IN DEFENSE OF INTUITIONS: BEYOND EXPERIMENTALISM AND THE RATIONALIST RENAISSANCE

by

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Abstract

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In Defense of Intuitions: Beyond Experimentalism and the Rationalist Renaissance

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Robert Rupert

This thesis has a negative and a positive goal. The negative goal consists of showing (i) that the standard analyses of intuition are flawed, (ii) that there are a number of unwarranted assumptions that underpin the experimentalist approach to intuitions, (iii) that the experimentalist methodology rests on seriously unstable ground, and (iv) that the standard rationalist response to the experimentalist's challenge is inadequate. The positive goal is to demonstrate that it is nevertheless possible to give a sound metaphysical account of intuition reliability. I say why we must think there are reliable intuitions, then I spell out in detail what the structure of the correct account must look like.

To Mom, Dad, and Matt

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Special thanks go to Andrew Chapman and Bob Hanna for all the support they have given me over the last several years.

[1] "Reflections on Reflective Equilibrium" (1998)

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Philosophical intuition, therefore, is epistemologically useless, since it can be calibrated only when it is not needed. Once we are in a position to identify artifacts and errors in intuition, philosophy no longer has any use for it. But if we are *not* in a position to do this, philosophy should not have any faith in it.

- Robert Cummins ("Reflections on Reflective Equilibrium", p. 5)

Nothing here can escape us, because what reason brings forth entirely out of itself cannot be hidden, but is brought to light by reason itself as soon as reason's common principle has been discovered… *Tecum habita, et noris quam sit tibi curta supellex.* – Persius.

- Immanuel Kant (A Preface AXX, p. 104)

In recent years philosophers have become increasingly concerned with the question whether philosophical intuitions are reliable sources of evidence. So-called "experimental philosophers" have begun to make an impact on the way mainstream philosophers think about the role of intuitions in philosophy. They argue that it is possible for good empirical work to reveal the truth about the nature and reliability of the intuitions that philosophy has relied on so heavily.[2] For example, the positive experimentalist program has it that intuitions may be useful and epistemically justified as long as they can be properly calibrated by empirical science. The negative program has it that intuitions are generally unreliable, and that empirical science will show us how and why. There has also been staunch criticism of the empirical method, and even staunch support for a philosophical methodology which prizes the use of purportedly robust and reliable philosophical intuitions. The former approach is broadly empiricist in nature, and the latter approach is broadly rationalistic. My project is to demonstrate that neither of these approaches is entirely satisfactory. First, I hope to show that there is a categorical difference between the kind of intuitions experimental philosophers and intuition skeptics take seriously

[2] If philosophy in fact relies on the use of intuitions at all, which is contested in Cappelen (2012). Here I will assume that philosophy does rely on the use of intuitions.

and the kind of intuitions that we *ought* to take seriously.[3] Then I hope to show that this overlooked account of intuition can defeat some of the most worrisome problems that have been presented by intuition skeptics.

In particular, I would like to examine what I take to be one of the most serious worries about the reliability of intuitions: the Calibration Dilemma, developed by Robert Cummins.[4] The Calibration Dilemma has almost never been properly appreciated by philosophers who do serious work on intuitions. Here I will suggest that there are at least two possible approaches to the Calibration Dilemma: one which, if it is viable, overrides it, and one which undercuts it. The first attempt at a solution assumes that the kind of intuition Cummins is concerned with *is* actually worrisome and unreliable. Then this proposed solution will attempt to yield the result that, although these intellectual seemings very well may be unreliable, it is in principle possible to calibrate them and still put them to some kind of philosophical use, even if that use is extremely limited, and ultimately unsatisfactory. The second solution, which is the one I will ultimately endorse, suggests that the Calibration Dilemma does not actually apply to the class of intuitions that *are* reliable and useful.

I will begin by distinguishing three kinds of intuition. First, there are the intuitions that worry experimental philosophers (and which, in turn, are typically being revived by contemporary rationalists) – namely, "intellectual seemings," which are spontaneous or immediate judgments that are given under different circumstances, or unreflective opinions or judgments. These will simply be referred to as "intellectual seemings or spontaneous or unreflective judgments." Michael Huemer and George Bealer give what I take to be the definitive account of intellectual seemings. Their account is as follows. Something counts as an

[3] Which are also the intuitions taken seriously in classical philosophy, from Descartes to Kant to Russell.
[4] Cummins 1998

"intellectual seeming" just in case it is a non-inferential (i.e. immediate)[5] *appearance* which expresses some proposition. It just *seems* to me to be the case that something cannot be both red and green all over. I just *do* think that something cannot be both red and green all over. This sort of belief, Experimental Philosophers think, does not have the sort of "modal tie to the truth"[6] that is required for it to be deemed reliable.[7] Thus, the reliability of philosophical intuitions is questionable. There are a number of reasons why we might think this. For one, the way these intellectual seemings come about can be affected by a number of factors. Among them are:

(1) Socialization – i.e., the community of which I am a part tends to think this way
(2) Evolution – i.e., it was evolutionarily beneficial to believe this, but it is not *true*
(3) Psychological biases – i.e., some bad processes of reasoning are instances of bias types

The factors that might affect the way my unconscious brain processes work are often totally irrelevant to the truth. For instance, it is not directly relevant to the truth that the people I grew up with have a strong belief in x.[8] Even if a number of people have frightened me into believing that-x, it does not follow that my belief that-x is true. This is obvious enough, and here we can see the basic worry that Experimental Philosophers have about spontaneous or unreflective judgments. It may very well *seem* to me that x is true, but I have no good reason to trust the seeming itself.

Second, there are also philosophers, including experimentalists, who don't think of

[5] Non-inferential here does not mean that the seeming cannot play any inferential role in reasoning, but that it cannot be represented as the conclusion of a chain of reasoning.
[6] Bealer 1999
[7] By "modal tie to the truth" I mean a necessary link or connection between my intuitive judgment and the truth. A proper modal tie to the truth would be one that necessarily reliably gets me from a judgment to the truth
[8] For example, it is strongly possible that a vast majority of the people in some community believe superstitions that are simply not true. If so, the connection between my belief in the superstition and the community believing the superstition is not one that has anything to do with whether the superstition is actually true.

intuitions specifically as seemings but do think of them as "shot-from-the-hip," that is, as spontaneous judgments or unreflective non-inferential judgments.[9] There is a difference in kind between intellectual seemings and other sorts of intuitions. Some philosophers speak of intuitions as if they are nothing but "knee-jerk" reactions to stimuli. It is easy to caricature intellectual seemings as "knee-jerk" intuitions, e.g, by playing up the fact that intellectual seemings are immediate and unreflective, but I think there is an essential difference. Knee-jerk reactions are not only unreflective and unconsidered, but they are also neither *intellectual* nor *seemings*. Sometimes, when I am presented with a philosophical scenario, I respond with some claim that has no significant phenomenological evidential character. What this means is that it has no phenomenological *rational pull* on my choosing the claim that I choose. This can be contrasted with intellectual seemings, which do have significant phenomenological evidential characters – that is, they do in fact rationally pull me in one direction or another.

Third, while most philosophers seem to agree that the above account of intuition outlines what we really mean when we use the term, I will argue that there is another kind of intuition which does more work for us. Following Robert Hanna[10] and others in the literature, I will refer to these as *Rational Intuitions*. Rational Intuitions (RIs) are different from intellectual seemings in a few ways. First, RIs provide a necessary epistemic link between a priori cognition and the world. That is, RIs do not merely provide evidence in favor of some claim. Rather, they can (if they are *authoritative* – more on this later) necessarily show that the claim is true. Moreover, these RIs are a sort of mental *act* rather than a mental *occurrence*, as the traditional notion of an intellectual seeming might offer, in the sense that when I have a rational intuition I am suitably reflectively applying the appropriate concept or representation rather than merely unreflectively

[9] See: Williamson, *The Philosophy of Philosophy* 2007

[10] "Objectivity Regained: The Benacerraf Dilemmas and Intuitions in Logic, Mathematics, and Philosophy," Summer 2012 unpublished MS.

being affected by one.[11] This has two important implications for my project: (1) RIs can provide a strong tie to the truth; (2) RIs are not merely evidential, but can also necessarily lead us to the truth (i.e., there is a fundamental difference between a rational intuition's being evidence for some claim and a rational intuition's directly pointing out what is true, and I will explain this in more detail in §2).

My basic line of argument will be as follows. Experimentalists who are skeptical of the reliability of intuitions are relying on a notion of intuition that is both historically idiosyncratic and generally not very useful. But, rather than stopping short with this reply, I will actually show that there is a useful notion of intuition that does not come loaded with the standard worries related to any of the classical empiricist or rationalist approaches. So, I will argue, it is possible to save the reliability of at least some philosophical intuitions by accepting my account. Furthermore, this essay is not intended to give a definitive answer to those philosophers who are willing to bite the ultimate skeptical bullet – that is, I am not trying to make a case against global skepticism about intuitions. Rather, I will argue that since almost no philosopher is content with accepting global skepticism about intuitions, there are a number of important philosophical theses that follow, and that there are also clearly better and worse metaphysical accounts of intuition reliability, *and* that it is possible to offer up such an account. In the end, I will aim to show simply what such an account would require, metaphysically speaking.

In order to make this argument work, I will of course have to demonstrate that the standard accounts of intuition are seriously flawed. To accomplish this, I will argue that it is generally unclear what we mean when we talk about intuitions – especially "intellectual seemings" and spontaneous judgments – since there are a number of ways to cash out the term (see §4). More importantly, I will demonstrate that there are a number of unwarranted

[11] i.e., I am *taking* something to be true rather than merely being struck by something "out of nowhere"

assumptions at work behind the experimentalist methodology, and that the experimentalist methodology does not rest on a sound theoretical footing. If this goes through, then it will show that, ironically, the experimentalist methodology *itself* will be incapable of providing reliable data about our intuitions. Finally, I will show that the standard rationalist response to intuition skepticism is also inadequate.

My positive thesis is that there is, despite the worries that surround the experimentalist methodology and the standard rationalist rebuttal (the so-called Standard Justificatory Procedure), a sound metaphysical account of how at least some of our rational intuitions are reliable. After I spell out the worries in detail, I will present some arguments motivating the thought that there must be some reliable rational intuitions, and then I will spell out in detail what the structure of a good metaphysical account must look like.

I will now briefly define some of the key terms of this essay. Then, I will explicate the Calibration Dilemma and attempt to show that it is not a serious worry, as long as the Experimentalist is wrong about the nature of philosophical intuitions.

CHAPTER TWO:

Defining Terms

Here I will briefly sketch a list of terms that I will be using in this essay, along with their definitions, for the sake of clarity.

(1) ***Authoritative*** – the authoritativeness of an intuition consists in its having two properties: (1) Being a rational intuition, and (2) having systematic modal reliability, which metaphysically necessarily entails veridicality. It is of course still *logically* possible that my rational intuitions can go wrong, which preserves fallibilism. Bealer[12] usefully distinguishes between contingent reliabilism and modal reliabilism, which is a distinction I will exploit in this essay. Modal reliability ensures that there is a metaphysically but not logically necessary connection between the intuition and the fact in the world.

(2) ***Rational Intuition*** – A rational intuition is distinct from an intellectual seeming or spontaneous judgment, which covers the standard analyses of intuitions in the relevant literature. Unlike intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments, rational intuitions are sufficiently reflected upon, rather than mere seemings or judgments, which "hit one over the head."

(3) ***Reliability vs. Veridicality*** – It is extremely important to keep in mind the distinction between reliability and veridicality. An intuition can be veridical (i.e., it can successfully get the world right) without also being reliable (i.e., without systematically getting the world right). Likewise, an intuition can be reliable without being veridical, as a logical

[12] Bealer 1999

necessity. Thus, when I claim that, on the whole, we must have reliable philosophical intuitions, I am not claiming that they are infallible and always veridical. I am only claiming that we have intuitions that, in general, tend to get the world right.

