now, mostly silent on these topics. Appealing to intuition may be all that is available to us presently. Let me be clear here and say that this is not equivalent to claiming that we are justified in appeals to intuition because they are "all we have." Rather, it is simply an expression of the limits of our present capabilities. Despite these limits we do, however, have intuitions. And in some cases these intuitions are inescapably forceful such that ignoring them seems imprudent. In a default position then, when no other evidence is accessible, we should be able to take intuitions as preliminary forms of evidence so long as these intuitions truly run deep and

moreover that we *ensure* that they run deep. That is to say, it is our continued responsibility to do all that we can to ameliorate intuitions and do our best to see past them, even if this attempt in hindsight seemed futile. Some believe that this attempt is futile to begin with, having understood and accepted the arguments made against intuition. But the alternative – giving up as essential aspects of our methodology when *no substitute is available* – is too much to pay when considering (i) the force of the intuition in question and the refinements that were made to them, and (ii) the virtues exhibited by SPA.

4.2 Folk vs. Philosophical Intuitions

The moral that should be taken away from this aspect of the debate is one that actually restores faith in philosophical methodology. When examining SPA in detail we found that two related but decisively different phenomena are at work: folk intuitions and philosophical intuitions. Philosophical intuitions are those that have had the benefit of being subjected to critical reflection, and therefore, as some believe, have a modal tie to truth having survived rigorous analysis. Folk intuition, however, has not gone through this dialectical process and remains unrefined. It is common belief that philosophers entertain philosophical intuitions when conducting their inquiries, however, it was elucidated that this is not entirely true. When conducting analyses, philosophers often appeal to intuitions that have not been through what we referred to as the Standard Justificatory Procedure, yet those intuitions remain authoritative in their ability to call into question whatever is being analysed at that time. The concern is that intuition, as a crucial aspect of our methodology, seems to escape the defining feature of that methodology. Appeals to intuition are made at many junctures in the dialectical process, but these intuitions are folk intuitions not philosophical ones: they are unreflective entities, not considered judgments. Prima facie, this fact, combined with the general arguments made against intuition, seems to greatly diminish any hope of restoring faith in appeals to them as a methodological tool.

In spite of this, it is important to recognize that the intuitions that enter the dialectic as input are not taken as authoritative for the duration of the dialectic. That is to say, the authority intuition purports to have at the outset of an inquiry are significantly reduced as the inquiry ensues. Put differently, folk intuitions are not folk intuitions for very long in philosophical discourse. The idea is simply that philosophers do not dwell on the folk intuitions they generate; or at least they should not dwell on them. As I claimed earlier, folk intuitions have a very short half-life in philosophical discourse.

In the same way intuitions are immediate, so too should be the attempt to immediately purge them of any impurities. Constantly subjecting intuitions to critical analysis is the curse of the systematic philosopher, but also where she derives her strength. Being vigilant to this fact about intuitions as input will not solve the worry, but it diffuses the concern that folk intuitions are more than only initially authoritative in SPA. We have seen that they really only function to indicate that more work needs to be done in the direction they point out.

Now it is not hard to see an objection lurking: The process of revising these intuitions will always depend on another intuition that itself has not been refined. For some, what is required if intuitions are to prove authoritative is an independent route to validating them. This leads to what is arguably the most troubling argument for intuitions: calibration.

4.3 Calibration

When considering how we should deal with concerns surrounding intuitions and the future of philosophical methodology, one requirement must be respected: calibration. Not much needs to be said apart from the fact that calibration is indeed frustrating. This is owed to the desire to circumvent it but not even knowing where to begin. The arguments made by those like Cummins and Pust are truly forceful and convincing, in part because they are so glaringly intuitive (sarcasm intended). As resentful as we may be toward the need for calibration, there as of now does not seem

to be a way around it (in certain fields of inquiry) apart from abandoning appeals to intuition altogether. But I hope I have convincingly shown this to be also unacceptable. We're stuck with calibration and must make peace with the fact that we may not be able to navigate around it. But we can go through it. We can proceed through the storm knowing that it will rock the boat.

