

Understanding the Role and Nature of Intuition in Philosophical Inquiry

by

Nicolas John Claude Nicola

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Abstract

This thesis explores the role and nature of intuition in philosophical inquiry. Appeals to intuition have either been used as evidence for or against philosophical theories or as constitutive features of judgement. I attempt to understand our uses of intuition by appealing to tacit knowledge. The hope is to elicit a picture of intuition as being practical and explanatory. Our reliance on intuition is warranted if we understand it as an expression of tacit knowledge

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I'd like to end off with a Masonic teaching about discipline and education which hopefully is reflected in this work. It revolves around the use of a chisel in the hands of a craftsperson. Just as the brilliance of the diamond is revealed by the skillful use of the chisel, so too will the beauties of the human mind be revealed through knowledge.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	II
INTRODUCTION	1
INTUITION SKEPTICISM: THE RESTRICTIONIST CHALLENGE.....	1
AIMS.....	2
STRUCTURE	3
SCOPE	4
CHAPTER I: EXPLORING INTUITION	5
WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?	5
SETTING THE SCENE	5
<i>Revival of Intuition</i>	5
<i>The Conceptual Analysts</i>	7
<i>The Rationalists</i>	7
<i>The Hybrids</i>	9
<i>The Experimental Philosophers</i>	12
<i>The Eliminativists</i>	14
<i>But That's Not All!</i>	16
<i>Things to be Aware of</i>	19
<i>Map of the Discussion</i>	21
CHAPTER II: EXPLORING YET ANOTHER FORM OF INTUITION.....	24
CHARACTERISTICS OF INTUITIVE JUDGEMENT.....	24
INTUITION IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY	25
<i>Moore's Intuitionism</i>	25
<i>Prichard's Intuitionism</i>	28
<i>Ross's Intuitionism</i>	32
<i>McDowell's Virtuous Agent</i>	36
<i>Dancy's Particularism</i>	37
<i>Commonalities between Intuitionism, Virtue, and Particularism</i>	39
INTUITION IN TEACHING.....	40
PROBLEMS WITH INTUITIVE JUDGEMENT	42
CHAPTER III: A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING INTUITION.....	45
HOW TO UNDERSTAND INTUITIVE JUDGEMENT.....	45
COMPETING CONCEPTIONS OF TACIT KNOWLEDGE.....	47
SO WHAT'S THE STATUS OF TACIT KNOWLEDGE?.....	48
<i>Against PC</i>	50
<i>Against PA</i>	51
<i>Advocating PI</i>	53
APPLYING THE CONCEPTION OF INTUITION AS TACIT KNOWLEDGE	54
CONCLUSION	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY	61

Introduction

Intuition Skepticism: The Restrictionist Challenge

It is widely held amongst philosophers that their practice makes use of appeals to intuition.

Numerous examples abound: Gettier cases in epistemology, trolley problems in ethics, the Chinese room argument in the philosophy of mind, and the list goes on. Clearly, intuitions have a significant role in contemporary philosophy. But what exact role do they play? And what role ought they play? In part, these questions depend on what intuitions are, and what philosophical inquiry aims to achieve.

Though there is no consensus concerning the role and nature of intuitions, nor an agreement concerning the aims of philosophical inquiry, there is a worry that shadows these uncertainties. In the field of experimental philosophy, philosophers conducted a series of experiments about our intuitions and what they tell us (in the hope of learning more about their role and nature). The results were surprising. The first set of findings present our intuitions as *diverse*. In a study conducted by Jonathan Weinberg, Stephen Stich, and Shaun Nichols (2001), the authors advance the claim that our intuitions are sensitive to our cultural background.¹ Intuitions vary across cultures. The second set of findings present our intuitions as *sensitive*. Intuitions vary not only across cultures but within cultures. People who share the same cultural background have intuitions that are at odds with one another. In addition, our intuitions also vary at the individual level – i.e. within the subject. Our intuitions may change over time given our

¹ In one example, they ask participants from Western and Eastern backgrounds what their intuitions are surrounding a case of whether an agent, Bob, knows or merely believes that his friend, Jill, drives an American car. They found that 26% of Western subjects judge that Bob knows while 56% of Eastern subjects judge that Bob knows.

exposure to certain content,² the way in which the content is presented,³ and our relation to said content.⁴

Of course our intuitions are diverse and sensitive to various factors. In fact, we want them to be. However, what the experimental philosophers show is something more serious than simple diversity and sensitivity. Their experiments demonstrate that our intuitions appear to be influenced by factors irrelevant to the situation that matters. We want our intuitions to track the salient features of a case. But if philosophical inquiry employs intuitions and our intuitions appear to be sensitive to irrelevant factors, we need a way of understanding intuition's proper place in philosophy. Call this the *restrictionist challenge*. Joshua Alexander states:

The real challenge lies not just in the fact that intuitions are not wholly reliable, but also in the fact that we know so little about them. We lack the resources needed to explain problematic intuitional sensitivity and, in return, struggle to understand its dimensions, to identify strategies for how to compensate for it, and to predict where it will appear. What is really needed, then, is a general, systematic understanding of philosophical intuitions. By coming to better understand what intuitions are, where they come from, and what factors influence them, we can better understand what role they play in philosophical practice. (2012, 71-72)

Aims

In part, this thesis is a response to the *restrictionist challenge*. By exploring the nature of both intuition and philosophical inquiry, I aim to provide a satisfactory account of the role intuition plays in philosophy. In particular, I argue that intuition is an expression of tacit knowledge. Contemporary philosophical practice treats our intuitions as evidence – e.g. for or against a theory, a claim, a way of thinking, and so on. By defending the claim that intuition is an

² Nichols and Knobe (2007) provide a case study that reveals our intuitions are sensitive to the presence or absence of affective content.

³ Sinnott-Armstrong (2008) discusses how framing effects can alter our intuitions.

⁴ Timm (2016) presents a study in which our practices of eating meat shape our intuitions and attitudes toward animals.

expression that relies on tacit knowledge – i.e. a claim concerning its nature – I argue that intuition’s primary role is to understand or apprehend the salient features of a case – in the form of a judgement – and a secondary (indirect) role as evidence for or against philosophical theories. The idea is to suggest that intuition as an expression of tacit knowledge can equip us with a framework that deals with the issues posed by the *restrictionist challenge*.

Structure

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter I explores three themes. The first theme concerns how contemporary philosophers view intuition – i.e. its nature. The second theme concerns the aims of philosophical inquiry – i.e. what philosophers take the task of philosophy to be. The third theme concerns the role they think intuition should have in philosophical inquiry given what they take the nature of intuition to be in light of their view of philosophy’s aims. In particular, this chapter characterizes the role intuition has as evidence for or against philosophical theories.

Chapter II develops an alternative account of intuition that figures prominently in domains such as moral philosophy and the educational context. In particular, I describe an account of intuition as being an essential feature of judgement. In contrast to the role intuition has in Chapter I, here the role is described as knowledge about what to do or how to act.

Chapter III argues for understanding the conception of intuition (as described in Chapter I and II) as an expression of tacit knowledge. The motive behind this is in part a response to the *restrictionist challenge*. My goal is to provide a general framework that makes sense of intuitions in philosophy. By drawing upon the notion of tacit knowledge, I argue that we can better

understand what intuitions are, where they come from, what factors influence them, and what role they have in philosophical inquiry.

Scope

There are going to be relevant themes I will not be able to discuss for want of space. In particular, I will not be able to provide a taxonomy concerning the different types of intuitions discussed in the literature.

Chapter I: Exploring Intuition

There is a debate in contemporary philosophy about the role and significance of intuition. In particular, the debate surrounds the use of intuitions in philosophical inquiry. How should philosophy use intuition? This chapter will explore the various ways contemporary philosophers have used the notion of intuition.

What are we Talking About?

The question of what intuition is, is a complicated thing. The reason is that our answer will depend on what we take the task of philosophy to be, what role intuition should play in philosophy, and the nature of intuition itself.

What we take philosophical inquiry to be will influence the role we want intuitions to play. What role we want intuitions to play will influence what we want to say about their nature. Also, what the nature of intuition is, will influence what role they should play. On top of all this, (if things weren't difficult enough) the problem of the intuition skeptic influences what one thinks the task of philosophy is, the role of intuition in philosophy, and the nature of intuition itself. This depends on how one views the problem of intuition skepticism and how much weight one assigns it. In this section I will be highlighting the various ways contemporary philosophers have used intuition in philosophy.

Setting the Scene

Revival of Intuition

According to Hintikka (1999), a revival of the use of intuitions was prompted by Chomsky's linguistics. Chomsky used intuitions to reveal truths about the structure of language. For

example, the Chomskian researcher would ask an individual if a certain sentence is grammatical. Usually, the question posed had never been encountered by the individual. The response from the individual is the intuition. It is characterized as a *spontaneous judgement*.

In contemporary philosophy, philosophers appeal to intuitions in a similar way. The difference is that the setting has changed. Instead of revealing truths about language structure, they aim to use intuitions as evidence. Evidence for what? Such evidence is usually taken to have general applicability. For example, thought experiments like the Gettier Case produce a particular intuition viz., that the subject does not possess knowledge. The intuition is said to apply more generally, yielding insight into the nature of knowledge as such. Such intuition is also characterized as being a spontaneous judgement.

The problem Hintikka has with such appeals to intuitions is the fact that they do not have any respectable theoretical foundation (1999, 127). In older philosophical traditions, those who relied on intuitions provided reasons why intuitions have the right sort of information or insight – in other words, why they are reliable sources. For example, Aristotle's notion of intuitive reason describes the way in which we grasp first principles of science from which all deductive reasoning starts. It is a type of apprehension by the soul. But contemporary philosophers' appeals to intuition lack any similar justificatory foundation.

What contemporary philosophers need is a justification for their appeal to intuitions given the role they hold them to have – i.e. an evidential role. Hintikka (1999) claims that to justify our appeals to intuition in this sense, we need radically to change how we think of them. For Hintikka, intuitions that result from thought experiments tell us more about our concepts and language rather than any external truths. In addition, our intuitions are fallible and should not necessarily be epistemically privileged. That is to say, to justify a judgement based on intuition,

we need to do more than just appeal to the intuition itself. But, Hintikka argues, contemporary philosophers do not see this, often invoking intuition as the sole justification of certain key claims.

The Conceptual Analysts

There is a style of philosophy that is consistent with Hintikka's recommendations. Call this camp the *Conceptual Analysts*. Proponents of this view take philosophy to be concerned with understanding our concepts. Goldman (1999) argues that philosophers should be focused on making clear what the structure and content of our *mental representations* – i.e. concepts – are. In particular, philosophical inquiry should focus on elucidating our folk concepts (Goldman and Pust 1998, 190-191; Goldman 2007, 18).