(4) ***Intuition-skepticism*** – This is the view that either (1) all philosophical intuitions are generally (modally) unreliable and thus useless, or more weakly that (2) all philosophical intuitions are automatically suspect unless they have been calibrated by an external calibration source.

(5) ***Reflective/Considered*** – As I use the terms "reflection" and "consideration" in reference to rational intuitions, I do not mean simply "self-consciousness." Clearly, rational intuitions must be reflected on in the sense that we must have some degree of self-consciousness about the intuition. However, one could be a self-conscious dogmatist and still be "reflective" in some sense. So, I need to build more into this notion than that. What reflection entails, then, is some kind of self-conscious consideration, aimed at the rational intuition's *intrinsic compellingness*, which sets the intuitive judgment against other possible judgments and compares them rationally. I want to claim that reflection is an *activity*, so that rational intuitions might be said to be *active* rather than non-active or *passive*, but only in the sense that rational intuitions require this sort of reflection. Reflection also entails a mental *performance* of some kind, which I will define next.

(6) ***Performance*** – In this essay, a mental performance is the reflective (active) application of an intuitive judgment, where application is underdetermined by merely empirical or contingent factors.

(7) ***Application*** – I will also use the term "application," which is the selection of an appropriate judgment in light of some philosophical prompt/idea/scenario.

(8) ***Taking-to-be/Showing*** – I will often claim that authoritative rational intuitions are not merely evidence for some claim, but that they directly lead us to the truth, or that they "show" us the truth. I also make the claim that, rather than being unreflectively struck by an intellectual seeming, we can "take" our intuitions to be true in suitably reflective way. I have already outlined what I take reflection to be, but here I will say something very briefly about what it is for an intuition to "show" us the truth rather than merely provide evidence for a claim. *Showing* truth happens on the basis of self-evidence or self-justification, and is the result of a rational intuition being reliably connected up with the truth. Spontaneous or unreflective judgments, on the other hand, are typically seen as providing evidence for claims, which amounts to providing reasons. I take this to be weaker than what I mean by "showing."

CHAPTER THREE:

The Calibration Dilemma

Now that I have very briefly outlined the differences between intellectual seemings and rational intuitions, I will explain the Calibration Dilemma and why it is so worrisome. The Calibration Dilemma (or the CD hereafter) is the following worry, raised by Robert Cummins[13]:

CD: on the assumption that philosophical intuitions must be "calibrated," i.e., tested for reliability, either (i) philosophical intuitions cannot be calibrated, in which case they are epistemically empty, or (ii) they can be calibrated, in which case they are epistemically unnecessary. Hence in either case, they are "epistemologically useless."

Philosophical intuitions are useful only insofar as they can lead us to a priori truth.[14] Cummins gives some compelling reasons for believing that we must calibrate our philosophical intuitions in order to judge their reliability. If I am performing a properly rigorous scientific experiment, I cannot know that the data collected is reliable data unless the instruments I use are properly calibrated. That is, I must first check the reliability of the instrument before collecting the data.[15] Similarly, it would be unwise to use my best philosophical instruments (e.g., my intuitions) for forming beliefs about the world if I have not first confirmed that those instruments are indeed reliable. Thus, it

[13] Cummins 1998

[14] I will assume that necessity is built into the a priori, and will not offer an argument against, for example, Kripke's contingent a priori.

[15] In the literature on justification, the prospect of a self-calibrating faculty is referred to as "bootstrapping" and "easy knowledge," and many take it to be a problem for process-reliabilism. See: Vogel 2000, and Cohen 2002.

seems, we need the most independently plausible method[16] for calibrating our philosophical intuitions. Cummins thinks that the best candidate for this is empirical science, since empirical science appears to be the most effective and reliable tool for directly gaining knowledge about the world.

However, if in order to know that our intuitions lead us to a priori philosophical truth we have to calibrate them using empirical science, we are getting the truth *from empirical science* and not from the intuitions. Whatever justification the intuitions might otherwise have seems to drain into the empirical work. The philosophical intuitions themselves are justificatorily redundant, in the sense that they are not justificatorily required on their own, and so are useless (at least in one important sense) regardless of whether we can calibrate them.

This is a shocking conclusion, because it threatens to level any area of philosophy that relies on the use of intuitions. Even *ethics*, Cummins thinks, may not be saved in the end, since it relies so heavily on intuitive cases. Thus, it appears that the CD is one of the most worrisome threats to the reliability and usefulness of philosophical intuitions, since the conclusion is that no philosophical intuitions are useful. That is why I will use the CD as the fulcrum of my discussion in this essay.

Other worrisome threats to the reliability and usefulness of philosophical intuitions, such as (i) the empirical fact of widespread disagreement across intuiting subjects or cultures, and (ii) the further empirical fact of intuitional inconsistency and nonrational variability within the cognitive lives of many individual subjects, will also be considered along the way.

Later, in §9, I will also carefully spell out what I call the Reverse Calibration Dilemma – a similar dilemma that is ironically faced by the intuition skeptic. The RCD is as follows:

[16] That is, some checkpoint that doesn't itself need to be calibrated, or which is already calibrated.

(i) Either we find that someone has the right intuitions by doing philosophy,

(ii) Or we find out that someone does not have the right intuition, and this also involves doing philosophy. Either way, experimental work is useless.

CHAPTER FOUR:

A Taxonomy of Intuitions

It will be important for my project to build a taxonomy of intuitions before proceeding with my main arguments. As I established in the introduction, in this essay I will be drawing important distinctions between the standard notion of intuition in epistemology -- the notion of an intellectual seeming or spontaneous or unreflective judgment -- and the mostly ignored but historically relevant notion of a rational intuition.

As we have seen, it is at least conceivable that there is a subset of intellectual seemings which requires the relevant mental states to *reflectively* represent the world. Huemer and Bealer already build a minimal sort of reflection into their account of intellectual seemings, but the full implications of it are not carried out. The basic idea is that intuitions are only epistemologically interesting insofar as it is possible for us to reflect upon them and then modify or augment them according to other intuitions, and so on. This is a point that most contemporary rationalists do seem to take seriously, and there appears to be a strong claim here against the standard experimentalist procedure, insofar as it seems to require that intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments are not reflective in this way.

Reflective intuitions are important because only sufficiently reflected-upon intuitions should be relevant or interesting to philosophers. If an intuition is the sort of thing that merely happens to me or "hits me over the head," then there is very little reason to suspect that it has any justificatory force. In this way, the Experimentalists are setting themselves up to win the debate. *Of course* purely causal and/or unreflective and unintended reactions are justificatorily questionable. These reactions can be influenced by all kinds of contingent factors which are completely out of our control.

Now, one might ask why reflective intuitions are more truth-conducive than passive or unreflective ones. For instance, why is it that reflective intuitions are not actually *worse* since they are more likely to allow personal biases to heavily affect our judgments? I think that an argument can easily be made that we normally think that our philosophical beliefs are rationally required of us only insofar as we have sufficiently reflectively examined the evidence, and as a consequence we are supposed to take cognitive responsibility for our reflectively-formed beliefs or judgments. Thus, it never seems acceptable for us to immediately and non-reflectively judge that the cause of someone's pulling the trigger of a gun is an intentional one. We have to decide what counts as an intention and what kinds of evidence we would expect to find when the intention is actually present. Therefore, it seems equally plausible that intuitions work this way. Philosophers who believe that these passive or unreflective intuitions are doing the real philosophical work must believe that philosophy is done by *shooting from the hip*. That is, the methodology would involve simply "shooting" unconsidered intuitions at one another until a victory is reached. It is only nominally better if intuitions are shot at each other, and then reflectively compared and contrasted with one another, then modified, then shot again, and then mutually reflectively compared and contrasted, modified, etc… until some sort of stable equilibrium is reached.[17] But this is like a debate that ends only because all the debaters have ultimately mutually agreed to say the same thing. Nothing whatsoever has been done to secure a modal tie to the truth. If this is what philosophy is, then obviously we have got to drastically alter the way we apply our intuitions (which, according to some intuition skeptics, may involve not applying any of them at all!).

However, if intuitions are allowed to be reflective and considered, and if a plausible metaphysical theory of the modal tie to the truth is also added, then it is no longer obvious that

[17] Rawlsian Reflective Equilibrium

they are unreliable or that they rest on an unstable foundation. Again, it is obvious that intuitions which are taken to be merely causal and/or unreflective will be epistemically suspect. Thus, it seems to me that the most interesting notion of intuition will build reflective intentional activity into its analysis.

In fact, then, there is a difference in *kind* between either intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments on the one hand, and rational intuitions (and rational *authoritative* intuitions) on the other.

Here, then, is my working taxonomy of the kinds of intuitions:

Passive Intuitions – either spontaneous unreflective judgments or intellectual seemings

Spontaneous Judgments – for instance, my fully unarticulated (or non-conceptual) and perhaps non-intrinsically compelling reaction to the Trolley Problem that I ought to switch the tracks.

Intellectual seemings – for instance, the unreflective but fully articulated and conceptual reaction to the Brain-In-A-Vat (BIV) thought experiment that I cannot possibly have knowledge of the external world. Intellectual seemings do have intrinsic compellingness.

Unequilibriated seemings or spontaneous judgments – for instance, my fully uncalibrated and isolated intellectual seeming or spontaneous judgment that I cannot have knowledge of the external world in the BIV case.

Equilibriated seemings or spontaneous judgments – for instance, my intellectual seeming or spontaneous judgment that I cannot have knowledge of the external world in the BIV case, calibrated by a web of my other intellectual seemings.

Rational intuitions – for instance, my self-conscious, reflective, and fully articulated and conceptual act of the will, which may or may not actually be reliably connected to the world.

Authoritative rational intuitions – for instance, my sufficiently reflective and fully articulated and conceptual act of the will, which *is* actually reliably connected to the world.

When talking about philosophical intuitions, whether they are rational intuitions or merely passive intuitions, it will be common to see the use of phrases like "it seems to me…" It should be noted that this phrase can be used in at least two different ways: (i) as a report of a phenomenal judgment – as in, "it seems to me that this cup is red"; or (ii) when prefacing a spontaneous or unreflective judgment.

What sorts of propositional declarative representations are *not* intuitions? I take it that we can all agree that the following mental acts or states are not properly considered intuitions:

Conclusions from inferences
Dogmas
Faith
Fantasies
Guesses
Hunches
Inferences
Mere assertions
Non-cognitive declarative affects and emotions
Stipulations

Suppositions
Wishes

These mental acts or states are either unreflective (dogmas, hunches, mere assertions), inferential (inferences, conclusions from inferences), subjunctive (suppositions), or they lack conceptual and intellectual character (faith, non-cognitive declarative affects or emotions), or they do not involve responsible acts of will (fantasies, wishes).

Now I will begin to unpack the two possible solutions to the Calibration Dilemma. I will show that the first proposed solution will not work, and that the second proposed solution *does* work, provided that it is given a proper metaphysical foundation.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Solution 1: How an Intuition Skeptic Might Look at the Dilemma

Here I will explain how an Experimentalist might try to argue that there is a way of overcoming the CD.[18] I will then argue that this solution will not work, since the solution still involves, *at the very least*, giving up all the most important philosophical questions.

There is one possible solution that may be thought to override the standard intuition dilemmas such as the CD. *If* it turns out that there are good experimental methods for determining the reliability or unreliability of intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments, then it is possible that we will uncover reliable intellectual seemings or spontaneous or unreflective judgments. Nearly everyone in experimental philosophy accepts this. However, the worry is that once we have determined the reliability of these seemings or spontaneous judgments, they become epistemically useless. There is, however, supposedly a way around this worry. That is, it may be possible for experimentalists to take advantage of a method overlooked by Cummins.