What I think might allow us to do so is what I have classified as the methodological virtues of philosophical analysis explained above. Moreover, I was at pains to show in Chapter 3 that the construction of philosophical theories is devoid of appeals to intuition. Instead we rely on logical principles to correct for fallacious missteps. More than that, these deep-seated intuitions only ensure us of coherence and consistency: they give us validity, not truth or content. As we have seen, we cannot ignore these intuitions, and we should not from threat of stagnation. I further showed that one of the defining merits of philosophical analysis is found in the continuity of its self-scrutiny. Intuitions as input in philosophical discourse are continually bombarded by arguments to ensure contaminants attached to them are removed; smoothing intuitions, making them suitable for use. And although this process is never complete, our satisfaction then can be found in our meticulousness.

Again, it must be emphasized that we are to acknowledge and respect the desire for calibration. However, we need not lose faith in philosophical practice altogether in the face of it. There are virtues attached to philosophical methodology that we can focus our attention on; but none of which completely escapes calibration. Reconciling these two horns of the debate is essential if we do not want to succumb to stagnation. But to deny that calibration does not exist, *or act such that it does not*,[51] is not being true to those aspects of philosophical discourse we cherish and should try to promote.

[51] This refers to those who assign more authority to intuition than is warranted, allowing that intuition justify or refute entire theories. Cf. Weatherson (2003).

4.4 Onward

Intuition has sustained much damage. Seemingly all aspects and features of intuition have been subjected to countless arguments that attempt to undermine its efficacy and reliability as a form of evidence in philosophical discourse. The true target of these attacks, directly or indirectly, is in fact Standard Philosophical Analysis; since if intuition is truly essential to SPA yet is inherently unreliable, SPA must itself be inherently unreliable. In order for intuition to be considered reliable there was the demand that it be able to be appropriately calibrated – tested in a non-epistemically circular fashion. We've seen that no such test is available to us presently. Nonetheless, there is a way both intuition and SPA can enjoy a kind of calibration. SPA demonstrates certain virtues that contribute to the enhancement and refinement of intuition. What I've referred to as *self-analysis*, *self-correction*, and *continuity* are virtues exhibited by SPA that overall seem to at least be able to ameliorate intuitions, if not able to provide reliability. Focusing on these virtues will help restore faith in the ability of SPA to yield informed and refined outputs.

Intuition and Standard Philosophical Analysis are not condemned, but they are not acquitted either. The day may come when we say goodbye (or good riddance) to intuition. However, until we have some alternative to supplant it, intuition should continue to act a basic source of foundational evidence. And it is my hope that the frustration of presently being unable to get past our intuitions does not result in stagnation or unmediated appeals to intuition. Rather, it should encourage continued efforts to seek new and better ways to conduct philosophical discourse, allowing Standard Philosophical Analysis to live and fight another day.

References

Alexander, J., and J. Weinberg. (2007). "Analytic Epistemology and Experimental Philosophy." *Philosophy Compass* 2, No. 1: 56-80, p. 63.

Bealer, G. (1996). "A Priori Knowledge and the Scope of Philosophy." *Philosophical Studies* 81: 121-42.

Bealer, G. (1998). "Intuition and the Autonomy of Philosophy." In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, (eds.) M. DePaul and W. Ramsey, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 201-239.

Brendel, E. (2004). "Intuition Pumps and the Proper Use of Thought Experiments." *Dialectica* 58: No. 1, pp. 89-108.

Cummins, R. (1998). "Reflections on Reflective Equilibrium." In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, (eds.) M. DePaul and W. Ramsey, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 201-239.

DePaul, R., M. (1998). "Why Bother with Reflective Equilibrium?" In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, (eds.) M. DePaul and W. Ramsey, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 293-309.