The conceptual analysts take intuition to be a tool that helps elucidate our folk concepts. Our intuitions help us understand our concepts by making explicit their structure and content. So, for example, when one is confronted with Gettier-like cases, one judges that, say, Smith does not know that he has received the job. This intuition provides us with information relevant to our folk conception of knowledge – i.e. Knowledge as Justified True Belief. In this case, intuitions play an evidential role. They provide us with evidence that aids in clarifying our conception of knowledge.

The Rationalists

While the conceptual analyst project appears to be in line with Hintikka's recommendation, there are other camps in philosophy that take a rather different route. Like the conceptual analysts, there is a camp that holds intuitions to have an evidential role. However, unlike the conceptual

analysts, they think that intuitions provide us with evidence for *a priori* truths. Call this camp the *Rationalists*.⁵ Intuitions are identified as *sui generis* states and are characterized differently from one rationalist to the next. Some hold that intuitions are intellectual seemings (Bealer 1998, 2002; Pust 2000; Huemer 2005). Others characterize intuitions as propositions *presented to* the subject as being true (Chudnoff 2011). While proponents of this view differ in respect to intuition's characteristics, there is a commonality that unites them. The rationalists argue that a belief is neither necessary nor sufficient for an intuition. Intuitions are belief-independent and presentational, in contrast to being belief-dependent and doxastic (Chudnoff 2011, 82). If you stare at a bright pink Bristol board for five minutes and then glare away looking at the rest of your room, you'll notice that everything in your room appears to be coloured in shades of pink. Although you know that your room is not made up of various shades of pink, at the time the room presents itself this way. Intuitions are said to be like this. When we have an intuition that *p*, it appears to us that it is the case that *p*. This may or may not actually be the case, but intuitions present us with seemings.

On this view, intuitions are intellectual seemings concerning what is necessarily the case. For example, some object cannot be black and yellow all over all at once. At first, you may not be aware of the statement, but once consciously experienced, it just intellectually seems true. Therefore, such intuitions provide us with insights into the way the world *necessarily* is (BonJour 2001, 158).

⁵ Some primary advocates of the view are George Bealer, Laurence BonJour, and Michael Huemer.

The Hybrids

There is a further camp that paints yet another picture about intuition's role in philosophy. This camp may be seen as a hybrid between the rationalists and conceptual analysts because they argue that intuition may play an evidential role in both respects. In his article "Philosophical Intuitions", Mark Fedyk (2009) sets out to explain what philosophical intuitions are and explores what makes them reliable – i.e. reliable as a source of evidence. He holds that intuitions can have two 'evidential roles'. The first role is that intuition may be a source of evidence concerning one's concepts. The second role is that intuitions may be a source of evidence concerning whether or not a property is instantiated.

For Fedyk:

Intuitions are *about*—in the sense of, “is a response to”—the *salient feature(s)* of a *case*. The *salient features* of a *case* are the *objects* of an intuition. The *propositional content* of an intuition follows from the *implicated concept*. Thus, the basic idea is that an intuition is about the salient features of a case, it has propositional content, and the propositional content of an intuition is obtained in some way from the implicated concept. (2009, 56).

To expand on this notion, Fedyk (2009, 58) applies it to the Gettier case. In the Gettier case, the *object* of the particular intuition (Smith does not know that he'll get the job) is *the salient feature* of the case viz., Smith's doxastic state. The *propositional content* of the intuition (i.e. what it's about) stems from the *implicated concept* – i.e. the concept of knowledge.

Given what's been said, Fedyk states that intuitions have a presentation composed of:

- (1) The case (e.g. Gettier case);
- (2) The implicated concept (e.g. the concept of knowledge as JTB) and;
- (3) The intuition itself (e.g. Smith does not know he has received the job). (2009, 66-67)

Fedyk claims that if such an account is right, then intuitions can provide and present us with evidence in two ways. Concerning the first type of evidence, intuitions can be used as evidence to relay information about the intuitor's concepts. For example, if you were to ask a lawyer about

the physical structure of time, her response would provide one with evidence about the lawyer's concept of time, rather than the nature of time itself. Such a presentation of an intuition is used as a *meaning-directed probe* (Fedyk 2009, 68). However, if you asked Albert Einstein about the physical structure of time, his response would seem to provide one with evidence about whether or not time has such properties instantiated. Such an intuition is used as a *world-directed probe* (Fedyk 2009, 68). The difference between meaning-directed and world-directed probes is that the former is about the individual's practices, values, beliefs, and the latter about the actual values of the world or something along these lines.

Fedyk inquires into the conditions under which it would be rational to use an intuition as a meaning-directed or a world-directed probe. Fedyk holds the following:

It is rational to use a presentation of an intuition as a meaning-directed probe if there is reason to believe that the intuitor is able to make ordinary operative presuppositions about the case, and the intuition manifest in the presentation occurs in favourable circumstances. (2009, 69)

It is rational to use a presentation of an intuition as a world-directed probe if there is reason to believe that the intuitor is able to make ordinary operative presuppositions about the case, and the intuition manifest in the presentation occurs in favourable circumstances, and that the implicated concept is sufficiently accurate. (2009, 71)

Meaning-directed probe conditions:

The idea of operative presuppositions is that the individual being probed is providing an intuition that conforms to what one would intuit in circumstances that reflect daily interactions or usage.

The intuition would be reliable if it had some sort of external validity (e.g. the mental processes in the case reflect those that occur in daily life, the case is similar to one that an individual would come across, etc.).⁶

⁶ See Bartels et al. (2014) for an excellent article discussing criteria regarding external validity and its conditions.

Regarding the condition that the intuition in the presentation occurs in favourable circumstances, what I take Fedyk to mean is that even if the intuitor is able to operate in a context that reflects the everyday circumstances, he or she must be in a state that does not impinge or hinder the result of the intuition. The intuitor's intuition mustn't be tainted by irrelevant factors. So, for example, self-interest may hinder the reliability of my intuition. One should be in a clear state of mind.

World-directed probe conditions:

Like the meaning-directed conditions, the world-directed will have the conditions of operative presuppositions and the presentation of the intuition occurring in favourable circumstances. However, there is an additional condition viz., we should have good reason to hold that the intuition being presented is very likely to be true (Fedyk 2009, 70-71). If I understand the author correctly, the idea is that the implicated concept being used gets things right. The implicated concept itself should be highly reliable and conform to how things currently are done in the field. So, my conception of knowledge should be reliable in the sense that it maps onto the well-grounded and established conception of knowledge in the current field. To take another example, my conception of time must be one that conforms to the best-established current conception of time. I believe the motive behind this is that if one's conception of x conforms to *the* conception of x , then one is in a position to intuit whether or not some property is instantiated.

Reliability:

What does this tell us about intuition's role and reliability? Well, philosophers' presentations of intuitions can be legitimately used as world-directed probes and meaning-directed probes.

However, it is not *always* appropriate to use such presentations as world-directed probes (Fedyk 2009, 77). The example he gives is that of fair contracts. A philosopher may be well aware of the concept of fair contracts, but have little experience with actual contracts (other than their tenure contracts). To consult a lawyer would be a wiser decision. Although philosophers may be experts on issues of social justice, this is not a reason to privilege their intuitions concerning contracts themselves, and to present such intuitions as world-directed probes (Fedyk 2009, 78).

So, intuitions, under the right circumstances, can be reliable sources of information that either (i) provide us with insights into the intuitor's concepts or (ii) provide us with insights into whether or not a property is instantiated (for e.g., whether or not time itself possesses tensed properties). When it comes to philosophical intuitions, it may be that they provide us with information concerning (i) or (ii), but the more interesting project involves (ii) and it is not always appropriate to view philosophers' intuitions as identifying the salient features of a situation. We should be aware of the conditions and contexts in which we claim that intuitions tell us anything about the salient features of a situation before we entertain such an idea, and this involves taking into account what the literature in experimental philosophy has said.

The Experimental Philosophers

Experimental philosophers practice philosophy in a similar manner to the sciences. They survey people, collect and analyze the data, and report on trends given by the data. A hot issue in experimental philosophy concerns understanding the role and status of intuitions in philosophy. These philosophers conduct experiments to test what people's intuitions tell us. Their results are surprising. Joshua Alexander (2012, 72-81) highlights two general themes: (i) intuitions are diverse; and (ii) intuitions are sensitive.

Concerning (i): intuitions are diverse in multiple categories. Studies found intuitional diversity by culture (Weinberg et al. 2001) and gender (Zamzow and Nichols 2009; Stich and Buckwalter 2011). For example, our intuitions may differ given our cultural background – I intuit *p* whereas you intuit *not-p*. The same goes for the other categories listed above. The point is that if you provide a group of people with the same set of information concerning a case, their intuitions differ because of external factors outside the scope of the case.

Concerning (ii): intuitions are sensitive to various factors. In particular, they are sensitive to *interpersonal* factors (Alexander 2012, 78). In addition to interpersonal factors, intuitions are sensitive to *intrapersonal* factors (Alexander 2012, 78). The idea being that intuitions vary within the individual. My intuitions may change given the context and sometimes they may even conflict. For example, I may have the intuition that killing is always morally wrong, but in a case of self-defense, I may rightly think that it is morally permissible to kill someone as a way to protect myself.

The force of these findings comes from inquiring into why our intuitions are diverse and sensitive. In particular, experimental philosophers want to know what factors influence intuitional diversity and sensitivity. What is most surprising is that their findings show our intuitions track features of a case that do not pertain to the truth or relevance of the matter at hand. What relevance does cultural background have when inquiring into whether a subject possesses knowledge?

Because philosophers appeal to intuitions as evidence, and such evidence appears to be influenced by irrelevant factors, experimental philosophers recommend that philosophers should stop appealing to intuitions because they are an unreliable source of information and we do not

know much about their workings.⁷ Hence, these findings produce a pessimistic outlook surrounding the idea that intuitions should serve an evidential role in philosophical inquiry.

The Eliminativists

In a similar vein, there is another camp that doubts intuition's evidential role in philosophy. However, unlike the experimental philosophers, they argue that philosophy does not in fact rely on intuitions. Call this camp the *Eliminativists*. Herman Cappelen argues that most philosophers think that the Centrality Thesis is true:

Centrality: Contemporary analytic philosophers rely on intuitions as evidence (or as a source for evidence) for philosophical theories. (2012, 4)

But Cappelen rejects Centrality. He puts forth the claim that intuitions do not play an evidential role in philosophy and that much of the 'intuition'-talk is exaggerated (Cappelen 2012, 18). What are we doing when we use 'intuition' in philosophy? The eliminativists respond by claiming that our usage of the term reflects:

- (1) A mere disposition-to-believe;
- (2) A hidden assumption or;
- (3) A rhetorical tool.

Concerning (1): If intuitions are dispositions-to-believe, then they do not provide one with justification for the belief in question, but rather incline us towards *holding* the belief. The idea is simple: If I'm inclined to believe that candy filled with sugar is healthy for me, my inclination does nothing to justify the belief itself. There needs to be something else to verify my belief.