First, as Talbot[19] has usefully pointed out, if we are working with the correct model of unconscious processing,[20] and assuming that there is a dedicated mechanism for the production of intuitions, we can show that some categories of seemings or spontaneous judgments are more reliable than other categories of seemings or spontaneous judgments, because the cognitive mechanism behind some *kinds* of seeming or judgment tends to produce reliable responses to the world. Still, one might think, these are epistemically useless, because the empirical work is doing

[18] This is by no means a solution that I endorse. The purpose of this section is to show that there are attempts at showing how the Dilemma might be overcome, and that those solutions are not satisfactory.
[19] Talbot 2011, draft of MS
[20] Assuming this is possible. According to Hanna & Maiese (2009), the Deep Consciousness Thesis would rule out the possibility, since it entails that there are no truly unconscious mental states or processes.

all the justification in our project. However, it may be argued that this is not the case for a handful of philosophical problems. In particular, if some hypotheses have empirically verifiable effects, we can use empirical data to support those philosophical hypotheses. Nevertheless, as I will argue, this is not going to make calibrated intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments *enough* to be evidential justification for any serious philosophical conclusions.

Even though we have done the empirical work required to determine the reliability of intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments, we can only ever actually calibrate those seemings or judgments that are about the empirical world. In other words, *empirical* seemings or judgments and *philosophical* intellectual seemings or judgments are fundamentally different, because science and philosophy answer questions about the world in two fundamentally different ways. It may seem to me when I drop a bowling ball and a tennis ball at the same time from the top of a building that the bowling ball will fall at a faster rate. I can check this empirical seeming or judgment to see if it is (1) correct, and (2) produced by some reliable unconscious process, but even if it *is* reliable and reliably produced, I still get all the relevant justification deriving from these intuitions from the empirical evidence itself. This is not the case with distinctively *philosophical* intellectual seemings or judgments,[21] because we cannot calibrate philosophical seemings or judgments *directly*. One simple way to explain this is to show that there is at least one philosophical problem (with its own intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments) that cannot be solved only by collecting and interpreting empirical data. As long as we accept this, and we accept that seemings or spontaneous judgments across the board are produced by similar unconscious processes, then we should conclude that *if* we find high reliability in some empirical intuitions, we may be able to use them as evidence in favor of the reliability of philosophical intuitions that fall into the same category. If it turns out that my seemings or spontaneous

[21] As opposed to a "physical intuition," of which the bowling ball case is an example. See: Bealer 1992

judgments about causal relationships in the empirical world are generally reliable, then I should be able to use that as evidence that my philosophical intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments about the nature of causation have some reliability.

The one glaring problem with this solution is that, if it is true that there is a fundamental difference between philosophical questions and scientific questions, it seems that empirical evidence will always underdetermine philosophical knowledge. That is, philosophy is in the business of giving us mostly a priori knowledge about the world, and at least one necessary condition for a priori knowledge is that it is both necessary and underdetermined by all the merely contingent and empirical facts. This is, of course, a highly contentious claim since there are many naturalists who would argue that there is no real a priori knowledge, and that philosophy only gives us a posteriori knowledge about the way the world is. Obviously I do not have the space here to weigh in on whether there is a real distinction between the a priori and the a posteriori, but it is clear that philosophy must be different from empirical science at least in the sense that it gives us some weak kind of a priori knowledge. Moreover, even if that a priori knowledge were merely *stipulative*, it would still be the case that a set of empirical data itself would never *give us* the answer to any philosophical problem.

So, on the one hand, it may be possible to take advantage of this overlooked method. On the other hand, most philosophical questions cannot be seriously or fully addressed this way. So, in the end, one either has to give up most of philosophy (i.e., Cummins is right), or one has to re-think the role of intuition in philosophy.

Questions about free will, intentional action, ethics, and so on, are questions that simply could not be answered by appealing to any amount of empirical evidence. Clearly, some

philosophers think that this is not the case. However, if we take a look at the relevant literature, it becomes clear that the conclusions drawn about, say, free will, are drawn ultimately using a priori methods and not purely a posteriori ones. For example, Mark Balaguer[22] thinks that free will is an entirely open empirical question, in the sense that the most pressing task we have is to look at the right empirical data about causal connections in the brain in order to determine whether we have libertarian free will. But, even Balaguer first does some a priori philosophy that rules out compatibilism as a genuine possibility. Then, since Balaguer thinks the relevant question is whether libertarianism or hard determinism is true, the only thing left to do is to look for an empirical match for one of the theories.

However, this does not mean that Balaguer's search for the truth with respect to free will is a *purely* empirical or a posteriori pursuit; it only means that scientific data should be taken into consideration when judging one way or the other. But my view does not oppose this. I am only claiming that ultimately our conclusion as to whether we have free will or not is a priori and underdetermined by the merely empirical and contingent facts. I think that Balaguer is right that scientific data must also correspond to our best theory. So, it is not clear that this is a case of purely empirical a posteriori philosophy. Even if it is true that our best science has to be applied to our best philosophical theories, it does not follow that the question of free will is a scientific question, or that all we have to do is appeal to the scientific data to answer the philosophical question of free will. I take it that this also applies to every other philosophical question, since philosophical questions generally seem to be about necessary features of the world.

So, it seems as though empirical evidence always underdetermines philosophical knowledge. Thus, we either give up the pursuit of philosophy, or else give up the experimentalists' analysis of philosophical intuitions. Luckily, there is an analysis of

[22] Balaguer 2010

philosophical intuition that experimentalists completely overlook, and this will explain why I think the second horn of the dilemma must be endorsed by the experimentalist. The Undercutting Solution below will give us convincing reasons to reject experimentalism and to re-examine the standard analysis of intuition. It will also begin to sketch the framework for a metaphysical account of reliable intuitions.

Solution 2: The Undercutting Solution

The second and most important solution to these dilemmas is what I will call the Undercutting Solution (the US). The US says that philosophers in these debates have overlooked an important alternative account of intuition. If my account of rational intuition is correct, then worries like the Calibration Dilemma are not even applicable any longer. That is, the possibility of genuinely authoritative RIs leads to the possibility that we may not need to use empirical data as an independent check-point against our intuitions. Rather, we may actually have access to self-calibrating (or self-justifying, self-evident) intuitions. There is an entire class of intuition that experimentalists have completely overlooked, simply because they operate under the assumptions that (i) some version of empiricism is true, and (ii) that scientific naturalism is true. However, if we do not operate under these assumptions, and instead adopt a different account of intentionality, the standard worries about calibration and disagreement would not even apply. Here is what I mean by this. An account of intentionality tells us how the mind is connected to the external world. If an empiricist and/or scientific naturalist account of this mind-world connection is assumed, then intuitions will be restricted to what experimentalists are primarily concerned with. But, there are many ways of talking about what an intuition is, and this simply requires that one give an interestingly different account of the mind-world connection.

I will sketch a rough outline of an account of intentionality that is importantly different from the standard empiricist account, the standard scientific naturalist account, and the standard rationalist account, and then show how self-calibration could work. It is then up to the experimentalist or intuition skeptic to argue either that these cases do not work, or that there really is no *assumption* about intentionality at all.

Roughly, the US is a solution which says that the only way for rational intuitions to be systematically reliable is if the metaphysical account of reliability shows that there is an intrinsic connection between the way the mind is and the way the world is – that is, the metaphysical account must show that the reliability of rational intuitions is *guaranteed* by some principle joining the intrinsic facts about the mind with the facts about the world. As my arguments in this chapter unfold, it will become clear that empiricism, experimental philosophy, and contemporary rationalism all fail to provide adequate accounts of the reliability of rational intuitions. The US picks up the slack by suggesting that the failure is the result of an inadequate metaphysics. The metaphysics of these accounts supposes either that (i) intuitions are intellectual seemings or spontaneous or unreflective judgments, or (ii) that even if there are sufficiently reflective rational intuitions, the best account of their reliability is the fact that there is a clear acquaintance relationship between our intuitions and universals, and that no further explanatory work is required. If all of these explanations fail, then the remaining option is that there is somehow a necessary intrinsic connection (i.e., a guaranteed connection) between certain mental states (i.e., rational intuitions) and facts about the world, and that this connection would have to be spelled out more explicitly. As we will see soon, this can be accounted for in several different ways, and many of the relevant accounts are given in classical modern philosophy.

To motivate this account of intuitions as *rational* intuitions, I will give three arguments. First, I will present a worry about the very plausibility of an experimental method for testing intuitions. If I am right, then it will follow that either the current experimental methodology has to change radically, or that the experimentalist must re-think the nature and role of intuitions completely.

Second, I will argue that intuitions, if they are to be philosophically useful at all, must be useful *on their own* and not useful in virtue of being calibrated by an external calibration source. I will argue that one way of thinking about the role of calibration in a philosophical method that takes intuitions seriously is to use the phenomenal characters of intuitions as a guide to their reliability. If this is all true, then there is yet another reason to think that we can (and should!) alter the standard account of philosophical intuitions.

The third argument claims that experimental philosophy proceeds on a number of unwarranted assumptions – for example, the assumption that empiricism is true and that scientific naturalism is true. But these are *merely* assumptions. If we start from the assumption that rationalism is true, and that some or another version of anti-naturalism is true, we may get a radically different understanding of what a philosophical intuition is, and we would certainly be able to infer different conclusions about the role of intuitions in philosophy.

To begin arguing in favor of this shift from intellectual seemings to rational intuitions, I will consider the experimental method employed by those doing work in experimental philosophy, and I will argue that it presents to us several problems about the standard account of philosophical intuitions.

CHAPTER SIX:

Intuition Modeling and the Failure of Experimental Philosophy

One of the basic assumptions made by those who purport to study philosophical intuitions empirically is that there is some interesting way of modeling the production of an intuition. Even if these philosophers are not explicitly using such a model in their work, it must be *possible* to provide a model. My aim in this section is to show that the sort of model that can be provided by experimental philosophers is highly problematic for the kind of experimentation that is required to draw their conclusions. I will conclude that either some new methodology must be proposed or that experimental philosophers must accept my own account of philosophical intuition. Before proceeding, I will briefly explain what experimental philosophy is up to. Then, I will explain why it is important for experimentalists to provide a model for intuition production.

Experimental philosophy (X-Phi hereafter) can be split up into two distinct programs: (1) the positive program, and (2) the negative program. The positive program is aimed at making philosophical progress with respect to our intuitions by investigating them empirically. The basic idea is that philosophers often make claims about our intuitions that need empirical support. For instance, if a philosopher claims that the burden of proof lies on the person who rejects theory X when theory X is supported by widespread intuitions, the claim that these intuitions are widespread needs empirical support. One way to provide this empirical support is to conduct surveys designed to measure folk or expert intuitions on the matter. If the data show that theory X is widely intuitively plausible, then a burden of proof argument can go through. This is, of course, only one way in which the positive program of X-Phi works.

The negative X-Phi program is aimed at undermining the philosophical use of intuitions. The basic idea is that philosophers often appeal to philosophical intuitions in order to justify their

claims, but that these intuitions are highly contentious. That is, these intuitions are either widely disagreed upon, produced by cultural factors that are not relevant to the truth of the intuition, or they are the result of some other biases or irrelevant factors. According to the negative program, many of our intuitions are produced by irrelevant factors in the sense that we would expect to have some intuitions that are false for simple cultural reasons. Sometimes we learn false things that become intuitive, and sometimes we have intuitions that are the result of some evolutionary process which is not aimed at the truth, but at spreading genes[23]. If this is true, then our use of philosophical intuitions is often unjustified.

Given this brief explanation of X-Phi, we are now in a position to see how modeling is important. In order to carry out the relevant experiments or quasi-experiments, experimentalists need to be able to say what precisely an intuition is. In order to do this, it seems like some sort of causal cognitive model is required. This is true of cognitive science generally. In order to make predictions, the predictions have to be made in relation to some causal model.

I take all of this to be obviously true. The next step is to attempt to motivate some account of intuition modeling. I will begin by explicating and discarding one account of an intuition model, and then I will consider the possibility that a more plausible account could work.