Feltz, A. (2008). "Problems with the Appeal to Intuition in Epistemology." *Philosophical Explorations* Vol. 11, No 2, pp.131-141.

Gettier, E., L. (1963). "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* 23, 121-123.

Goldman, A. (2007). "Philosophical Intuitions: Their Target, Their Source, and Their Epistemic Status." *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 74: 1-26.

Goldman, A., and Pust, J. (1998). "Philosophical Theory and Intuitional Evidence." In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, (eds.) M. DePaul and W. Ramsey, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 179-197.

Graham, G. and Horgan, T. (1998). "Southern Fundamentalism and the End of Philosophy." In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and Its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, (eds.) M. DePaul and W. Ramsey, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 271–292.

Grundmann, T. (2007). "The Nature of Rational intuitions and a Fresh Look at the Explanationist Objection." *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 74: 69-87.

Gutting, G. (1998). "Rethinking Intuition": A Historical and Metaphilosophical Introduction." In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, (eds.) M. DePaul and W. Ramsey, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 3-13.

Jackson, F. (1998). *From Metaphysics to Ethics: A Defence of Conceptual Analysis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Kornblith, H. (1998). "The Role of Intuition in Philosophical Inquiry: An Account with No Unnatural Ingredients." In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, (eds.) M. DePaul and W. Ramsey, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 129-141.

Kornblith, H. (2002). *Knowledge and Its Place in Nature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Kornblith, H. (2007). "Naturalism and Intuitions." *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 74: 27-9.

Liao, S. Forthcoming. "A Defense of Intuitions." *Philosophical Studies*.

Miscevic, N. (2004). "The Explainability of Intuitions." *Dialectica* 58: No. 1, pp 43-70.

Nagel, J. (2007). "Epistemic Intuitions." *Philosophy Compass* 2, No. 6: 792-819.

Nozick, R. (1981) *Philosophical Explanations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pust, J. (2000). *Intuition as Evidence*. Nozick, R. (ed.), New York: Garland Publishing.

Pust, J. (2001). "Against Explanationist Skepticism Regarding Philosophical Intuitions." *Philosophical Studies* 106: 227-58.

Sosa, E. (1998). "Minimal Intuition." In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, (eds.) M. DePaul and W. Ramsey, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 257-269.

Sosa, E. (2005). "A Defense of the Use of Intuitions in Philosophy." In M. Bishop and D. Murphy (eds.), *Stich and His Critics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Sosa, E. (2006). "Intuitions and Truth" In *Truth and Realism*, (eds.) P. Greenough and M. Lynch, Clarendon Press: pp. 208- 226.

Sosa, E. (2007). *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge*. See Ch. 3 "Intuitions" pp. 44-70.

Sosa, E. (2007). "Experimental Philosophy and Philosophical Intuition." *Philosophical Studies* 132: 99-107, p105.

Sosa, E. (2007). "Intuitions: Their Nature and Epistemic Efficacy." *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 74: 51-67.

Symons, J. Forthcoming. "Intuition and Philosophical Methodology." *Axiomathes*.

Swain, S., Alexander, J., and Weinberg, J. (2008). "The Instability of Philosophical Intuitions: Running Hot and Cold on Truetemp." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.

Weatherson, Brian. (2003). "What Good are Counterexamples?" *Philosophical Studies* 115: 1-31.

Weinberg, J., Nichols, S. and Stephen S. (2008). "Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions." In *Experimental Philosophy*, (eds.) Knobe, J. and Nichols, S. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 17-45.

Williamson, T. (2004). "Philosophical 'Intuitions' and Skepticism About Judgment." *Dialectica* 58: No. 1, pp. 114.

Wisniewski, J., E. (1998). "The Psychology of Intuition." In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, (eds.) M. DePaul and W. Ramsey, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 45-58.

Wright, C. (2004). "Intuition, Entitlement and the Epistemology of Logical Laws." *Diaclectica* 58: 157-177.