Merely having an inclination does not produce justification.

⁷ Not all experimental philosophers hold this position. But there is a good majority who think that we should stop relying on intuitions given what their experiments demonstrate.

Concerning (2): On occasion, our ‘intuitions’ are hidden assumptions in arguments not made explicit. To highlight the point, let’s take an example from perceptual evidence. Imagine you saw me place my wallet by the front door the night before. The next day I ask you if you know where my wallet is and you respond by saying “I believe it is by the front door”. Now there is nothing wrong with that response. I wouldn’t say “How did you form this belief?” Although you form the belief that Nick’s wallet is by the front door via perception, this needn’t be made explicit. It’s a hidden (or underlying) assumption that forms the belief that Nick’s wallet is by the front door.

Sometimes, intuitions are said to be like this. They are implicit assumptions not made explicit but nonetheless operative. They operate in the context of the theory one holds to be true. Let’s apply this to the Gettier case. One’s belief that ‘Smith does not know he will get the job’ is in part operating on a hidden assumption concerning one’s theory of knowledge (or at the very least, features of knowledge). The hidden assumption concerns the idea that knowledge requires more than justified true belief, though one may not have a clear picture (or hold consciously) what else may be required of knowledge. However, unlike the perceptual faculty, we are unaware of what system underlies the formation of our intuitions. If this is the case, intuitions do not justify beliefs. Instead, one should try and find reasons why people have such intuitions. In other words, one cannot rely on intuitions as evidence because one needs to carefully understand what intuitions are expressions of.

Concerning (3): Intuitions can play a rhetorical role. When one relies on intuition, one is not relying on reason to convince one’s interlocutors. Instead, intuitions are used as tools of persuasion. Intuitions are used to get your interlocutors to see the value of your philosophical theory, belief, or argument. However, persuading someone of a view is not itself justification for

the view. I can persuade you that cookies are good for your health by telling you their taste counts in favour of their goodness, but my persuasive pull does not justify you having the belief that cookies are good for your health. So intuitions may be used to persuade others of one's viewpoint, but this is different from providing evidence of one's view.

But That's Not All!

We can see how one may find truth in the eliminativist position, but their view is not free from critique. In his paper, David Chalmers (2014) argues for a minimal conception of intuition that captures our everyday philosophical usage of the term. His method involves looking at Cappelen's *Philosophy Without Intuitions* and responding accordingly.

As highlighted above, Cappelen holds that philosophers hold true the Centrality Thesis, but he attempts to show it is false by using linguistic and textual analysis that demonstrates philosophers' practice does not in fact reflect the Centrality Thesis.

Cappelen does not provide a definition of intuition, but he claims that intuitions have three features:

- (F1) They have a special phenomenology
- (F2) They have a special epistemic status, in that they justify but do not need justification
- (F3) They are based solely on conceptual competence (2012, 112-113)

Cappelen's strategy is to look at particular philosophical cases that are said to be instances of appeals to intuition (e.g. Gettier cases, trolley problems, etc.) and showing that there is little evidence that such appeals have any of the three features, hence demonstrating that the Centrality Thesis is false.

Chalmers responds by claiming that these three features are not necessary features of intuition and that the notion is much broader than Cappelen's conception (2014, 536).

Concerning (F1), Chalmers believes that it is a theoretical claim about intuitions that may or may not be true. (F3) holds for (at most) a subclass of intuitions, and (F2) needs qualification, but is the most important feature.

Concerning (F2), Chalmers thinks it is crucial that they have this special epistemic status that justifies but does not need justification. The reason being that such justification reflects the way philosophers' practice appeals to intuitions. We think they play some sort of evidential role in that they justify but do not need justification. But what type of justification? Chalmers does not think we use intuitions as inferential, perceptual, memorial, testimonial, or (usually) introspective justification. He thinks the justification is an intuitive justification that exhibits some sort of response like "This seems obvious" (Chalmers 2014, 536). For Chalmers' purposes:

Broadly Inferential Justification: a justification is broadly inferential if it is inferential, perceptual, introspective, memorial, or testimonial (2014, 536-537).

Broadly Noninferential Justification: a justification is broadly noninferential if it is not derived from sources of a broadly inferential nature (2014, 537).

There are two subtleties Chalmers and Cappelen acknowledge. The first is that, "intuitions have broadly noninferential justification, so they do not *need* inferential justification to be justified, but they may nevertheless *have* inferential justification" (Chalmers 2014, 537). The idea is that intuitions may be justified by other sources, but such justification is not required. So if a claim has inferential justification, it does not mean it is not an intuition. Rather, what matters is that the claim's justification does not depend on inferential justification.

The second subtlety is that, "it is far from obvious that the intuitions that philosophers appeal to have a noninferential *epistemic* justification" (Chalmers 2014, 537). For example, it could be the case that the intuition solicited by a trolley problem is inferentially (but non-obviously) justified. What matters is that the use of intuitions in philosophy have a *dialectical*

justificatory status (Chalmers 2014, 537). The difference between *epistemic* and *dialectical* justification is that the former supports a subject's belief and the latter concerns how a subject supports her claim to someone else (Chalmers 2014, 537). I believe the reason why Chalmers holds intuitions to have a dialectical rather than an epistemic justificatory status is that we are more focused on the method by which we justify appeals to intuitions rather than how we support our own beliefs. This is because philosophers appeal to intuitions as evidence. So, appeals to intuitions are intuitive claims that have a dialectical justification that are broadly noninferential.

Chalmers concludes by noting that there are two worries with his conception of intuition. The first is an epistemological worry concerning how any judgement could have broadly noninferential support (Chalmers 2014, 543-544). There is no model which paints a clear picture of the support system and there is no clear way we can come to have access or knowledge of it. Because of this, intuitions seem to be "mysterious". The second worry is a methodological one. "Why should we accept a claim whose dialectical justification is broadly noninferential when there is disagreement over the claim" (Chalmers 2014, 544). This suggests that the dialectical justification is not universally recognized and this reduces the force of the claim because there doesn't seem to be full support of appeals to intuition being used as evidence through broadly noninferential justification. Think of it this way: if I disagree with you about an inference, I can show you why by means of another inference that may override yours. But, the same cannot be done with noninferential justifications. There seems to be a sort of stalemate. So how do we recognize the force of noninferential justification if we disagree about its place in philosophy?

Things to be Aware of

So far we've discussed the different ways contemporary philosophers appeal to intuition. All of the authors aim to understand what role they play in philosophical inquiry. Yet, we haven't explored how these philosophers have come to hold their views on intuition. It will be useful to make explicit the factors that influence what role and significance intuition has in philosophy.

In "The Role of Intuitions in Philosophy", Daniel Cohnitz and Sören Häggqvist (2009) explore the relationship between our use of intuitions and their adjudicating philosophical truths. The authors notice that what role intuitions have is closely associated with the question of what the nature of intuitions are and vice versa. The role and nature of intuitions seem to have some sort of dependency or at least some sort of correlation.

Now what intuitions are evidence for depends on what philosophy is concerned with. In other words, what the nature of philosophy is will in a sense determine what type of role/evidence intuitions have/are. Cohnitz and Häggqvist highlight three conceptions of philosophical inquiry:

Metaphysical Conception: Philosophy is concerned with metaphysical issues that aim to identify and understand the "essence" of things – e.g. What is x ? where x can be knowledge, truth, identity, etc.

Conceptual Analysis: Philosophy is concerned with the meaning of terms – e.g. What does x mean? Where x can be knowledge, truth, etc.

Ideal Language Conception: Philosophy is concerned with the meaning of terms, but unlike conceptual analysis, it is concerned with its ideal conception – e.g. In the ideal context, what does x mean? Where x can be truth, identity, etc. (2009, 9).

It would be redundant to provide examples for all three conceptions, so I will appeal to one to highlight the point. If philosophical inquiry is conceptual analysis, then philosophy aims at understanding what ordinary folk mean by x . For our purposes, let x be knowledge. Philosophy, then, aims at understanding what knowledge is. What role do our intuitions have in all this?

Well, our intuitions provide and produce insights into what ordinary folk mean when they speak of knowledge. Since conceptual analysis is concerned with the concept of knowledge, our intuitions provide us insights into what our conception consists of. Our intuitions aim to make clear what we mean by knowledge. They are reliable indicators concerning the values, beliefs, and practices we hold. We can say that intuition's role is to provide one with evidence surrounding the ordinary folk concept of knowledge (or whatever x may be).

As was said above, whether intuitions are evidence depends on what they are evidence for. Another important question concerns whether or not the various types of intuitions share a common lineage. Is there some underlying nature that the various types of intuitions – e.g. intuitions as beliefs, as dispositions-to-believe, or intellectual seemings – share? This matters because if something underlies one type of intuition and such feature proves to be problematic, then if all other types have this feature, then they will also encounter this problem. If on the other hand, they do not share a common nature, while there may not be the same problem facing all types of intuitions, there may be a problem of whether a particular domain can be said to reliably rely on a group of intuitions. Hence, the significance of Cohnitz's and Häggqvist's article is that the role of intuition depends (I don't think it *ultimately* depends, but rather some dependency) on what we take philosophy to be. In addition, how we identify intuition depends on various factors and the weight we assign to them – e.g. one element of consideration is whether we identify intuitions with the process or results of a philosophical inquiry.

Map of the Discussion

Before we move onto the next chapter, it will be useful to provide an overview of the discussion thus far. In particular, it will be useful to highlight the various roles, natures, and characteristics of intuitions discussed above. Here is a figure laying out these themes:

Table 1: Overview of Intuition

	Nature	Role	Characteristics
Hintikka's Suggestion	-Identified as the propositional content of a claim – i.e. <i>p</i> -The result of intuiting is <i>the</i> intuition	-Evidential -Evidence for what? -Should be evidence for our concepts and language (following Chomskian intuitions) - Not about external truths	-Spontaneous judgements
Conceptual Analysts	-Propositional content	-Evidential -Evidence for what? -Intuitor's concepts	-Spontaneous mental judgements
Rationalists	- <i>Sui generis</i> states	-Evidential -Evidence for what? -Necessary truths	-Intellectual seeming -Propositions <i>seem</i> true (e.g. stick in water <i>seems</i> bent)
Hybrids	- <i>About</i> the salient feature(s) of a case	-Evidential -Evidence for what? - (i) one's concepts and (ii) whether or not a property is instantiated	-Involves propositional content -Propositional content stems from the implicated concept
Experimental Philosophers	Beliefs	-Evidential -Philosophers should stop relying on intuitions as evidence because they are unreliable	-Tells us how human beings think -How we are – i.e. human nature
Eliminativists	??	-Non-evidential Philosophers do not rely on intuitions as evidence (mistake to think so) -Various roles such as rhetorical	-Special phenomenology -Special epistemic status -Based solely on conceptual competence
Chalmers	The results of a broadly noninferential process	-Evidential -Evidence for what? -For (or against) philosophical theories	-Broadly noninferential -Dialectical

Chapter II: Exploring Yet Another Form of Intuition

In the first chapter, we described intuitions as inputs or data points. In this sense, intuitions are evidence for or against philosophical theories. However, this is not the only conception of intuition's nature and role in philosophical inquiry. There is yet another conception that figures prominently in the work of some philosophers. These philosophers find a role for intuition (or something like it) in their theory of judgement. This chapter aims to explore the nature and role of intuition in this second sense – i.e. intuition as an important constituent of judgement.