The Modular Account

One way to model intuitions is to describe a causal system that is modular. The idea here is that there is some dedicated cognitive mechanism for the production of intuitions. This is an idea that seems to not be explicitly represented in the X-Phi literature, but it is one way to model intuition production, and it is an especially interesting move for those who think some brand of the

[23] See a discussion of this in Cummins 1998

massive modularity thesis is true. Here, briefly, is one possible way to justify a modular account of intuition production.

The intuitions that are interesting to X-Phi are immediate, unreflective responses – that is, either intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments.[24] An idealized process for producing intuitions would be one that could be expected to produce the same intuitions in the same contexts and under the same circumstances. A good candidate for this sort of process – that is, one that would easily play the appropriate role – is a cognitive module. A cognitive module would, it seems, reliably produce intuitions given the right inputs. Taking into consideration the standard example of what sort of intuitions we are supposed to be dealing with (according to X-Phi), let us think about the case of a philosophical thought experiment. The thought experiment presented to the subject is supposed to trigger a philosophical intuition which is both immediate and unreflective. Given the same circumstances, at a different time the same thought experiment (the relevant input) should trigger the same intuition (the relevant output). So, a cognitive module is at least a plausible candidate for a good model of intuition production.

There are at least three prima facie problems with a modular account, though. For one, massive modularity[25] is not widely accepted in cognitive science. Therefore, most experimentalists will reject a modular model for the same reasons they would reject any modular account of cognition.

Secondly, and more importantly, there is no good reason to suppose that we would possess such a module. We need a good way of modeling the production of intuitions, but it seems as though we would need some independent reasons for thinking that the model must be a modular one, and there are no good independent reasons for thinking this is true. There is no

[24] Talbot 2009; Knobe 2008 (in discussion of what kind of experiment is appropriate)
[25] Akin to Fodor's thesis in *The Modularity of Mind*, 1983

good reason, for instance, for us to suppose that evolution would provide us with an intuition module. Intuitions themselves may be evolutionarily useful for many reasons, but unless the mind is *massively* modular and unless there is no other possible model of intuition production, we have no reason to suppose that it is a modular model. As I will propose below, I think that the intellectual seemings or spontaneous or unreflective judgments that experimental philosophers are concerned with can be modeled in a much more plausible way.

Third, and most importantly, a modular account of intuition simply presupposes that intuitions come immediately fully formed. In other words, there is an assumption here that intuitions are not able to be revised or reconsidered in any serious way, and that the intuitions we should care about studying experimentally are the ones that some process in our brains generates unconsciously and immediately. This seems to just set up the game in favor of the experimentalist, though, and it is not a theory of intuition that *itself* comes from serious empirical work in cognitive science.

A More Plausible Model

A sufficiently general model of reasoning using intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments can be given instead of a modular account. By this I mean that a roughly Bayesian account of intuitions can be outlined by sketching out the causal process by which one comes to an intuition. A Bayesian account of cognition is essentially a way of modeling statistical inferences such that there is a high probability that a certain input will trigger a certain output[26]. I will assume here that this can be done by simply inferring the best causal explanations from our best psychological data. For example, it may seem to be the case that the Trolley Problem, framed in

[26] Griffiths, Kemp, Tenenbaum (2008)

a particular way, tends to produce some specific seeming or spontaneous judgment. If so, our best model is one that causally links this formulation of the Trolley Problem with the specific output.

Some may be worried about whether this is actually a scientific model[27]. I have not said much at this point about what a scientific model is supposed to be. However, I would be proving too much if I were to attempt to show that experimentalists cannot provide a proper scientific model at all. I will concede to the experimentalist that it is actually possible to provide such a model, and then go on to show that intuition modeling is doomed. The next step is to argue that, despite the possibility of a genuine model of intuition production, it is highly implausible that the model captures what we really want to capture as philosophers.

Before moving on, I should say something briefly about what this model *does* purport to capture about our intuitions. This roughly Bayesian account of intuition production is supposed to (1) give us an idea about the causal structure of intuition production, and (2) it is supposed to provide a basis for actually carrying out intuition experiments – that is, one virtue of a good scientific model is that it legitimates the thing being modeled. It is important that experimentalists have a decent understanding of the basic mechanisms underpinning intuitions in order to claim that any of their conclusions are *about* intuitions.

Worries about Bayesian Models and Experimental Requirements

Right away, there seems to be at least one sort of worry about this model that needs to be addressed. This is the sort of model that proceeds from particular instances to general conclusions. As such, there is no guarantee that giving a strong Bayesian account of a collection

[27] See, for example, discussions in Godfrey-Smith (2006) about direct vs. indirect representation

of our particular intuitions will give us any idea about how intuitions are produced in a *general* sense. Certainly, once a number of intuitions have been modeled in this way, a general picture may emerge. However, the general picture may not be one that gives us any idea about what to expect when given novel input. This may be a problem if experimentalists think they need to use such a model in order to calibrate intuitions – that is, if the model is somehow related to the ultimate justification of our intuitions. I will not address this further in this section, but it is worth pointing out that there are some issues to work out with respect to this general sort of model[28].

As I have pointed out, a modular account of intuitions is not required for the sorts of explanation that experimentalists want to give. However, if experimentalists do give a roughly Bayesian account of intuition production, a problem still lurks. Here is what I take that problem to be.

It seems to be a requirement that intuition experiments (or quasi-experiments/surveys/questionnaires) assume that intuitions are in fact produced in the way described by the model. If it were not the case that intuitions were produced in exactly this way, then experimental data would not be clearly *about* anything interesting. The intuitions actually modeled are the interesting objects that experimentalists want to study. However, the most plausible sort of model that an experimentalist would use seems to give us intuitions that are highly unstable, unpredictable, and therefore not very interesting to philosophy.

All of us who have instructed undergraduate philosophy students know that it can be quite easy to manipulate their intuitions. For instance, present to them the famous Trolley Problem, and they will most likely have consequentialist intuitions. However, present next the Transplant thought experiment and they will most likely display deontological intuitions. This

[28] As opposed, of course, to a dedicated cognitive mechanism, which would presumably be more effective in addressing these concerns

presents an interesting problem for the experimentalist. Why would philosophers be interested in studying intuitions that are so unstable? Systematically unstable intuitions are not interesting because they are obviously unreliable. But the aim of intuition-skeptical empiricists is not to prove that obviously unreliable intuitions are unreliable. The aim is to show that the intuitions we take very seriously are unreliable. There is a good reason for suspecting that philosophers do not in fact take *these* intuitions very seriously. If all philosophy amounted to "shooting from the hip" with our spontaneous judgments or intellectual seemings, we would certainly have good reasons for suspecting that traditional philosophical methods are doomed.

Here is how the experimentalist might try to mend the problem. She might begin by saying that this is a good reason for suspecting that we should not be concerned with folk intuitions, but rather the intuitions of experts. That is, the reason why undergraduates in philosophy have such unstable intuitions is that they have not given the issues much thought, and they probably do not have all the right skills. Experts, however, *do* have the skills and *have* taken the time to reflect on these very basic philosophical issues. I have two responses to this – I will outline the very brief response here, and then give the longer and more important response in the "conclusion" portion of this section.

As to the brief response, I think there is a reason for thinking that this appeal to expertise is too optimistic. As some experimentalists have pointed out[29], good psychological data point to the idea that experts are not actually any better than novices at handling thought experiments. Experts are still subject to framing and order effects, which are the main problems with using novices as experimental subjects. If this is right, then I think that it is clear that the problem is not just that we are testing the wrong subjects, but that we are testing the wrong sort of intuition.

[29] Weinberg, Gonnerman, Buckner, Alexander (2010)

If experts have just as much trouble as novices with framing and order effects, then it seems as though the relevant intuitions are just not reliable.

Conclusions

Now I will outline the conclusions that follow from what I have written in this section. I first want to give a more elaborate response to the experimentalist who calls for the testing of expert intuitions.

Apart from the worry that expert philosophers are just as bad with thought experiments as novices, there is an even more serious worry for the Experimentalist who recommends testing experts. If the response to the claim that intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments are unstable is simply that we should not focus on novice/folk intuitions, then it would make *at least* as much sense to recommend that philosophers focus on the *history* of philosophical intuitions as it would to recommend that philosophers use *one another* as test subjects. Here is what I mean by this. If experts have the *right* sort of philosophical intuitions, then we can proceed either by using experts as test subjects of proper experiments, or by actually doing philosophy with one another. The latter seems more appropriate for at least some purposes. For instance, if we are concerned with how widespread certain intuitions are among experts, our ordinary philosophical practices are at least as good as surveys. In fact, conducting surveys that would check the distribution of philosophical intuitions would, in effect, be the same as doing philosophy. Imagine just asking someone whether they have a robust and self-evident rational intuition that something cannot be both red and green all over. Perhaps they respond with "yes, of course," or they will respond with "no," in which case perhaps the surveyor would ask a follow-up question like "why is that?," to which the subject would respond with reasons, and so-on and so forth.

This is effectively just what professional philosophers do, so performing experiments on experts is either superfluous or no different at all from ordinary philosophical methodology.

Another important point I want to make with respect to expert intuition is that it is unclear whether the model outlined in this section is still appropriate for testing experts. One could apply the model when testing experts, but I see no reason to think that the target of the model is appropriate. Remember that the model is supposed to be testing for our passive or unreflective intuitions. However, expert intuitions are not like this. Expert intuitions, while they could be *elicited* by providing certain inputs like thought experiments, are "settled" or stable in some way, precisely because the experts have spent time reflecting on and reasoning about these particular intuitions. The conclusion we should draw, I think, is that the model provided above is not appropriate for testing expert intuitions. Thus, my more wide-reaching conclusion comes in the form of a challenge to the experimentalist: she must either re-think her experimental methodology pretty radically, or she must accept a different notion of intuition all together.

This is quite a strenuous challenge, because it is difficult to see how a new model could emerge. This is not to suggest that it would be impossible, but consider what seems to make a model interesting and useful. For one, the model needs to give us some idea about how the intuition is causally brought about. But, if our intuitions are of interest only once they have been settled over some period of time and reflection, then an appropriate cognitive model will have to capture this entire process, or somehow isolate the relevant process from the irrelevant processes. The reason that the model outlined above captures the relevant X-Phi-based notion of intuition is that intuitions in their sense are supposed to be passive or unreflective – that is, intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments. Therefore, the model simply has to be a statistical

formalization of the causal relationships between relevant inputs and outputs. But this is unsatisfactory if expert intuitions are not being captured.

The other option is to re-think the very notion of a philosophical intuition. Rather than insisting that the relevant intuitions are passive or unreflective, it is entirely possible to focus on expert intuitions and *avoid* the experimental work. As I have pointed out, it seems plausible that if the class of expert intuitions includes the right *sort* of intuition, namely rational intuitions, then doing philosophy is a way of accommodating at least some of the concerns that X-Phi has.

Finally, the biggest worry I have is one about doing X-Phi more generally. Philosophers who are using cognitive models to think about the role of intuitions are doing something akin to philosophical *doxology* (the theory of *opinion*) rather than serious *epistemology* (the theory of *knowledge*). And here is why I think this is the case. Since the notion of intuition that is relevant to X-Phi takes intuitions to be intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments rather than rational intuitions, and since the only kind of intuition that can be reasonably tested experimentally is intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments, it follows that what X-Phi is doing is simply studying empirically how philosophical *opinions* work, rather than how rational intuitions work.

Now, consider why philosophical opinions are importantly different from rational intuitions. Recall that rational intuitions are a priori, reflective, rational performances, and that in this section of the essay I have shown that the possible objects of study for experimentalists are not rational intuitions. I think it is much more accurate to characterize the objects of empirical study as *opinions*, since they are "shot-from-the-hip" judgments (intellectual seemings or spontaneous or unreflective judgments) and not reflective or deeply considered philosophical judgments. Thus, X-Phi is in the business of discovering how our philosophical shot-from-the-

hip intellectual seemings or opinions work, how they are developed, and how they can be systematically manipulated.

I am very much open to conceding to the experimentalists that our passive or unreflective intuitions can be systematically manipulated, and are thus prone to serious error and unreliability. In fact, we should expect this to be the case, given that our shot-from-the-hip seemings or spontaneous judgments are completely determined by both contingent features of our brains together with our environments. Thus, it would not at all be surprising to find that I have some unreliable seemings or spontaneous judgments when responding to a philosophical thought experiment while, say, a strobe light is being flashed in front of my face.

It should also go without saying that there is something good and philosophically interesting about this sort of empirical work. It is philosophically valuable to understand what philosophical opinions are and to understand how or whether they can actually reliably tell us that our judgments are accurate. Thus, X-Phi is not a worthless endeavor by any means, and it is philosophically valuable in a real sense. On the other hand, this sort of empirical work would not be properly considered epistemology[30], since it is not actually studying the *reliable justification* of rational intuitions. Therefore, the project of X-Phi is an important one, but only insofar as it is telling us something about the psychology of philosophical opinions, and not insofar as it is attempting to tell us something deep about the nature of authentic philosophical knowledge.

Moreover, and as I have already briefly pointed out, it should come to us as no surprise at all that passive intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments can be manipulated. The important question is whether the manipulation of intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments is in any way *relevant* to the reliability of rational intuition. For instance, it is clear

[30] Insofar as epistemology is the modal study of knowledge, in the sense that it attempts to discover the necessary features of knowing, justification, reliability, and so on.

that under differing sets of circumstances people will favor one philosophical conclusion over another. It is easy to provide examples of this sort of behavior by appealing to the interesting psychological data about so-called "intuitive" judgments. For example, people will tend to do poorly on a standard Wason Card Selection task, but they will perform fairly well when the cards are not labeled with numbers and vowels, and when instead the task is structured as a cheater-detection task.[31] But it seems misguided to conclude from this sort of research that philosophical rational intuitions are generally unreliable or in serious question, just because certain surface-level opinions tend to be unreliable. Analogously, we would never conclude that we are generally not justified in appealing to intuitions about our own characters or past behavior, just because strange or unusual circumstances can make otherwise reasonable people believe falsely that they committed a serious crime, e.g., when manipulative interrogation methods or certain drugs are used.

The upshot of this section is that the empirical study of philosophical intuitions, whatever it might have to say about intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments, provides no good reasons whatsoever for thinking that philosophical *rational intuitions* are unreliable or seriously questionable.

[31] See: Cosmides & Tooby 1992, and Hanna *Rationality and Logic*, ch. 5

CHAPTER SEVEN:

Five Seriously Problematic Assumptions Made by Experimentalism and Intuition-Skeptical Empiricism

I think that there are at least five seriously problematic assumptions lying behind experimentalism in particular, and intuition-skeptical empiricism more generally. If any or all of these assumptions is or are highly implausible, then there are good reasons for favoring a theory which does not make these questionable assumptions. Here are the assumptions I want to challenge:

1. That there is one and only one kind of propositional intuition, or intuition-that
2. That there is one and only one way of calibrating intuitions
3. That natural science does not itself require calibration
4. That no intuitions are self-calibrating
5. That Classical Empiricism/Quinean Pragmatism and Scientific Naturalism are unquestionably true

It should be already obvious why the **first assumption** is seriously problematic. Most philosophers concerned about intuition have a very narrow conception of what an intuition is, namely, either an intellectual seeming or spontaneous judgment, sometimes together with the thought that it is produced by some dedicated unconscious cognitive mechanism. But as I argued in earlier sections of this thesis, it is at least prima facie plausible that there are several categorically different kinds of intuitions, including rational intuitions and authoritative rational intuitions. In fact, if it is true that experimentalists assume that there is one and only one kind of

propositional intuition, then they are playing a rigged game. Or in other words, X-Phi is already implicitly working under the assumption that intuitions amount to shot-from-the-hip philosophical opinions, which in turn provides a path to their intended conclusions. But if it is true that some of our intuitions are indeed rational intuitions in the sense I have outlined, then intuition skeptics are *not* going to be able to conclude that "philosophical intuitions are epistemologically useless,"[32] or even that intuitions tend to be formed by unreliable processes and need to be calibrated by an independent epistemic source, without further independent arguments.

The **second assumption** is problematic because calibration requires taking an independent standpoint for checking the reliability of some intuition, but natural science cannot be the *only* way of doing this. This is because there are no truly intuition-independent checkpoints. Since natural science is no more independent of intuition than, say, Rawlsian reflective equilibrium, there is just as much reason for deferring to reflective equilibrium as there is for deferring to natural science on its own as an authoritative domain of knowledge.

It is abundantly clear, though, that experimental philosophers do assume that empirical science plays this role. Stich has explicitly claimed[33], e.g., that while empirical science does indeed rely on some basic philosophical intuitions, experimentalists are not typically concerned with *those* intuitions. The ones that do concern us are the intuitions of specific philosophical cases, and according to experimentalists, we can evaluate those by using empirical methods.

The basic project that underlies both the positive and the negative programs of X-Phi is predicated upon the idea that data gathered by the sciences gives us a better understanding of

[32] Cummins 1998, p. 125
[33] At a public lecture at the University of Colorado-Boulder CHPS conference, 2012

what our intuitions really *are* than philosophy itself.[34] Experimentalists may not always rely on the *natural* sciences (although sometimes they do or think they should), but one basic assumption underlying the project of X-Phi is that empirical data – from surveys and self-reports to the natural sciences – can themselves overturn philosophical intuitions, or show that they are modally unreliable. In order to believe that this is true, one must think that empirical science is somehow immune to (or at least less likely to be affected by) whatever worries there might be about the reliability of philosophical rational intuitions. But, this does not take into consideration the fact that the sciences all rely upon some basic philosophical intuitions. For instance, we must take a stand on what counts as an observation, what counts as an experience, whether the basic principles of logic are true, and whether the basic axioms of mathematics are true. None of this is known independently of philosophical rational intuitions, and thus whatever conclusions we can draw about intuitions from the natural sciences will be conclusions that are also the result of philosophical rational intuitions. Therefore, there is no more reason to defer to natural science than there is for deferring to some other method that also depends on these basic philosophical rational intuitions. The idea that empirical science is an intuition-independent domain of authoritative knowledge is, ironically, only an intuition (and, it seems, not a fully authoritative rational intuition).

The **third assumption** is seriously problematic for reasons closely related to my worries about the second assumption. As we have seen, all experimentalists explicitly or implicitly hold that science is an epistemologically primitive starting point[35] – which entails that science itself is the one mode of inquiry that does not require calibration. If this weren't true, then

[34] See: "Is Incompatibilism Intuitive?" by Nahmias, Morris, Nadelhoffer, Turner 2006
[35] See: "Semantics, Cross-Cultural Style" by Machery, Mallon, Nichols, Stich 2004, which claims that ultimately we cannot make a ruling on whether our semantic intuitions are justified until science has told us whether the intuitions are widely agreed upon.

experimentalists would have to be open to the possibility that sometimes it is not natural science, but some other calibration method, which will do the most justice to our philosophical intuitions.

Now suppose that the experimentalist tried to reply to this worry by claiming that empirical science is *self*-calibrating. Then this would undermine the experimentalist's basic reason for holding the **fourth assumption.** If natural science is self-calibrating, then why can't intuitions (at least sometimes) be self-calibrating too? In fact, I do think that natural science and rational intuitions alike are importantly self-calibrating. But at the same time, the self-calibration of natural science *presupposes* the self-calibration of intuitions.

Here is what I mean by that. It is abundantly clear that there are some rational intuitions guiding our use of empirical science—e.g., rational intuitions about causation, rational intuitions about induction, rational intuitions about abduction, rational intuitions about elegance and Ockham's Razor, rational intuitions about deductive logic, rational intuitions about mathematics, and so on—and in this regard, the sciences are calibrated by rational intuitions. We can then also infer two possible conclusions from this: either

(i) we drop the thesis that methods of inquiry must be calibrated, or else

(ii) if we retain the thesis that methods of inquiry must be calibrated, then we drop **assumption two.**

Now suppose that we hold onto the thesis that methods of inquiry must be calibrated, and opt for (ii). Then at least some rational intuitions must be self-calibrating. And this, in turn, leads me to the fourth assumption.

The fourth assumption is seriously problematic in light of the worries I have already expressed. Intuitional self-calibration occurs when an intuition is manifestly reliable without appeal to an external and independent calibration source. For example, a self-evident rational

intuition would be self-calibrating, since self-evidence is enough on its own to see that the intuition is reliably justified.

There are historical (and *some* contemporary[36]) attempts to show that self-calibration is possible. There are at least two ways in which a philosopher might try to justify this claim. One way is to invoke some kind of rationalism – the view that sometimes the determinate possession of an innate concept is enough to guarantee a connection between the concept and the content of the concept.[37] Another way to justify the claim that self-calibration is possible is to invoke some kind of Kantian theory of cognition which would allow one to say that at least some of our rational intuitions are self-calibrating because, necessarily, the basic ontological structure of the world conforms to the innate structure of our minds. In either case, it is clear that the act of rational intuition itself, necessarily including the rational intuition's specific phenomenal character, must be able to sometimes do the justificatory work, and that is what is meant by self-calibration. Clearly most defenders of X-Phi are going to think that this is highly implausible, but it is not clear why, apart from dogmatism. Experimentalists clearly tend to assume that some version of empiricism is true, and also that scientific naturalism is true, and there are simply no justifications offered for these views.

This brings me to the **fifth assumption**, which is that either classical empiricism or Quinean pragmatic empiricism[38], plus scientific naturalism, are unquestionably true. Now, regardless of whether empiricism and/or scientific naturalism are in fact true, the X-Phi literature does no justice to other views about the way the mind relates to the world. It would be prudent for experimentalists to address whether their conclusions about the reliability of intuitions apply

[36] Hanna "Objectivity Regained" 2012 MS
[37] See: Descartes's *Meditations*, Huemer's *Ethical Intuitionism*
[38] It is possible that some experimentalists are empirically-minded pragmatists, in the sense that they may think that classical empiricism is false, but nevertheless that scientific evidence can (and often does) overturn our philosophical (a priori) intuitions.

across the board. They clearly do believe that this assumption is true, since they offer no instructions about how to apply their conclusions and also tend to cite rationalist philosophers such as Descartes, Bealer, etc., as examples of the abusers of intuitions, but there is no interesting discussion about whether defeating, e.g., rationalism or Kantianism would require any extra argumentation. If not, then it seems like anyone who is not an intuition-skeptical empiricist (or anyone other than Bealer, Huemer, and other rationalists who are specifically cited in the X-Phi literature) can simply ignore X-Phi, because there are no arguments given for an empiricist or naturalist approach or arguments given against rationalism or Kantianism, or some other suitably anti-intuition-skeptical view.

The worry, to put it more precisely, is that either classical empiricism or Quinean pragmatic empiricism, and scientific naturalism, fall out of the basic assumptions behind X-Phi, which is that it is possible for our a priori intuitions to be undermined by merely contingent and/or empirical facts. If it is true that X-Phi rests on this basic assumption, then no experimentalist can be a rationalist or an idealist, and since the three available options seem to be empiricism, rationalism, and idealism, it follows that they must be assuming that some form of empiricism is true. This is no *argument* against rationalism or idealism, and it is also question-begging.

The closest X-Phi seems to come to broaching this discussion is in Prinz's paper "Empirical Philosophy and Experimental Philosophy",[39] where Prinz claims that neither empirical philosophy nor experimental philosophy collapses into basic psychology, and that both require some "armchair methods." However, Prinz does not address the question-begging worry here, namely that X-Phi merely assumes or stipulates that rationalism and idealism are false.