Characteristics of Intuitive Judgement

We need to make clear the distinction between the intuition explored in the first chapter and the one explored here. First and foremost, in the latter conception intuitions do not figure as evidence for or against philosophical theories. Intuitions here figure as constituent features of judgements. An instance of this example is when one has the intuition that killing is morally wrong. This intuition is not used as evidence from which the philosopher might make inferences about the intuitor's concepts or beliefs or about what is the case, but rather as an expression of the intuitor's knowledge made in the relevant context. This intuition does not tell us which theory is right or wrong – i.e. intuitions are not necessarily about theories – but rather about understanding or apprehending the relevant features of a case, exercised in the form of a judgement. The intuition is about *what to do*, or *how to act*. The intuition that *p* is not used as evidence for *p*. It is an expression of one's knowledge that *p*.

Secondly, not all philosophers who find a role for intuitive judgement in this way explicitly use the term “intuition”. For example, a number of philosophers talk about apprehending a moral truth in a way that suggests that the apprehension in question is intuitive,

even though they make no explicit mention or use of the word. What these philosophers have in mind is a kind of judgement that does not follow from explicit, articulable reasoning, but is like a perceptual judgement in that it is contextually situated and issues from a process or procedure that is non-codifiable. Judgement about what to do cannot be exhaustively determined by rules and principles.

Intuition in Moral Philosophy

So where can we find this use of intuition? One place we should look to is moral philosophy. In particular, the ethical intuitionist tradition appears to make heavy use of intuitive judgement in the relevant sense. There are also branches in moral philosophy that either follow closely or stem directly from the intuitionist tradition, though they do not deploy the term “intuition”. Thus I will be examining the characteristics of intuitive judgement at work in Moore’s, Ross’s, and Prichard’s intuitionism, but also McDowell’s conception of the virtuous agent, and Dancy’s particularism. The goal is to highlight and make explicit the various similarities that are crucial for understanding the nature of intuitive judgement.

Moore’s Intuitionism

In his *Principia Ethica*, G.E. Moore sets out to understand what ‘good’ is. His inquiry stems from the unsatisfactory accounts his predecessors had to offer. Some would equate goodness with pleasure and others with the satisfaction of desire. Such views were usually associated with Utilitarianism. Utilitarians state that the best course of action is one which maximizes utility while producing the least amount of disutility. The factors that go into deciding what course of action is the best depend on the particular Utilitarian theory at issue. Some utilitarians think of

utility in terms of happiness; some favour preference-satisfaction. Some utilitarians suppose we should act in light of the utility of particular acts; others argue we should act in accord with a system of rules adherence to which will promote the most overall utility.

The problem Moore had with these accounts is that they seemed insufficient to capture the notion of 'good'. Although things like pleasure and desire may have goodness in them, they fall short of *being* good. Moreover, he thinks it is a mistake to equate pleasure and desire with goodness because such association commits what he calls a "naturalistic fallacy":

But far too many philosophers have thought that when they named those other properties they were actually defining good; that these properties, in fact, were simply not 'other,' but absolutely and entirely the same with goodness. This view I propose to call the 'naturalistic fallacy' and of it I shall now endeavour to dispose. (Moore 1903, 10)

One commits the naturalistic fallacy when one identifies moral properties with natural properties. According to Moore, moral properties cannot be reduced to natural properties. He highlights the fallacious reasoning by using the example of colour first. Taking the colour yellow, we can say that it produces particular wavelengths. Further we can identify the colour yellow with these particular wavelengths. However, once we identify yellow with the wavelengths, we've committed the fallacy. When we say we see yellow, we do not mean to say we see these particular wavelengths. Far from it. What we perceive is the yellow itself. The fact that we can identify the particular wavelengths comes after the fact that we can identify what yellow is. All that we are entitled to say is that these wavelengths correspond to the colour yellow (Moore 1903, 10).

Similarly, when one identifies the good with pleasure or desire, one commits the fallacy. Imagine that what is good is identical to that which is pleasurable. When we say of something that it is good, we do not mean to say that it is simply pleasurable. What we identify is the goodness itself. The fact that we can identify pleasure comes after the fact that we can identify

what a good is. All we are entitled to say (if we are even entitled to say that) is that pleasure is usually somehow correlated with with goodness.

Moore thinks it is an open question whether some object that has a natural property is good. That is to say, we can always ask the additional question “But is it good?”. Let us take good to be identical to pleasure. When one says, “x is good”, then one means to say that “x is pleasurable”. But Moore thinks that can’t be right, because if one asserts that “pleasure is good”, one appears to be saying more than “pleasure is pleasure”. We can always ask of some pleasurable act the additional question “is it good?”. It remains an open question as to whether or not some natural property or object is good.

What does this reveal about the nature of the good? Moore thinks that one is in a position to see that the good is a property that is peculiar, non-natural, simple and indefinable (Moore 1903, Ch. 1). It is non-natural because a description of an object, action or event in purely natural terms is unable to capture its goodness in the full sense. It is simple (primary) because it cannot be decomposed or analyzed into further properties of which it is comprised. It is indefinable because it cannot be defined in terms of natural properties. From this, one may conclude that moral terms like ‘good’ are peculiar (*sui generis*) because they do not conform to the way we describe the world naturally. It follows that the truth of moral judgements cannot be derived by analyzing the concepts ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’, ‘wrong’, nor can they simply be derived from sense experiences – e.g. looking out into the world and locating the property of ‘goodness’ as one might look and see through the window that there is a bird in a tree.

So how do we arrive at the truth of moral claims? He asks: “what is the nature of the evidence, by which alone any ethical proposition can be proved or disproved, confirmed or rendered doubtful” (Moore 1903, Preface viii). Moore thinks that our intuitions allow us to grasp

moral truths. By exercising intuitive judgement, we are in a position to know whether something is good or bad. He writes:

Again, I would wish it observed that, when I call such propositions ‘Intuitions,’ I mean *merely* to assert that they are incapable of proof; I imply nothing whatever as to the manner or origin of our cognition of them. Still less do I imply (as most Intuitionists have done) that any proposition whatever is true, *because* we cognize it in a particular way or by the exercise of any particular faculty: I hold, on the contrary, that in every way in which it is possible to cognize a true proposition, it is also possible to cognize a false one. (Moore 1903, Preface x)

A few things can be said of Moorean intuitions. First, they only concern knowing the good in itself (Moore 1903, Preface viii). This is in contrast to intuitions being concerned with what actions we ought to perform in accordance with the good – i.e. matters concerning right actions and duties. Second, while there may be evidence as to what actions we ought to perform, there is no evidence in the same way as to what the good is. The former is capable of proof while the latter is not. Third, while our intuitions may be true, they do not amount to proof. Intuitions are no more proof as they are disproof. This leads to the last point; namely, that our intuitions may be fallible. We may intuit false propositions just as well as we may intuit true ones.

One may also note that Moore does not commit himself to the idea of there being a faculty of intuition. Nothing in what he says leads him to hold the view that there is a faculty that administers data relevant to intuition. All that has been said is that our intuitions deal with non-natural, indefinable, and peculiar things. In the next section, we will turn to Prichard and consider how he saw the role of intuitions.

Prichard’s Intuitionism

Influenced by Moore’s *Principia Ethica*, H.A. Prichard wrote “Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?” (1912) to clarify the aim of moral philosophical inquiry. Like Moore, Prichard is an

ethical intuitionist, who holds that we can arrive at moral truths by employing our intuitions to grasp the salient features of a situation. However, where Moore is concerned with the good, Prichard concerns himself with obligations. As we will see shortly, Prichard drifted away from Moore in that he thinks it is a mistake to provide principles of obligations derived from what is – or is known to be – good.

Prichard observes that the moral philosophers of his time are concerned with providing justifications for one's obligations. They try to provide answers to questions like, "Is it *really* my duty to repay my debt?" and "Why am I obliged to be benevolent?". He thinks it is a mistake for moral philosophers to answer these questions. These questions are in fact illegitimate (Prichard 1912, 34).

To appreciate his view, it is important to understand the nature of obligations. For Prichard, our sense of obligation is "absolutely underivative or immediate" (Prichard 1912, 27). He states:

The rightness of an action consists in its being the origination of something of a certain kind A in a situation of a certain kind, a situation consisting in a certain relation B of the agent to others or to his own nature (Prichard 1912, 27).

The relation of the agent to others or to him- or herself carries an immediate apprehension of knowing what to do or how to act in the particular case. The obligation here is the commitment to such a course of action that stems from the particular case. Just as one is able to grasp that a three-sided figure must have three angles by attending to the subject matter, so too one can grasp that it is one's obligation to do x by attending to the subject matter of x – given the particular circumstances that call for x . Here then, one's obligations are grasped by attending to the situation at hand. The grasping itself is said to be immediate in the sense that the truth of what is being grasped is self-evident – similar to how one grasps certain mathematical truths. Our

intuitions are that which make us grasp what our obligations are. They give rise to how we ought to act or what we ought to do. Notice that our sense of obligation is incapable of proof or demonstration in the way that we can show empirically that grass is green.

We are now in a position to appreciate the force of Prichard's claim that moral philosophers' quest to provide proof of, or evidence for, our obligations is mistaken. If our judgement that we have an obligation to x issues from grasping a truth by attending to a situation, and this grasping is immediate and self-evident, then to ask if one's obligation to x is *really* one's obligation is to miss the point completely. Once you see in this way that you have an obligation to x , there is no place for the further question of whether you ought to do what you see you have an obligation to do.

Prichard parallels this line of thought and argues that epistemology rests on the same mistake. He writes:

As I urged before, at some time or other in the history of all of us, if we are thoughtful, the frequency of our own and of others' mistakes is bound to lead to the reflexion that possibly we and others have *always* been mistaken in consequence of some radical defect of our faculties. In consequence certain things which previously we should have said without hesitation that we knew, as, e.g., that $4 \times 7 = 28$, become subject to doubt; we become able only to say that we thought we knew these things. (Prichard 1912, 34)

Epistemologists typically respond to this skepticism by attempting to show how it is we know what we know. But Prichard thinks that the source of such skepticism is not genuine (1912, 35).

This is because we are not doubting *knowledge* per se, but rather our *belief*. When we doubt whether we know $4 \times 7 = 28$, we are doubting whether our belief that $4 \times 7 = 28$ is true, not our knowledge of $4 \times 7 = 28$. If we come to appreciate that the skeptical doubt does not concern itself with knowledge but *mere* belief, then the skepticism towards our knowledge becomes misplaced.