[39] In Knobe & Nichols, *Experimental Philosophy* 2008

This way of putting it obviously assumes the truth of one construal of the distinction between empiricism and rationalism over another. Some, for example, might think that it is possible to be a rationalist just insofar as we have some innate concepts. I think this is not a plausible view, since even a nativist view of the mind is consistent with the view that there are no a priori truths. That is, it is possible to reject the possibility of genuine a priori knowledge while simultaneously holding that we have some innate concepts or cognitive structures that did not themselves originate in experience.[40] However, it seems that the rationalist must at least accept that there *are* indeed a priori truths. In other words, and without turning this into an argument for one version of rationalism or empiricism over another version, I am arguing that the experimentalist has to be committed to the view that there are no a priori truths that cannot be overturned by merely contingent or empirical facts. For, in order to believe that there really are a priori truths that cannot be overturned by merely contingent or empirical facts, one must also accept that some rational intuitions are reliable *on their own* – that is, apart from being independently checked by the sciences. This is a logical implication of Cummins's dilemma, and it seems basically correct.

The following section is an attempt to argue that there is a viable notion of calibration that does not require independent checkpoints – that is, epistemic tests that are fully independent of philosophical intuitions.

[40] In fact, it is clear that some classical empiricists (e.g., Hume) and many contemporary empiricists believe in some version of nativism.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

The Cognitive Phenomenology of Intuitions

One important aspect of philosophical rational intuitions has not been explored much in contemporary philosophy -- the phenomenology of rational intuitions.[41] I want to suggest **first** that such a study would actually be helpful and illuminating with respect to the topic of philosophical intuitions, and then, **second**, I will show how the study can proceed. The cognitive phenomenology of rational intuitions is important, I will suggest, in part because phenomenology is actually partially constitutive of rational intuitions themselves. I have argued that one interesting fact about rational intuitions is that, if they are to be reliable and philosophically useful, they have to be so in virtue of their very possession – since, if an external calibration source is required, they provide no significant justification on their own. Thus, one conclusion I draw is that we need to be able to tell, at least in part, whether a rational intuition is reliable or not by examining the specific phenomenal character of the rational intuition, from a first-person perspective (i.e., *from the inside*). If we cannot do this, then there is no hope for rational intuitions. The second conclusion I will draw is that since we can internally detect a phenomenological difference between authoritative rational intuitions and non-authoritative rational (or non-rational) intuitions, *and* since there actually is a justificatory difference between the two, we can in principle tell when we are in possession of a reliable philosophical rational intuition.

Now, why should we care about the phenomenology of rational intuitions? The most important reason for caring about the phenomenology of intuitions is that an intuition's specific

[41] Although it is important to note that much of what goes on in this section is not dissimilar to what Husserl was up to in the *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901). Also see: Robert Hanna's *Rationality and Logic*, ch. 6 (2006)

phenomenal character is *partially constitutive* of the intuition itself. Prima facie this seems like a triviality, but actually most contemporary philosophers seem to overlook this fact. In Goldman's recent Romanell Lecture[42], e.g., he sets up the basic worry about the reliability of our intuitions by pointing out (as it is common to do) that philosophers often make *appeals* to intuitions when they are arguing for some philosophical conclusion(s). It is implied by Goldman and others that philosophers tend to make use of intuitions as evidence when it is convenient. The metaphysical view here seems to be that intuitions are pieces of evidence "out there" beyond us, and that we reach out for them when we need support for a philosophical conclusion. I think this is a deeply mistaken view.

It has been pointed out by Bealer[43] (and others) that one must rely on the use of intuitions even if one is arguing *against* their reliability. This has become a common response to the intuition skeptic, and I think it is basically correct. Nevertheless, more needs to be said about *why* this is a good response to the intuition skeptic. My take on this response is that it is right, since intuitions are not just completely mind-independent pieces of evidence "out there" for us to reach out to. Rather, intuitions are mind-*dependent* at least in the sense that they are partially constitutive of thought itself. Here is why we should believe this:

Epistemology, as philosophers are mostly concerned with it, is a modal enterprise. That is, epistemology is about necessity and possibility, not (solely) about the merely contingent facts about knowledge. Furthermore, modal knowledge is a priori, since knowledge about necessity and possibility requires something over and above the examination of specific empirical, contingent cases. Insofar as this is right, it seems that some rational intuitions are required for knowing whether some epistemological view is correct. The reason why most philosophers

[42] Goldman 2010
[43] Bealer "The Incoherence of Empiricism," 1992

believe that logic is justified by intuition is that all a priori knowledge requires a *cognitive phenomenology*[44] that signals the truth of the proposition in question. In other words, the cognitive phenomenology associated with a priori knowledge is supposed to be partially constitutive of a priori knowledge, since, counterfactually, we would not have a priori knowledge without the corresponding phenomenology. If this is right, then those who hold the standard view, that intuitions are completely mind-independent[45] sources of evidence, risk the worst kind of skepticism imaginable – that since intuitions are unreliable (or since we cannot know whether they are reliable), and since intuitions are required for drawing any epistemological conclusions, then we cannot make any epistemological claims at all.

Thus, it is extremely important for us to understand the role of rational intuitional cognitive-phenomenology. Secondly, it is clear that we are capable of picking out intuitions from non-intuitions in qualitative terms. For example, we can distinguish quite easily, I believe, between hunches and intuitions, between opinions and intuitions, and likewise between intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments and rational authoritative intuitions. The difference is in the way in which we seem to *experience* the truth of the proposition in question. In the case of intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments, we are passively or unreflectively coming into some intellectual state in which it seems to us that P is the case. In the case of rational authoritative intuitions, by contrast, we are "locking onto" (i.e., sufficiently reflectively intuiting) the truth of P. The difference is, of course, a metaphysical one, but I will argue that it is also (especially) a cognitive-phenomenological one. The question is why we ought to believe

[44] See: M. Montague & T. Bayne's *Cognitive Phenomenology*

[45] Here one may think that this is a view nobody holds, since it is obvious that intuitions are *mental* things. However, philosophers do a hold a view like this, because there is a tendency to think that, while intuitions are mental, they are not also *constitutive* of thought in the sense that they are built out of our basic cognitive machinery. The standard view is, rather, that intuitions interrupt our thought by "hitting us over the head" or "striking us." This is the sense in which philosophers think that intuitions are mind-independent.

that whatever cognitive-phenomenological difference there is tracks a real difference in the level or kind of justification provided by these different mental states. This requires a two-part answer. **First**, I have already laid out the justificatory difference between either passive or unreflective judgments on the one hand, and rational authoritative intuitions on the other. **Second**, as long as there is also a cognitive-phenomenological difference between the two kinds of states, then we can reliably track the justificatory difference via the cognitive-phenomenological difference.

Recall that passive or unreflective intuitions are propositional attitudes that merely happen to us, and active or sufficiently reflective intuitions are ones that we perform by non-inferentially *taking* some proposition to be necessarily and a priori true. An unreflective intuition is a propositional attitude that is either non-self-conscious or not disposed to be engaged in comparative or contrastive relations with other judgments. Thus, when I perform a *rational* intuition, I am self-consciously engaging in this comparative/contrastive behavior, which clearly involves some kind of self-representation. It is clear, then, in a very basic way, what the cognitive-phenomenological difference between passive and active intuitions amounts to – i.e., it amounts to the difference between being unreflectively struck by something and engaging in *self-representation*, at least in the sense of being aware that I am taking something to be true after first comparing and contrasting that proposition with other propositions that I also represent to myself.

I will also have to account for the fallibility of authoritative rational intuitions, since it is logically possible to think that we are having an authoritative experience without actually having one. This will become clearer as I develop a theory of how the cognitive-phenomenological aspect of rational intuition can be hooked up with the actual evidential status of rational intuition.

A Preliminary Worry

I should address one worry that may come up immediately. One response to what I have said thus far will surely be that phenomenological analyses such as this one are inherently unclear or obscure. For instance, it might be compared to the old psychological tradition of Introspectionism, which failed because it seemed impossible or at least highly unlikely that we could calibrate, compare, and contrast (i.e., quantify over) our various inner qualitative states. While this is a serious worry about experimental psychology, the worry does not seem to apply when we are talking about basic, shared experiences that are central to our agency and rationality. For instance, surely everyone would agree that there is a distinct phenomenal character related to eating a Granny Smith apple – one that is quite different from the phenomenological character of drinking Dunkin Donuts coffee. It is also surely true that the ability to distinguish such phenomenal characters is central to who we are.

I believe that the clear, manifest cognitive-phenomenological difference between intellectual seemings or spontaneous or unreflective judgments, on the one hand, and rational intuitions on the other, is on a par with a basic example like this. Compare the following kinds of experiences:

(1) I take it to be necessarily true that if 1+1 = 1+1 and the sum of 1 and 1 is 2, then 1+1=2

(2) When I am prompted to think about a brain-in-a-vat scenario, it seems to me that it is possible that we do not have knowledge of the external world

The difference, I think, is that in the second scenario the idea that we could never know whether we have knowledge of the external world merely occurs or appears to me, without any self-conscious inference. But, in the first scenario I am carefully, rationally, and self-consciously *making an inferential move* from the conjunctive antecedent of the mathematical conditional to

its consequent.[46]

Now consider the difference between rote memorization and application on the one hand, and carefully working through a mathematical problem on the other hand. I can recite the first twelve numbers of the Fibonacci sequence without much thought, because I have considered the Fibonacci sequence a number of times in my life, and it is seared into my memory. However, my recitation of the numbers in the sequence (at least in this case) comes into my mind with no deep understanding of how the numbers of the sequence are derived. In order to understand the derivations, I have to work through a number of small mathematical problems. It is easily conceivable that I could go wrong once or twice while merely reciting the numbers of the sequence, but it is much harder to think that I would go wrong while reflectively and actively deriving the numbers of the sequence. It is even conceivable that I could be systematically mistaken in my rote memory of the sequence, while I am not systematically mistaken about the numbers of the sequence when I actually do the derivations. Thus, these are clearly and distinctly different phenomenal characters, which I can identify through cognitive-phenomenological introspection.

Here is a bit more justification for the above claim. Rote memory is, it seems, more susceptible to manipulation by outside factors. My memory of the first twelve numbers in the Fibonacci sequence is highly contingent, in the sense that it is merely physical data stored in my brain. Being highly contingent in this way, it would not be surprising if environmental factors or even other cognitive processes in my brain were to interfere with the accuracy of specific memories, especially if I am being relatively unreflective about the application of those memories. On the other hand, active calculation over basic arithmetic seems to involve not only a great deal of reflection, but also intuitive deductions that are accompanied by a specific

[46] This, I take it, does not presuppose that mathematical judgments are analytic.

cognitive phenomenology. It seems that we are more inclined to think that reliable beliefs are more reflective than not, and that they would more often *seem* reliable than not. Thus, rote memory seems less modally reliable than active calculation.

Calibration Revisited

As the thesis of this section suggests, there are at least two good reasons for caring about the phenomenology of rational intuition. The second reason I gave is that the specific phenomenological characters of rational intuitions can give us some idea about the reliability of those intuitions. This may come as a shock to many (if not most) philosophers who do work on intuition, because it is a thought that is typically adamantly denied by those who are worried about the reliability of philosophical intuitions. Experimental philosophers, for example, seem to take it for granted that the way intuitions present themselves to us cannot itself be an indication of their reliability, since we need to be able to independently *check* the reliability of intuitions.

Recall Cummins's dilemma. The two horns are as follows: (1st horn) either intuitions can be calibrated, in which case we do not need the intuitions themselves; (2nd horn) or intuitions cannot be calibrated, in which case we should not use them. Fortunately for us, as I have argued above, the assumption that there is one and only one method of calibration is an unwarranted one. More specifically, the assumption that there is *any* method of calibration which takes an independent standpoint (viz., which is free of the use of philosophical intuitions) is unwarranted, since even science requires intuitions about logic and mathematics (not to mention intuitions about the scientific method, what counts as evidence, and so on).

If this is right, then Cummins's argument is unsound. Thus, if I have good reasons to think that there is some method of calibrating intuitions that clearly assumes some other more

basic intuitions, then I am not at all at risk of begging the question against someone like Cummins. In fact, I do believe that I have good reasons to think that there are interesting ways of calibrating intuitions without dogmatically assuming that science is operating independently of philosophical intuitions. One way to calibrate our intuitions is to recognize that some of them are self-justifying (e.g., that some of them are self-evident).