Prichard thinks that by understanding how one arrives at knowledge, one is able to understand

the nature of knowledge itself (1912, 35). It is by intuitively grasping certain claims as self-evident that one is said to be in a position of knowing.

Two things follow. First, Prichard argues that radical skeptical doubt of the kind exemplified by Descartes' Evil Genius hypothesis is utterly confused, resting on the idea that we need to provide additional proof of what we know, whereas knowledge in fact rests on the immediate recognition of truths that do not admit of proof. Second, Prichard recognizes that genuine doubt arises from losing one's grip on what was apprehended in a previous state of mind (Prichard 1912, 35-36). For example, I genuinely doubt whether $4 \times 7 = 28$ when I cannot recall the method at arriving at the truth of this statement. The way to figure out whether or not $4 \times 7 = 28$ is to attend to the mathematical relations involved. In other words, "do the sum again" (Prichard 1912, 36). More broadly, he writes:

Or, to put the matter generally, if we do come to doubt whether it is true that A is B, as we once thought, the remedy lies not in any process of [philosophical] reflexion but in such a reconsideration of the nature of A and B as leads to the knowledge that A is B. (Prichard 1912, 36)

The lesson being that we do not need to engage in philosophical reflection of whether we know what we take ourselves to know, but rather to consider the particular case at hand and deploy familiar methods to ascertain whether what we believe is true. Knowledge is immediate and self-evident; when one is in possession of knowledge, one is in a position to know. It is as simple as that.

Returning to the moral case, the nature of moral philosophy does not concern itself with providing justification or proofs for one's obligations; the obligation *is* the reason why you should do it. It requires no further proof; hence it is a mistake to ask what justifies our obligation to do some particular action.

If we genuinely come to doubt our obligation – where genuine doubt is losing sight of how one came to hold the obligation – then the only remedy is to attend to the particular situation at hand and see if one is obliged to act accordingly. If the answer is positive, then one comes to know what one's obligation is. If the answer is negative, then one comes to know that it is not one's duty to act accordingly in the situation at hand.

To sum up Prichard's intuitionism, he thinks that when moral philosophers attempt to provide justifications for our obligations, they are making a mistake. When one comes to appreciate where one's obligation lies, one is in a position to see that the obligation itself is the reason to act accordingly and no further proof is required. Knowledge of one's obligation is immediate and self-evident. One grasps what one's obligations are by exercising intuitive judgement in the particular case at hand. One thereby understands what one's obligations are.

Ross's Intuitionism

Like Prichard, W.D. Ross was also heavily influenced by Moore's *Principia Ethica*. In addition to Moore's writings, Ross benefitted greatly from discussion with Prichard, who influenced the position Ross took in his famous book, *The Right and the Good*.

What Ross advocates in the first two chapters of his book can be seen as a hybrid of Moore's view on the good and Prichard's view on the nature of obligation. Similar to Moore's position in that there is a difference between something that is good and goodness itself, Ross argues there is a difference between a right act and rightness in itself. But whereas Moore thought that the good in itself is the chief and only aim of moral inquiry, Ross departs from this view. The reason is that Moore frames the 'good' in a way tied to the consequences of one's action – i.e. the action to do is the one that produces the most amount of the *sui generis* property

of goodness. Moore's view appears to be a type of Utilitarianism, namely, Ideal Utilitarianism. The thought being that what determines the good is the consequences and we should strive to produce the best overall consequences. For Ross, however, morality concerns itself with duties – not motives or consequences, but rather actions (Ross 1930, 42-43). He thinks that while we may have a *prima facie* duty to promote the good, it is but one of several *prima facie* duties. *Prima facie* duties are duties that hold 'at first sight'. Ross writes:

I suggest '*prima facie* duty' or 'conditional duty' as a brief way of referring to the characteristic (quite distinct from that of being a duty proper) which an act has, in virtue of being of a certain kind (e.g. the keeping of a promise), of being an act which would be a duty proper if it were not at the same time of another kind which is morally significant. (1930, 19)

Our *prima facie* duties are expressed as principles. Ross identifies seven *prima facie* duties: fidelity; reparation; gratitude; non-maleficence; justice; beneficence; and self-improvement (1930, 21-22).⁸

Another important point is that our *prima facie* duties to act in certain ways are self-evident. They are self-evident in the way that certain axiomatic truths are self-evident. For example, we know that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line by grasping that in *this* case, the shortest distance is a straight line and in *that* case, the shortest distance is a straight line. Similarly, our *prima facie* duties are self-evident in the sense that in *this* case it appears to be our duty to keep our promise and in *that* case, it appears to be our duty to keep our promise. It is not self-evident in the sense of being obvious. Axiomatic truths are not necessarily obvious; one needs to be in a position to understand the relationship of certain mathematical truths in order to see what is self-evident. Ross states:

For the nature of the self-evident is not to be evident to every mind however undeveloped, but to be apprehended directly by minds which have reached a certain degree of maturity, and for minds to reach the necessary degree of maturity the

⁸ The list is not intended to be exhaustive.

development that takes place from generation to generation is as much needed as that which takes place from infancy to adult life. (1930, 12)

Our *prima facie* duties are self-evident in the sense that, given our experience and sufficient attention to what is being proposed, they require no proof beyond themselves (Ross 1930, 29). Similarities can be seen here with Prichard's claim that for something to be our obligation, we need to look no further than apprehending the nature of the obligation itself.

Yet there is another point to take notice of, namely, that our *prima facie* duties are not necessarily our duties proper. Ross holds that, "whether an act is a duty proper or actual duty depends on *all* the morally significant kinds it is an instance of" (Ross 1930, 19-20). What I take him to mean is that whether or not one of our *prima facie* duties are our *actual* or *proper* duties depends on the morally relevant features of a situation. The morally salient features of a situation determine what our actual or proper duty is. This is to be contrasted with *prima facie* duties because they only admit to claims about the character of certain actions, e.g. on first sight, fulfilling one's promise appears to be an action one ought to do. But whether or not one ought to fulfill a promise depends on the morally relevant features of a situation. For example, if fulfilling my promise to tell one of my friends the truth about their aesthetic appearance (in which they lack) when they ask me, it may not be my duty to fulfill my promise because I know that the truth will harm them more than help. In this case, fulfilling my promise is not my duty proper though promise keeping is still a *prima facie* duty.

Thus Ross recognizes that our *prima facie* duties will conflict. That there are these principles which tell me to keep my promise, improve my character, or pay my debts, it is by their nature that they may cross paths whereby they point in different directions. What are we to do in situations where our *prima facie* duties conflict? Is there a general principle which tells us

what we ought to do or how we ought to act given the conflict of such *prima facie* duties? To this, Ross writes:

When I am in a situation, as perhaps I always am, in which more than one of these *prima facie* duties is incumbent on me, what I have to do is to study the situation as fully as I can until I form the considered opinion (it is never more) that in the circumstances one of them is more incumbent than any other; then I am bound to think that to do this *prima facie* duty is my duty *sans phrase* in the situation. (1930, 19)

This passage implies that there is no overarching principle that tells us what we ought to do in circumstances where our *prima facie* duties conflict. What one ought to do “*sans phrase*” cannot be codified or be expressed by a simply moral theory. What it is to know what our actual duty is, when our *prima facie* duties conflict, is to be in a position to understand the situation in its entirety and judge that it is one rather than another *prima facie* duty that is our *actual* duty.

Such a judgement is an intuitive judgement and Ross characterizes it as a *considered opinion*. It isn't some sort of uneducated guess where we happen to form an opinion as to what to do. Rather, as agents with moral character, we pay particular attention to the details of a situation and form a judgement that accords with what the situation itself calls for. Concerning our judgements about particular duties, Ross writes:

There is no principle by which we can draw the conclusion that it is on the whole right or the whole wrong. In this respect the judgement as to the rightness of a particular act is just like the judgement as to the beauty of a particular natural object or work of art. (1930, 31)

The judging of what one's actual duties are is performed intuitively, enabling knowledge of what one has a duty to do in the relative context. Similar to art and beauty, there is no guide or overarching principle that dictates the outcome of our intuitive judgements. This is not to say that our intuitive judgements are subjective, but rather that they are particular. What makes this painting beautiful is *that* dash of fuchsia, whereas what makes that painting lack beauty is *that*

dash of fuchsia. Thus, the role intuitions play is one in which judgement is exercised between conflicting *prima facie* duties concerning how one ought to act.

To sum up Ross, his view combines the insights of Moore and Prichard. Morality concerns itself with duties and duties are concerned with actions. We have *prima facie* duties to act in certain ways and this stems from the distinct character of the actions themselves. When our *prima facie* duties conflict, there is no overarching principle that tells us how we ought to act in the case at hand. Instead, we have no choice but to consider what our intuitions tell us about the particular case.

McDowell's Virtuous Agent

Moving forward roughly half a century, John McDowell remarks on the nature of a moral outlook:

It may seem that the very idea of a moral outlook makes room for, and requires, the existence of moral theory, conceived as a discipline which seeks to formulate acceptable principles of conduct. (McDowell 1979, 331)

McDowell proceeds to reject this view. While he thinks ethics is concerned with how people should live, he denies that a moral outlook should be characterized as a set of principles or a theory of right action. Rather, in his essay, "Virtue and Reason", he paints a different picture, focusing on the idea of a virtuous agent. The virtuous agent is described as being in possession of knowledge of how to act exemplified by her reliable sensibilities (McDowell 1979, 331-332).

McDowell works with the virtue of kindness. The virtuous agent demonstrates her possession of kindness by being able to judge "the thing to do" (McDowell 1979, 332). What is characteristic of this judgement is that it stems neither from non-rational habit or instinct, nor from any codes of conduct that determine how to act in every case. Rather, the judgement exhibits a reliable

sensitivity that is perceptive of the morally-relevant details of a situation. McDowell identifies this sensibility with the virtuous agent's knowledge of virtue, in this case kindness. Her sensitivity is an instance (or expression) of knowledge.

However, McDowell notes that the virtuous agent needs not express her knowledge in an articulate or explicit manner (1979, 32). That is, she does not need to identify attributes of a particular action as kind, or to express the grounds on which she decided to act kindly.⁹ It is sufficient that the virtuous agent responds accordingly to situations which call for kindness. Being able to identify an action or attributes of an action as kind goes above and beyond being in possession of the relevant knowledge. It is the thing she does that demonstrates or exemplifies her possession of kindness.

Thus, what is characteristic of the virtuous agent is that she is able to intuitively judge what is required of her given the circumstances. What is required of her depends on the morally salient features of the case – i.e. the details of a situation that calls for attention. Her being able to respond accordingly is an exercise of her possession of knowledge. And this is identified with her reliable sensitivities that enable her to discern what ought to be done.

Dancy's Particularism

Jonathan Dancy builds on McDowell's position, developing it into the position that has come to be known as "ethical particularism" (see Bakhurst 2000). In his book, *Moral Reasons*, Dancy (1993) explains and defends his particularism against the position he calls "generalism".

Generalism is the theory that there are moral principles that apply across all cases. The generalist

⁹ Though she might give reasons that support her decision to act as she did. These reasons will not appeal to principles, but simply cite features of the situation that warranted responding kindly (e.g. he was suffering, she was in need of comfort, etc.). Thanks to David Bakhurst for pointing this out to me.

holds that such principles are grounded in the fact that certain properties always have the same moral relevance in whatever situation they appear in. So under the generalist stance, the fact that an action of the kind stealing is stealing, always involves a wrong-making characteristic and this underlies the moral principle that “stealing is wrong”.

In contrast to generalism, Dancy argues that considerations that constitute a reason for action in one case may not function in the same way elsewhere. He writes, “That an action is fun is a reason in favour of doing it – normally. But sometimes it is a reason against” (Dancy 1993, 61). He cites a quote by a British Labour politician Roy Hattersley delivered on April 21st 1990 in the Guardian:

I have long supported whoever it was who said that the real objection to foxhunting is the pleasure that the hunters get out of it ... If killing foxes is necessary for the safety and survival of other species, I – and several million others – will vote for it to continue. But the slaughter ought not to be fun. (Dancy 1993, 61)

In this case, the fact that foxhunting is fun does not function the same way fun usually does as a reason for action. In fact, that one finds it fun to foxhunt is seen as a reason *against* foxhunting. In some cases, it seems permissible to treat an action’s being fun as a reason to do it. However, in other cases, something being fun figures as a reason against. In short, Dancy holds that particularism is the stronger theory in contrast to generalism because a reason *here* is unable to explain whether or not it will be a reason *elsewhere*.

The role Dancy ascribes to moral principles are simply set as reminders for the importance a property *can* have in suitable circumstances (Dancy 1993, 67). For instance, the principle ‘lying is morally wrong’ reminds us of the moral relevance that lying can have in certain familiar circumstances, but that’s the *only* role Dancy thinks the principle should play. Principles cannot *determine* right action.

A moral agent cannot therefore rely on principles to decide for her what to do: she is the one who must judge. Her judgement must assess the weight of various reasons calling for action. If she is to decide whether or not it is morally permissible to push a fat man over the bridge to stop a trolley on course to kill five people, she must assess the various weight of reasons that call for her to act in one way rather than the other. For example, a reason not to push the fat man may be that she would be using him as a means to an end, whereas a reason to do so may be the prospect of saving five people. These reasons must be assessed given their relevant weight – i.e. how salient they are given the specific character of her circumstances, her character and moral outlook.

Hence, what is characteristic of the moral agent is that her judgement must be sensitive to the particular character of the circumstances at hand. These circumstances differ from one context to the next, and the agent's actions respond accordingly to the salient features of the case at hand. She responds accordingly by weighing and assessing the reasons she has for producing an action or inaction. In other words, she judges intuitively on a case-by-case basis.

Commonalities between Intuitionism, Virtue, and Particularism

There are four characteristics relevant to intuition as discussed by the philosophers in this chapter. The first is that intuition is shown to be exercised in the making of judgement. The agent's judgement includes an intuitional aspect. That is to say, when she forms her judgement, a feature of her judging is that it is done intuitively.

Intuition in this sense is different from that discussed in chapter one. This brings us to the second characteristic: intuitive judgement expresses the agent's knowledge. Her intuitive judgement is an expression of her apprehension or understanding of the matter at hand. Whether

it be her self-evident grasping, her reliable sensibilities, or her assessment of the various reasons in play and their weight, she is in a position where she apprehends or understands the situation.

But what can we say of her judgement? In all cases, her intuitive judgement appears to resist codification. There are no rules which tell her how to act or how to judge. Each scenario she comes across involves her being able attend to the salient features of the situation and being able to act or judge accordingly. This judging or action involves using her intuition and her deliverance cannot be codified. What her intuition calls for will differ from case to case, hence resisting codification.

Lastly, we can say that when the agent judges intuitively, she does so with an approach that takes into consideration the context in its entirety. One can say that her intuition is context-sensitive. The thought being that her intuitive judgement is one that is done with a sort of attunement to the various features of a situation. When she judges that she should not lie to her friend, she does so by taking into consideration all the relevant factors that makes her choice an appropriate one. She is said to have a context-sensitive judgement.

Intuition in Teaching

While intuition, understood as an essential feature of judgement, is prominent in moral philosophy, this is not the only domain in which it figures. There are other areas outside of philosophy that describe intuition in the way we describe it here. In particular, intuition is sometimes portrayed in a similar way in educational contexts.

Thorbjörn Johansson and Tomas Kroksmark (2004) conducted empirical studies that identify intuition in teachers as “intuition-in-action” as opposed to what they call “reflection-in-action”. The difference lies in what teachers do. Reflection-in-action is described as a type of

reflection that aids what the teacher knows, is aware of, and is liberated from (Johansson and Kroksmark 2004, 377). In contrast, intuition-in-action is more immediate or direct – i.e. when one intuitively is able to take in a situation in its entirety without any type of reflection occurring (Johansson and Kroksmark 2004, 377). Although these are just general characterizations of intuition and reflection, teachers can both be said to intuit and reflect in the course of their practice.

When the authors conducted qualitative interviews with the teachers concerning their practice, they noticed a trend: the teachers would explain their practice in terms of intuition-in-action rather than reflection-in-action (Johansson and Kroksmark 2004, 357). Here are a few statements from some of the teachers describing their practice:

Yes [...] let's see [...] Yes sometimes when you hit right, there is something and [...] and you try to explain. Then suddenly you get hit by some kind of brain-wave, right! Ah! I'll explain it like this. First you might think it comes barging in from nowhere, that you just happened to take that picture or that example. To me, just then, it feels something like where on earth did I get that idea? It came out of nowhere, yet I still believe I had it in me, either because I had done it long ago or because I had read about it somewhere or [...] because somehow have thought about this previously. And then it sits there and I find it at that very moment. I don't believe it drops down from above, you know. Some kind of flash of genius. Though at the time I have no idea where I got it from. (VSK 100)

You feel this [...] more or less like having antennae or tentacles out feeling the surrounding. Later, however, you can probably learn to be more sensitive or to open up your eyes to what happens around you, not to focus on yourself but to be extremely outgoing. (LH 146)

You can have an idea, a plan of what you have thought and so [...] when you are sitting there with the group, the conversation takes a different direction than the one you'd planned, but [...] You might jump at it right away when you see there is a possibility, that there is something they recognize, something they have done before and then you go for it. (JM 136) (Johansson and Kroksmark 2004).

There are a few things to take from these interviews:

- (1) Intuition appears to be characteristic of a teacher's practice and;
- (2) Intuition, as opposed to reflection, seems to be more prevalent in teachers' descriptions of their practice.

- (3) The teachers' intuition shares the same characteristics as those expressed in the ethical-intuitionist tradition.

To briefly comment on the third point, both the teacher and the agent judge in such a way that makes the use of intuition essential. The judgement is said to express knowledge, rather than figure as evidence for some conclusion to be drawn by other means. The basis of the judgement cannot be codified. This provides one with reason to conclude that intuitive judgement is practical rather than evidential. The reason being that the teacher or agent judges *what to do* or *how to act*. And this is not evidence for or against a theory, rather it is doing or acting in light of reasons for what there is to do or how to act.

Problems with Intuitive Judgement

So far, so good. We have been able to establish that there is another form of intuition that figures prominently in and outside of philosophy. This form of intuition is one that is constitutive of a judgement. Also, it appears to serve a practical role. But from this, one may raise two objections or worries concerning its role.

The first worry is metaphysical. In the moral case, we are told that intuition can disclose to us what the morally right course of action is. But what kind of thing *is* moral rightness? In the case of a natural property, such as mass or shape, we know exactly what is involved in determining whether something has that property, but the case of moral rightness is very different. We cannot point to the properties of rightness in an agent's action and say "there it is!". Does the notion of intuition really help illuminate this problem? Or is it rather that, operating with a metaphysically strange view of rightness as a peculiar property of "ought-to-be-doneness", we find ourselves positing "intuition" as the means by which we grasp the presence of this strange property. But this just explains the strange by the even stranger.

The second worry is epistemological. It arises from the fact that moral agents often disagree on what the right course of action is. If we cannot determine the rightness or goodness of an act except by appeal to intuition, then how are we able to verify our disputes concerning the issue? In a case where morally adept agents disagree about what to do can all that be said is simply that they have different intuitions?

Objections of this kind have long been made against intuitionism (see Warnock 1967). If intuition is supposed to enable us to discern moral properties and their significance for action, are we not positing a realm of mysterious non-natural normative properties and an equally mysterious technique for determining their presence and relevance? (Frankena 1963, 86-87). Why should we posit these non-natural normative properties if we can make sense of this phenomena in simpler and more natural terms?

McDowell and Dancy would strongly resist this interpretation, arguing that there is nothing mysterious in the idea that moral knowledge is non-codifiable and involves sensitivity to the salient features of particular cases. After all, those features are not mysterious: that she is in pain, that it would be stealing, that it would embarrass him, that it was disloyal... are all morally-relevant properties that can constitute reasons for action. We do not need special powers to discern such properties and why they matter, or so they argue (and this is why McDowell and Dancy deliberately avoid using the term “intuition”, with its connotations of mystery).

McDowell and Dancy insist that their views do not saddle us with dubious metaphysics and epistemology. For all that, however, neither of them does much to help us make sense of the distinctive kind of judgement involved in moral decision-making. We are still left appealing to the concept of intuition or something like it. In the next chapter, I attempt to provide a fuller account of the nature and role of intuition by drawing on the notion of “tacit knowledge”.

Chapter III: A Framework for Understanding Intuition

How to Understand Intuitive Judgement

How should we understand all this? At the conclusion of the last chapters, worries were raised about the metaphysical and epistemic status of intuitive judgement. In this section, I propose to resolve these worries by developing a conception of intuition as a form (or expression) of tacit knowledge. The hope is to understand intuition as having a less “mysterious” nature and a more explanatory role.

Michael Polanyi sums up tacit knowledge in a phrase: “*we can know more than we can tell*” (1967, 4, emphasis in original). He gives the example of people attempting to convey information about a criminal’s profile to police authorities. The people provide descriptive information such as the individual having a big nose, wrinkled forehead, large ears, and so on, but this description does not convey the knowledge the people have that enable them to recognize how the criminal looks. How they are able to recognize the criminal’s profile is a type of information that cannot be captured from what they strictly report. Tacit knowledge is just this – knowledge of something over and above what we are able to express in a report or telling. If our knowledge is something more than we can tell, this implies that it is not exhausted by our possession of propositional knowledge but involves a richer conception of what can be known. Hence, intuition in the tacit sense is a form of knowledge over and above the knowledge we can report. It is characterized as a state in which we know without necessarily being able to express that knowledge in propositional form.