Also, at the beginning of this section I suggested that there are two moves that need to be made in order to explain how the cognitive phenomenology of rational intuitions can hook up properly with their reliability: (1) showing that we have good reason to believe that some of our rational intuitions *are* in fact self-justifying or self-evident [or, more precisely, to show that our rational intuitions do in fact have epistemically reliable phenomenological characters], and (2) showing that there is some kind of intrinsic connection between at least some of our rational intuitions and the way the world actually is. If some of our rational intuitions are self-justifying or self-evident, then that fact in and of itself is enough to motivate the claim that some rational intuitions are reliable. After all, in the world of justification, what more could we ask for than self-evidence?

Authoritative Intuitions and Authentic Appearances

The authoritativeness of rational intuition consists of at least two factors: (1) the cognitive-phenomenological force of the rational intuition, and (2) the intrinsic connection between the rational intuition's propositional content and the world. The classical rationalist and I would agree that one way to guarantee the reliable connection between rational intuitions and the world is for rational intuitions to include a veridical experience of the real world, or an "authentic

appearance"[47] in Kantian terms. Authentic appearances are, for Kant, distinct from "mere appearances" in the sense that the former truly and objectively present the world to us. If we are to have any systematically reliable rational intuitions, they would have to have this authentic character. What sort of phenomenological character would we expect rational authoritative intuitions to have? Here are two examples of *self-evident* rational intuitions:

(i) That Modus Ponens is a valid inference rule
(ii) That addition and multiplication are commutative (i.e., that 2+3=3+2 and that 2*3=3*2)

For both cases, the reflective act of understanding what the statements mean – that is, understanding their propositional content – is also enough to rationally compel the subject to assent to those propositions, completely independently of any or all particular sense-experiences or contingent natural facts. In other words, in order to know that these statements are true, it is enough for me just to sufficiently reflectively understand their propositional content.

To put it in slightly different terms, there is a sense in which the very phenomenological grasp of some rational intuitions allows us to isomorphically match up our mental representations with the targets of those representations (or in Hanna's terminology[48], to isomorphically match up a schema or mental model with some object or fact). This is how "locking onto" the truth via rational intuition works, and it can only be done by paying close attention to the rich phenomenological differences between different kinds of intuition. Of course, if experimentalists are right in their general project, then we can never actually do this, since "grasping" or "locking onto" a truth requires using the rational intuition itself as an

[47] See: Robert Hanna's unpublished lecture notes, *Metaphysics with a Human Face: Lectures on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* 2012
[48] Hanna "Objectivity Regained" 2012 MS

epistemic guide, rather than using some other independent checkpoint.

Maybe there is an objection lurking here. Perhaps the Experimentalist will just reply by saying that there is nothing inherently good about using phenomenology to get evidence rather than independent checkpoints. But, this misses the point entirely. There *is* something good about it, because if our rational intuitions themselves aren't doing the justificatory work for us, then philosophical rational intuitions are, as Cummins aptly put it, "epistemologically useless."

Arguments Linking Phenomenology to Reliability

As I noted earlier, experimental philosophers and intuition-skeptical empiricists generally have rigged the philosophical game so that intuitions (in the X-Phi sense) do not, in virtue of the way they appear to us, tell us anything about their reliability. But, as we have seen, there is no truly independent standpoint in the sense of a method that does not itself rely on the use of some rational intuitions.[49] So, in order to truly know how intuitions can be reliable, we have to have some good philosophical arguments.

Secondly, and at least equally importantly, due to the serious problem that Cummins's Calibration Dilemma poses for both the intuitionist and the experimentalist, there is a reason to think that the phenomenological character of an intuition is never going to be epistemically important at all for X-Phiers. This is because the X-Phier assumes that there always needs to be an independent way of checking for the reliability of an intuition. Thus, the justificatory work is being done completely by the independent checkpoint and *not* the intuition itself. So, for X-Phi, intuitions themselves are always philosophically useless (or at the very least they are merely secondarily important and not primarily important), indeed. Moreover, to the extent that X-Phi

[49] Usually basic ones – e.g., what counts as an experience, mathematical intuitions, which arguments are valid and which are invalid, and so on.

invokes empirical science, it also presupposes some self-evident rational intuitions. Thus, X-Phi presupposes some intuitions that are not intuitions in the specifically X-Phi sense.

Here is an argument that connects phenomenal characters with reliability that is somewhat related to what Bonjour says to motivate what he calls a "Moderate Rationalism," and it should also appeal to those who take seriously Huemer's Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism:

(i) We are prima facie justified in trusting our rational intuitions, in the absence of defeaters.

(ii) It would be irrational for us to believe that we are justified in trusting our rational intuitions but that there is also no good metaphysical account of how these rational intuitions could be reliably connected up with the way the world actually is.

(iii) Therefore, we must think that there *is* some good metaphysical account of how rational intuitions are hooked up to the world in the right way.

(iv) Once we have given such an account, then we can know that there is an intrinsic connection between the specific phenomenal character of the rational intuition and the way the world is, since if our rational intuitions are generally reliable, then we must be justified in trusting our rational intuitions, provided that they appear to us robustly enough.

(v) Therefore, we are actually in a position to know that we have some reliable rational intuitions by just grasping the phenomenal characters of those intuitions.

And here is another argument, which I will call the Rationality argument:

I. At least some of the problems of philosophy are problems about how to reason correctly, e.g., logical reasoning problems, and problems about rational justification generally.

II. These are problems which are not presented to us by the senses, but by reason itself.

III. Therefore, there are some problems of philosophy which derive from the cognitive capacity, power, or faculty of reason itself.

IV. Philosophical problems are solved either by empirical means or by non-empirical means.

V. Empirical investigation won't by itself solve problems about how to reason correctly.

VI. Therefore, non-empirical means are required for solving some philosophical problems.

VII. Since there are some problems in philosophy which derive from reason itself, and since empirical investigation will not, by itself solve these problems, reason itself is the only cognitive capacity, power, or faculty that will non-empirically provide us with a solution to those problems.

VIII. Therefore, we must be able, in principle, to have authoritative rational intuitional access to some solutions for some philosophical problems.

If the Rationality argument is sound, then we can pair the conclusion up with the highly plausible thesis that rational intuitions are only epistemologically useful insofar as they can provide justification on their own (a.k.a., The Usefulness Thesis). It follows from The Usefulness Thesis that the way rational intuitions present themselves to us must somehow give us an idea about whether we are allowed to trust them or not. As with the previous argument, if we have a

good metaphysical account of the reliability of rational intuitions, and if the Usefulness Thesis is correct, then we must be able to use the specific phenomenal character of a rational intuition as a guide to its reliability, lest we give up philosophical intuitions wholesale.

An Objection and the Reverse Calibration Dilemma

A possible way to object to this project is to suggest that there is, in fact, a way to empirically test rational authoritative intuitions.[50] If it is distinctly *like* something to be in possession of a rational authoritative intuition, then, the objection says, it must be possible to empirically discover *when* subjects are actually in possession of an authoritative rational intuition. If this is true, then it seems as though it would still be possible to show, as per X-Phi, that there are, e.g., important differences between authoritative rational intuitions themselves and the philosophical intuitions that are actually widely held in a given community or culture, or across different communities or cultures. I think there are at least two problems with this objection, however:

Introspectionism and the Reverse Calibration Dilemma: The worry about Introspectionism that I outlined earlier in this section would, I think, actually have a serious effect on this sort of experimental methodology. That is, it seems unlikely that we could seriously and reliably depend on subjects' reports of their own intuitional phenomenology if the goal is to experimentally quantify over the phenomenological data. This is because the concept of, e.g., self-evidence, is something that we would have to philosophically instill in the subjects. And even then, once we have appropriately bestowed upon them the concept of self-evidence, we cannot be absolutely certain that they are going to deploy the concept properly unless we do a

[50] Thanks to Michael Sechman for formulating this objection in conversation.

little more philosophy to get closer to a guarantee that they are. For instance, how do we normally decide whether someone is properly applying a philosophical concept? We normally do this by asking a number of philosophical questions. For example, we might ask whether Kant's Categorical Imperative seems self-evident, and then we might follow this up by asking them to explain the specific phenomenal character of the rational intuition – that is, why it has this strong rational pull on them. Self-evident truths are usually *explained* in terms of why they seem self-evident to us. If I am unconvinced that this is actually an instance of self-evidence, I will in turn attempt to correct them. By now, of course, we are not merely empirically testing or measuring the rational intuition in question. Instead, we are actively engaging in a distinctively philosophical process.

Now, perhaps it would not be outrageous to suggest that we give experimental subjects a lesson in epistemology, but then the very reporting and evaluating of the authoritative rational intuition in question would be very close to doing philosophy on its own. That is, by asking some interlocutor whether she has a self-evident rational intuition, and then using reason to decide whether the intuition is being used correctly, I am not using a merely empirical methodology – I am doing philosophy! Thus, even if it were possible to show empirically *when* these subjects are having reliable intuitions, there is no point in doing the empirical work anymore. This, I think, is a way of posing a *reverse* calibration dilemma a la Cummins: On the assumption that X-Phi must be able to identify the concept of authoritative rational intuitions in order to be able to discover whether they exist or not, then either:

(i) (first horn) the experimental philosopher discovers that the concept |authoritative rational intuition| is not instantiated, in which case only a priori philosophy is doing the real cognitive-semantic work, and experimental methods are not needed, or

(ii) (second horn) the experimental philosopher discovers that the concept |authoritative rational intuition| is instantiated, in which case only a priori philosophy is doing the real cognitive-semantic work, and experimental methods are not needed.

Therefore, experimental work is epistemologically useless in determining whether a subject has an authoritative rational intuition, and similarly epistemologically useless in determining whether that rational intuition is the appropriate rational intuition to have.

The Problem of Disagreement: Even assuming that the experimental work is not epistemologically redundant or useless, and assuming that it does show that there are, e.g., important cross-cultural differences in the possession of authoritative rational intuitions, it does not follow from this that we are not justified in believing that our own authoritative or self-evident rational intuitions are reliable. This is because there are always going to be serious philosophical disagreements about which rational intuitions are the reliable ones, given that the world is non-ideal. This is also why philosophy is a tough, ongoing procedure, and it suggests that we need to do more serious philosophy with one another in order to resolve some of our intuitional head-butting. However, by no means should we infer from this sort of empirical data that there is no way of resolving the relevant philosophical disputes. It seems that in order to take this objection seriously, one must also think that philosophical methodology in general is problematic. Moreover, someone *may* want to bite the bullet and claim that if we have to make do with the existence of culturally variant philosophical rational intuitions, then we should stop doing philosophy. But, this just seems to lead directly into skepticism.

Conclusions

The goal of this section has been to show that the specific cognitive-phenomenological character of rational authoritative intuitions is important for at least two reasons: (1) because rational intuitions are at least partially defined by their phenomenological characters, and (2) the specific phenomenological characters of some rational intuitions can tell us how reliable they actually are. In fact, there is a third conclusion, which is that philosophical rational intuitions, if they are going to be reliable at all, need to be reliable, at least in part, in virtue of their specific phenomenal characters.

Cummins is right to say that once the justificatory work has been outsourced to empirical science, the rational intuitions themselves are no longer epistemologically useful. If what I have argued is true, however, then we must take seriously the idea that the evidential status of philosophical rational intuitions has to be partially constituted by the specific phenomenological character of the intuitions themselves.

The upshot of all of this: the cognitive-phenomenology of rational intuition teaches us both that we can have reliable intuitional access to the truth and that we can discern mere intellectual seemings or spontaneous judgments from rational authoritative intuitions.