It seems clear that the kind of intuition at work in moral judgement, and in the case of the teachers discussed in the last chapter, is a type of tacit knowledge. In the educational case, the teacher draws on tacit knowledge about how best to present material to the students so that they

should understand it. The teacher is not acting out of an appreciation of a codified pedagogical method. Teachers may be unable to explain why they chose to present the material as they did. In some cases, the knowledge they seek to convey may itself be uncodifiable so that the student grasps what is being conveyed in a way that requires more than just believing in propositions and facts. In the moral case, the agent expresses her knowledge of what is to be done through her ability to grasp, and assess accordingly, what she has reason to do. Tacit knowledge is implied without being stated – it is embodied. Intuition is a form of tacit knowledge that is embodied by the teacher or moral agent and directs itself at the case in a way that expresses knowledge that cannot be articulated merely in propositional form.

In a game of chess, there are certain rules – e.g. knights move in an L-shape, bishops move diagonally, and so on – but the game of chess requires more than just knowing the rules that can be expressed propositionally. The players are required to understand how to play the game and this is not captured by simply being aware of or following the rules. Intuition as a type of tacit knowing aims at conveying this knowledge. It's how one embodies a type of knowing or how one carries oneself in such a way as to understand the profile of a situation.

Thus, from what has been said, we can describe the characteristics of intuition as an expression of tacit knowledge. The first is that it is personal and embodied. Tacit knowledge is contextual knowledge that depends on the details of the circumstance the knower is situated in. The second characteristic is that the knowledge in question cannot be fully expressed in a report or telling: it cannot be codified. There are no general rules or principles which the knowledge arises from or adheres to.

Competing Conceptions of Tacit Knowledge

Given this characterization of tacit knowledge, how are we able to understand it? According to Neil Gascoigne and Tim Thornton, three competing principles bear on our understanding of the nature and possibility of tacit knowledge:

Principle of Codification (PC): All knowledge can be fully articulated, or codified, in context-independent terms.

Principle of Inarticulacy (PI): There can be knowledge that cannot be articulated.

Principle of Articulacy (PA): All knowledge can be articulated, either in context-independent terms or in context-dependent terms. (2013, 16)

Concerning PC: The idea is simply that all knowledge can be captured in descriptions in objective terms. Your knowing the train departs in the morning can be reduced to your standing in an appropriate relation to the fact that the train departs in the morning, full stop. This can be articulated and codified. That is to say, we are able to express the knowledge clearly in a report or telling. That we know x implies that what we know can be articulated or codified in terms independent of a subject. Though we are able to express our knowledge in context-dependent terms, all instances of knowledge are able to be captured in context-independent or objective terms. This is said to follow from the nature of knowledge itself. If tacit knowledge is a type of knowledge, then under this principle, all instances of tacit knowing are in fact able to be expressed in context-independent terms either through articulation or codification.

Concerning PI: The idea is that there is some knowledge that cannot be articulated. Applying the principle to tacit knowledge, the thought is that what is tacitly known cannot be articulated clearly in a report or telling. Here is an example.¹⁰ Imagine players of a soccer team teasing each about their performance and their abilities. In this case, teasing can be a way to strengthen bonds over a game they love and cherish. When one player teases another, they do so

¹⁰ The example of one's ability to tease as involving tacit knowledge will be developed in the next section. Thanks to David Bakhurst for bringing up this example during our regular discussions.

with the knowledge that it is done in a certain way. You tease at certain times, with certain intentions, and a certain approach. But someone who is good at such friendly teasing knows when such teasing is welcome and when such teasing threatens to “overstep the mark” and risk offending the person being teased. This knowledge, however, cannot be articulated. There is no general principle that tells you how and when to tease, and when to back off. This looks like a good example of tacit knowledge. Thus, there is some knowledge that cannot be articulated and the status of tacit knowledge conforms to this description.

Concerning PA: The thought is that if something is knowledge then it can be expressed either in propositional context-independent terms or articulated in other context-dependent ways. The reason being that if it is to be considered knowledge, it must somehow be expressible or transferable. Knowledge must be expressible via one of these means, and tacit knowledge takes the latter route. An example of a way for what is tacitly known to be articulated in context-dependent terms is to point out that *that* is a way to ride a bike. Regarding knowing how to ride a bike, one needs to be situated in the context. In addition, one needs to be able to recognize that *that* is a way to ride by employing demonstrative concepts. This example is supposed to capture the idea that tacit knowledge can be articulated.

So What’s the Status of Tacit Knowledge?

Which principle best captures the true nature of tacit knowledge? In this section, I will argue that PI correctly captures the status of tacit knowing. I will provide reasons for why PC and PA do not get things right. My main contention will be to focus more on defending PI from PA since it is the latter that Gascoigne and Thornton endorse in their book *Tacit Knowledge*. But first, let us

consider an example in which a person is said to clearly possess tacit knowledge. This is the example mentioned above of the soccer players who tease one another.

Case 1

Imagine some players of a soccer team, Johnny, Jimmy and Jimbo arrive early to the field to practice their shots. While warming up, each team member comments on the other's performance. They say things like "Literally, that shot was out of this world!", "The net is over *here*", "Going, going, and it's gone...". They communicate by teasing one another about their abilities to shoot on target. They tease not to annoy each other, but to bond over the game and strengthen their ties.

Now imagine a slightly different case:

Case 2

Johnny, Jimmy and Jimbo are members of a soccer team that arrive early on the field to practice their shots. While warming up, each team member comments on the other's performance. They say things like "Literally, that shot was out of this world!", "The net is over here", "Going, going, and it's gone...". Jerry, a new team member, arrives five minutes after. He sees that his teammates are teasing one another and decides to join in. He says things like "Woah, where was that going?", "What a bad shot!". The three other teammates do not appreciate his comments and think they are out of place. They take Jerry's comments to be annoying, rude, and targeted.

Here we have two cases: the first in which the members of the team – i.e. Johnny, Jimmy and Jimbo – are said to possess knowledge of how to tease and the second in which Jerry does not possess knowledge of how to tease. In the former case, the members of the team know when it is appropriate to comment in certain ways at certain times. In the latter case, Jerry does not know when it is appropriate to comment in certain ways at certain times. He is not attuned to the various considerations that call for teasing.

In what sense is the knowledge in question tacit? Well, knowledge of how to tease is personal. It is embodied by the subject, and such embodiment illustrates that one grasps knowledge of how to tease. The idea is that if knowledge is personal, then the person is in possession of knowledge – i.e. a state of knowing. If the person knows, then they possess

knowledge and this is just to say that he or she understands or grasps the relevant knowledge.

Also, one's knowledge of teasing is implied without being stated. When one teases, one does not act in light of rules that dictate how to tease. The knowledge is unable to be expressed clearly in a description. From here, let us examine the three principles and see what they imply concerning the categorization of the instance teasing as a form of tacit knowing.

Against PC

Let us attend to PC (all knowledge can be codified in context-independent terms) first. Defenders of this view are of the intellectualist tradition. They think that knowledge-how is reducible to knowledge-that. Knowledge how to get from Point A to Point B is expressible in terms of knowledge that *this* is a way to get from Point A to Point B. For example, my knowledge of how to get from Toronto to Niagara Falls can be expressed in context-free terms: taking the highway is a way to go from Toronto to Niagara Falls. This knowledge is clearly expressed propositionally and is independent of contextual factors.

However, while there is knowledge that is reducible to descriptions, not all knowledge is like this. In what way can we express or codify our knowledge of teasing in context-independent terms? Knowledge of teasing does not submit to any clearly articulated and non-circular rules or codes of conduct. While we may gesture at cues or hints of what teasing might involve, this is not independent of the context. One must be situated in the context in order to see what's going on. Knowing how to tease resists codification, hence making PC false. PC is too narrow of a principle to capture instances of tacit knowledge.

Against PA

By examining PC in relation to the case of teasing, we were able to notice that knowledge of how to tease resists codification. PA (all knowledge can be articulated in context-dependent or context-independent terms) does not commit itself to the view that all knowledge must be codified. It may or may not be the case that knowledge can be codified (Gascoigne and Thornton think that some knowledge can, but not all), but what really matters is whether all knowledge can be *articulated*. Well, what does this mean? The term is ambiguous and it will be my aim here to clarify the various meanings articulation can have, with an emphasis on understanding how Gascoigne and Thornton employ it.

In her review of Gascoigne and Thornton's *Tacit Knowledge*, Zhenhua Yu differentiates two meanings the term articulation can have. Articulation can refer to *linguistic* articulation or *practical* articulation (Yu 2015, 303). When one refers to the former, one embraces a narrow conception of articulation; when one refers to both the former and the latter, one embraces a broad conception of articulation. When Gascoigne and Thornton refer to articulation, they mean to employ the broad conception. It is made evident by what they say:

The equation of 'personal' and 'practical' flags the fact that such knowledge can only be articulated practically and from within [i.e. the personal/embodied aspect]. It requires not just a context, which would be sufficient for context-dependent spectator knowledge, but also a skilled agent both to perform the practical demonstration (in the role of the teacher) and also to have 'eyes to see' the import of the demonstration (as the 'learning-ready' pupil). (Gascoigne and Thornton 2013, 167)

Thus the truth of Polanyi's slogan is that one knows more than one can put into words without the aid of one's environment and one's skills, whether bodily or not. With that aid, however, what one knows can be articulated. ... Tacit knowledge is a species of the genus of knowledge without being either an instance of context-independent knowledge—that nor even context-dependent knowledge—that [i.e. irreducible to descriptions]. Its articulation—what a subject with it knows—is also practical. There is no prospect of a reduction of it in favour of either form of theoretical knowledge. (Gascoigne and Thornton 2013, 191)

Employing demonstratives within a context where the subject possesses knowledge is supposed to capture the broad conception of articulation. For example, when one states that *that* is a way to tease in a context where teasing takes place, it is supposed to capture the idea that what is being articulated is something practical done in a linguistic manner. One's pointing to the case is a demonstration of articulating the knowledge of how to tease.

But, according to Gascoigne and Thornton, tacit knowledge as practical knowledge cannot be reduced to either "context independent knowledge-that" or "context dependent knowledge-that" because what is known implies practical articulation. What PA refers to concerns articulation either in context-independent or context-dependent terms. But if tacit knowledge as practical knowledge cannot be reduced to context-dependent or independent terms, then such knowledge violates PA rendering it false.

How is it that what Gascoigne and Thornton embrace ends up actually misfiring? The first point to take notice of is that what the authors embrace does not necessarily imply what they actually state. The second point stems from the first in that the gap from what they embrace to what they state depends on a subtlety. The subtlety being that the conception of articulation employed in PA is *linguistic* articulation whereas what they actually embrace is both *linguistic* and *practical* articulation. This is supported by the way in which they discuss articulation in terms of PC. In PC, articulation refers to whether or not one is able to express what they know in terms of descriptions. It would be rather odd if the authors referred to different types of articulation in all three principles since it would make their categorizations inconsistent and of no philosophical interest.

Advocating PI

What does articulation refer to in PI (there is knowledge that cannot be articulated)? Yu notes that it could be either linguistic or practical articulation that is at issue (2015, 304). Because Gascoigne and Thornton dismiss PI, I am inclined to assume that they intend it refers to practical as well as linguistic articulation. Under this interpretation, PI is false because there is knowledge that can be articulated through action (e.g. the teasing case). But, if we take articulation in PI to refer to practical articulation, then we would be committing the fallacy of equivocation. In PC and PA, we would be referring to linguistic articulation, whereas in PI we would be referring to practical articulation. It would be inconsistent to have two conceptions of articulation at play when discussing the three principles.

Instead, articulation in PI should refer to linguistic articulation so as to not commit the fallacy. But if we amend what articulation refers to in PI, then it turns out to be true. PI would state that there is knowledge that cannot be *linguistically* articulated. In the teasing case, such knowledge cannot be conveyed clearly in a report or telling. What it is for someone to know how to tease is not something expressible or articulable in language. Hence, there is some knowledge, namely, tacit knowledge that cannot be articulated, making PI true.

But in what sense is tacit knowledge *knowledge*? If the knowledge cannot be linguistically articulated, then how is one able to transfer knowledge from one subject to another? The solution lies in the kind of knowledge it is. Tacit knowledge being practical may not be transferred neatly via language. While this is true, this does not mean it cannot be transferred or expressed, full stop. Instead, tacit knowledge is expressed or transferred via practical means. The agent must be situated in the context and shown how to behave so that, if all goes well, she grasps what to do or how to act in light of the reasons for action.

So to sum up, the way we characterized intuition as a form of tacit knowledge connects to the status of tacit knowledge as conforming to PI – there is knowledge that cannot be linguistically articulated. We used the teasing case as an instance of tacit knowledge and examined the three principles in relation to how well they captured its characteristics. PC is too narrow a conception to capture the characteristics of knowing how to tease because it relies on being able to articulate knowledge in context-independent terms. PA turns out to be false under a reading that refers to articulation as linguistic. In turn, we learned that PI turns out to be true under the same reading of articulation as linguistic. Hence, while PC and PA are too narrow to capture the notion of tacit knowledge, PI turns out to be apt.

Applying the Conception of Intuition as Tacit Knowledge

We now have a handle on what it means for intuition to be an expression of tacit knowledge. How does this conception of intuition relate to the different roles intuition has in philosophical inquiry? We noted two prominent roles:

- (1) Intuition used as evidence for or against philosophical theories and;
- (2) Intuition as a constitutive feature of a judgement.

Concerning (1): If intuition is an expression of tacit knowledge, then, at first sight, it appears to be in tension with its role as evidential. If my intuition in the Gettier case that Smith does not know he'll get the job is understood as knowledge, then my intuition does not need to be used as evidence for or against any philosophical theory. By default, having knowledge puts you in a state of knowing such and such to be the case. In contrast, evidence does not require or assume you have knowledge of what is the case, but rather aims to establish what is the case. Evidence aims to lend support to the conclusion. So, what gives? If intuition is an expression of tacit knowledge, then why is it being treated as evidence for or against philosophical theories?

The solution lies in the attitude one has towards intuitions. My intuition that Smith does not know he'll get the job is not evidence that Smith does not know he'll get the job; it is an expression of my knowledge that Smith does not know he'll get the job. Whether my knowledge of Smith not knowing he'll get the job is used as evidence for or against a philosophical theory is secondary to what my intuition is an expression of, namely, tacit knowledge. If we are to use intuitions as evidence, then this comes after the fact that they are expressions of tacit knowledge.

However, it is important that our judgements are *fallible*. That is, sometimes we think we have knowledge when we don't. So when I judge that *p* in a way that seems to draw on tacit knowledge, if all goes well, then my judgement does indeed reflect knowledge. But sometimes, I may make such a judgement and be wrong in which case I either don't have the knowledge I think I have, or I don't deploy it properly (e.g. I may know how to tease someone appropriately, but make an error, misjudging the situation, or their character, or whatever). Because we are fallible it can be interesting to consider what people *think* they know by asking them to make judgements in hypothetical cases.¹¹

In addition to being used as evidence (a secondary role), intuitions need to be supplanted with other relevant data and should not be used as standalone data points. This is due to the nature of what they are supposed to be evidence for – i.e. philosophical theories. Theories are not supported simply by intuitions; there are other relevant sources for their truth. For example, empirical data, consistency, external applicability, etc. Thus, while the conception of intuition as tacit knowledge appeared to conflict with its role as evidence for or against philosophical theories, the worry is resolved by changing our attitude towards what they reveal to us. It is only

¹¹ This is interesting because some contemporary philosophers' pessimistic attitude towards intuitional reliability arises from the way in which a judgement can go wrong. Thanks to David Bakhurst for clarifying the fallibility of intuition.

when we see its evidential role as secondary that we are able to make sense of the phenomena of what it is evidence for.

Concerning (2): Where intuition is an expression of tacit knowledge, then my judging that p is knowledge that p . The reason being that intuition is a constitutive feature of one's judgement and the judgement is exercise of one's knowledge of what to do or how to act in light of reasons for action. Knowledge is exhibited in the practice. For example, when I tease, my knowledge of how to tease is exhibited in the practice of teasing. My ability is exercised in the practice and it is said that my actions are an expression of my knowledge how to tease. The idea is that when I intuitively judge, my judging is an expression of my tacit knowledge. The knowledge is situated in the context and is expressed accordingly. It is non-codifiable and irreducible to descriptions. So, intuitions as an expression of tacit knowledge accords well with its role as being a feature of a judgement because what the judgement expresses is knowledge that such and such is the case.

Conclusion

We started off this thesis by attempting to understand what intuition is, what it's doing, and its relation to philosophical inquiry. At first, we introduced intuition skepticism and the worries it raised about our intuitions being diverse and sensitive to irrelevant factors. The worries concerned whether or not we can trust our intuitions. In other words, are they reliable? This posed what Alexander calls the restrictionist challenge:

The real challenge lies not just in the fact that intuitions are not wholly reliable, but also in the fact that we know so little about them. We lack the resources needed to explain problematic intuitional sensitivity and, in return, struggle to understand its dimensions, to identify strategies for how to compensate for it, and to predict where it will appear. What is really needed, then, is a general, systematic understanding of philosophical intuitions. By coming to better understand what intuitions are, where they come from, and what factors influence them, we can better understand what role they play in philosophical practice. (2012, 71-72)

I believe we are now in a position to respond accordingly. There are two items I want to address: what the challenge has to say about the nature of intuitions; and its proposed solution to understanding them. In regards to the nature of intuitions, the challenge states that they are unreliable due the fact that they are diverse and sensitive to factors we would otherwise not want them to be. For example, the way I frame one alternative over the other will affect the way in which I make my decision.

We can go two routes here. I can say that I find it hard to believe that we would not want our intuitions to be sensitive or diverse to these factors. Of course, if someone frames something in one way that makes it more prone to being chosen over another, then our intuitions will be sensitive to such factors. But in what sense are they irrelevant? It seems to matter to the case at hand that one alternative was framed in such a way as to be more appealing than the other. Our intuitions should be sensitive to such effects, but in no way does this entail that the factors are irrelevant.

The other route is to say that of course our intuitions will be influenced by irrelevant factors, but this does not mean that we cannot rely on them. Granting that we may lack resources to explain the sensitivity,¹² we may still remedy the sensitivity by attending to the particular situation at hand in more careful detail. We need to pay more attention to the case and assess accordingly.

In regards to the proposed solution the challenge offers, namely, needing a “general, systematic understanding of philosophical intuitions”, I think this is misplaced. The reason being that intuitions are an expression of one’s tacit knowledge. The characteristics of tacit knowledge is such that it is personal/embodied and irreducible to descriptions. This implies that our intuitions express something that is contextual and non-codifiable. To suggest that we can systematize our intuitions into a general category is to mistake the very nature of our intuitions. They resist codification and the knowledge they express is personal.

If intuition is a form of tacit knowledge, then there will be knowledge incapable of expression in propositional form. Similar to how a description of what it takes to ride a bike is insufficient – or at times unnecessary – to know how to ride a bike, a description of what makes things right may be insufficient or unnecessary to know what makes thing right. Hence, the defender of intuitive judgement need not be in a position to describe what makes an action right in order to get things right¹³; all that is required is that they get the action right.

If we understand intuition as being an expression of tacit knowledge, then we do not need to posit an extravagant explanation of how we come to know things. It is not that there are these mysterious normative properties or conceptions out there in the world, inaccessible to us. Rather,

¹² Although I have argued that if we understand intuition as an expression of tacit knowledge, we are in a better position to make sense of intuitional sensitivity.

¹³ Though he or she may articulate reasons for action.

the knowledge intuition expresses just is incapable of being reduced to descriptions. Being an expression of tacit knowledge, intuition resists codification. Does this make the knowledge it expresses mysterious? No. Athletes often cannot express how they know how to make certain plays, but this does not make their knowledge of the game some sort of mystery. It is with experience that they attain their knowledge and this knowledge cannot be neatly expressed in propositional form. Likewise, one's intuition expresses tacit knowledge, and this knowledge should not pose a mystery. All that can be said of it is that it is irreducible to descriptions.

So how does intuition get things right? Well, this relies on experience. The agent's intuition is reliable due to her experience. She is said to respond accordingly to whatever reason calls for. Does this mean that she always gets things right? The answer is no. Our intuitions are fallible. While we may apprehend or understand what a situation calls for, we may also pay attention to various factors that are irrelevant. We may also weigh the right sort of reasons in a deficient or an excessive manner. In the second case, while our target is right, the focus may be too weak or too strong. It is part of what it means to intuit, reason, or see that we are able to situate ourselves in the field of variability and aim to respond accordingly.

So why is it beneficial and useful to understand intuition as an expression of tacit knowledge? Well as we've highlighted it sheds light on its nature. It's not some sort of mysterious phenomenon that we posit because we cannot explain it in natural terms. Providing a reason to not tease someone because it will hurt his or her feelings is just as natural as descriptive properties such as the grass having greenness.

It also explains intuition's role in philosophical inquiry (and other similar domains) as a type of knowledge. The fact that it is knowledge means that our attitudes towards them should change. We should not treat them merely as curious facts; instead, we should take them more

seriously because they are an expression of knowledge. Therefore, we should alter our philosophical treatment of intuitions because what they express is knowledge and our attitudes shouldn't be taking them as anything less than that.

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