CHAPTER NINE:

The Failure of the Rationalist Renaissance

The standard contemporary reply to intuition-skepticism comes from rationalism, and in particular from what Bealer has called the Rationalist Renaissance.[51] The RR is comprised of a number of contemporary rationalists who have attempted to provide new (and sometimes slight variations on classical) accounts of how we have reliable philosophical intuitions. These rationalists seek to defend what has been called, by Bealer, The Standard Justificatory Procedure (hereafter, SJP).[52] The SJP is taken to involve appeals in specific cases to philosophical intuitions as evidence for philosophical claims. In particular, the SJP is taken to be an *armchair* methodology insofar as it makes prominent use of intuition pumps and thought experiments, which are meant to generate intellectual seemings, which are then traded back and forth until a solution or a stalemate is reached. Here I will show why the SJP, and hence the RR, is unsatisfactory. First, I will have to explain what contemporary rationalism amounts to.

Rationalism *simpliciter* is an epistemological thesis which rejects the classical empiricist view that all our ideas (and thus all our epistemic justification) not only originate from but are also strictly determined by actual or possible sense experiences. Classical rationalists, like Descartes and Leibniz, held that we had (in principle) the power to intuit or to *apprehend* necessary truths, and that necessary truths were often substantive truths about the nature of worldly phenomena (as opposed to the thought that all a priori truths are analytic and do not tell us anything substantive about the nature of the world).

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[51] Bealer, "Modal Epistemology and the Rationalist Renaissance" 2002
[52] Bealer, "The Incoherence of Empiricism" 1992

The Undercutting Solution I began to explain earlier is, as we will see, not a specific version of rationalism or idealism (the two options left over once we have discarded empiricism). However, it is compatible with many versions of both rationalism and idealism. The idea is that, like classical rationalists, I want to reject the thought that all ideas are (and all our justification is) strictly determined by sense experiences. I do this by proposing that the justificatory power of intuition is underdetermined by all the actual or possible empirical facts. That is, when a philosophical claim is justified by a rational intuition, that rational intuition has its justificatory power not in virtue of the sensory and/or contingent facts[53] that allow me to think and talk about the world, but by the a priori facts that have to do with the way my mind is *essentially*. Moreover, I am proposing that when a philosophical claim is justified by a rational intuition, that rational intuition has its justificatory power partly in virtue of its cognitive-phenomenological character (lest it have no justificatory power at all).

Contrary to contemporary rationalism, though, the Undercutting Solution also holds that there is a necessary connection between my cognitive capacities and the external world. That is, there is at least some class of truths about the world which hold not because there is a lucky or mysterious connection between my mind and the world[54], but because my mind is necessarily intrinsically connected up with the way the world is.[55] By augmenting contemporary rationalism in these ways, the US may be thought of as a *mitigated* rationalist view. In order to fully understand what I am saying here, I will have to demonstrate that the contemporary rationalist approach to intuition reliabilism is inadequate.

[53] Empirical facts = sensory/contingent facts.
[54] So we have solved what Hanna calls the cognitive-semantic luck problem, in "Objectivity Regained" 2012 MS.
[55] Explained in more detail in §11

One account of the reliability of RIs is given by Bealer.[56] Bealer suggests that there is a necessary and intrinsic connection between the grasping of a concept determinately and grasping the content of the concept. In effect, what Bealer is claiming is that the very determinate possession of a concept *leads to* or is intrinsically connected up with some fact. So, in a certain sense, Bealer is claiming that in the determinate possession of a concept, we could not fail to be wrong about the nature of the concept. Thus, for Bealer, intuitions are fallible only in the sense that it is possible for us to be mistaken about actually determinately possessing the concept. But, through determinately possessing a concept, my intuitions about that concept are incapable of being wrong. Intuitions then are necessarily reliable given semantic stability, determinate possession, and so on. Thus, intuitions are modally reliable for Bealer.

The worry that presents itself here is that merely gesturing at an intrinsic connection between concepts and truth is not itself explanatorily useful. There are a number of possible hypotheses about how an intrinsic relationship like this could work. For example, the nature of the intrinsic relationship could be at least partially causal, or it could be totally non-causal. Bealer does not give us any idea what his take on, for example, Benacerraf's Dilemma, would be. Huemer, as we will see shortly, totally bypasses a causal explanation, while Hanna, following out the implications of the original Benacerraf Dilemma, accepts the thesis that abstract objects have to be causally related to our minds. The standard rationalist account of intuition that Bealer is giving us, however, does not explicitly take a stand on the original Benacerraf Dilemma, and thus seems incomplete.

Moreover, if Bealer's view is that since it is clear that we *do* grasp universals and their relations, then we do not need a further explanation of how it is possible to have such a grasp, then his account seems either incomplete or ad hoc. It is incomplete since it does not answer the

[56] Bealer 2000

"how" question, but it is also ad hoc for the reason that some mysterious faculty or ability is assumed so that the basic question about reliability can be answered. This, it seems, is the general problem that contemporary rationalists must face up to. That is, the idea of Platonic grasping is inherently mysterious, and it entails that there is no further explanation available. If, however, Bealer's view does guarantee that there is some intrinsic connection between the mind and the world (and is thus a M→W determination relation rather than a W→M determination relation), then it is either just a version of idealism, or the further metaphysical details are not fully articulated in the account. In fact, Bealer even claims at one point that his view is "Hegelian",[57] which at least leaves it open that he does endorse a version of idealism.

The second account of the reliability of Rational Intuitions is given by Huemer.[58] The account suggests, like Bealer, that there is some necessary connection between certain concepts and properties of those concepts. Huemer cashes this out in terms of universals. Since all our philosophical intuitions are related to universals, and since there is some sort of necessary connection between concepts and the grasping of universals, we must necessarily have intuitional access to the contents of the universals. This is not radically unlike Bealer's account, but it is different in at least one crucial way. Huemer leaves room for synthetic a priori intuitions, which Bealer's account apparently does not.

I submit that Huemer presents a nearly correct account of the reliability of intuition. However, the problem with his account lies in its incomplete characterization of the nature of grasping universals. Huemer does not give a precise account of how grasping works, but he does situate his argument in terms of Benacerraf's Dilemma. Benacerraf's worry is that there must be mathematical abstracta, but that we cannot have reliable knowledge of mathematical abstracta if

[57] Bealer 2000
[58] Huemer 2005

they are abstract entities, since we cannot causally "bump into" abstracta, and our best theory of knowledge requires some sort of causal contact with the objects known.[59] The way to solve this, Huemer thinks, is to show that when we adequately possess a concept, we just do necessarily grasp the universals related to that concept (and the various relations the universals enter into). For instance, take the proposition that 'dogs are animals.' By possessing the concepts {dog} and {animal}, I grasp the relevant universals related to {dog} and {animal}, and by grasping those universals, I see how they are related.

I take these two accounts to be definitive of the contemporary rationalist approach to intuition reliability. Bealer's account is seriously flawed for the following reason. In Bealer's case, if we interpret the reliable intuition-world connection as an analytic one, then there is no reason to suppose that we would have reliable intuitions about synthetic a priori propositions, for the connection will always resemble the sort of connection in the Ontological Argument from the premises that God is perfect and that the concept of God exists, to the conclusion that God necessarily exists. Bealer must think that determinate concepts analytically entail the existence of the thing the concept is actually about. However, there are many philosophical intuitions that are about the world in a very different way – for example, intuitions about whether to pull the lever in the Trolley Case. If this is where we end up on Bealer's view, then rational intuitions will not get us very far. This would leave entire sub-areas of philosophy without any intuitional access to the truth. For instance, we would have no reliable access to rational intuitions about ethics, and that is perhaps where we need them the most.[60]

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[59] Benacerraf 1973

[60] Many philosophers (rationalists in particular) already believe that ethical knowledge is not merely analytic, so it is not a highly controversial thesis. For example, see Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy* pp. 75-76, and W.D. Ross's *Foundations of Ethics*, pp. 34-35, in his discussion of the Logical Positivists' rejection of the meaningfulness of ethical judgments.

Huemer's account, as I see it, is also seriously flawed. Benacerraf's worry is that we desperately need an account of how we could come to know abstract objects like numbers. In the brief passage about the link between his theory of the reliability of intuitions and Benacerraf's Dilemma[61], Huemer not only bypasses the causal assumption that Benacerraf takes seriously, but also seems to provide an ad hoc solution to the dilemma. It is problematic, as I see it, to accept Huemer's proposed account, for at least two reasons. First, it is problematic because Huemer's solution assumes that we just *are* intrinsically connected with universals and their relations. But, this is Benacerraf's very worry – how can it be possible for us to be connected up with abstracta in this way in the first place? In this way, it seems as though Huemer's account of the reliability of intuitions is merely assuming that Benacerraf's worry is not a worry at all, without really answering him. Relatedly, it seems that while Huemer may provide an explanation for how concepts and universals are hooked up, it is not so clear that he has provided an explanation for how the universals accurately match up to the world. Until this question is answered, it seems that Benacerraf's worry is still a legitimate one.

Secondly, and in a related sense, Huemer's account is problematic since his general solution to BD is what Hanna calls a negative, not a positive, solution.[62] A negative solution is one that aims to undercut the worry in question without meeting it on its own terms, so to speak. A positive solution, on the other hand, is one that meets the standards of the worry in question, and then gives an answer to the worry. Since there are other accounts that do provide positive solutions – for instance, versions of the US, like idealism or theistic rationalism – then there is a good reason to turn down Huemer's account in favor of one that provide's a positive solution.

[61] P. 123, *Ethical Intuitionism*
[62] Hanna's "Objectivity Regained," unpublished MS, p. 24

By asserting that we are in fact acquainted with universals, and therefore we know facts about universals and how they interact with one another, Huemer is not actually answering Benacerraf's basic worry. It may be true that we are acquainted with universals, but we need an account of what that acquaintance relationship actually amounts to, and Huemer does not provide such an account.

Given these worries, it seems as though contemporary rationalism fails to provide the right account of intuition reliability. But, if contemporary rationalism is false, and if either classical empiricism or Quinean pragmatic empiricism are also false, then there is only one other general option – some version of the Undercutting Solution. Contemporary rationalism assumes that the basic relationship between the mind and the world, and thus the relationship between intuitions and facts, is one in which we somehow just find ourselves in possession of a priori intuitional knowledge.[63] So, to exhaust the logical space of options, the other general option is one in which the a priori intuitional knowledge does not just happen to us, but is somehow imposed upon the world *by us* – i.e., is the result of the necessary conformity between the innate structure of the mind and the essential structure of the world. This is essentially what the US proposes – that is, the US proposes that we sketch a metaphysical account of reliability which shows that the mind is intrinsically necessarily connected up in the right way to the external world. This account would preserve most of what seems true about rationalism as explicated by Bealer and Huemer, but would also be properly modified so that the intrinsic connection between rational intuitions and facts is spelled out in a precise way that makes it clear how reliable intuitional knowledge is actually *possible*. Most contemporary rationalist accounts do not include this modification, as we can see by examining Bealer and Huemer. However, there *are* classical

[63] That is, the knowledge may be there, but a sufficient account of reliability is still lacking.

rationalist accounts that seem to fit the bill. For instance, Descartes and Leibniz have accounts that satisfy the constraints of the US. More on this in the last two sections.

The contemporary rationalist might object at this point by asking why it is so important to show how it is possible for our rational intuitions to be systematically reliable. The thought here is that it must be *good enough* to show that we do have reliable rational intuitions. Further explanation may or may not be possible, but is it really required? I have two responses to this objection:

(1) That contemporary rationalism does not provide a *genuine account* of intuition reliability, since it does not say enough about the nature of the important acquaintance relationship, which Bealer and Huemer both appeal to.

(2) That without a deeper metaphysical account, contemporary rationalism is actually compatible with a number of theories about how the mind is connected to the world, including: (i) theistic rationalism (Descartes's view), (ii) pre-established harmony (Leibniz's view), (iii) Kantian transcendental idealism, (iv) and Berkeleyan idealism, to name a few.

If this is true, then contemporary rationalism itself is not an interesting account. Consider an analogy to the debate over physicalism and dualism in the philosophy of mind. I might assert that the mind must be non-physical without giving many further details about how in particular this non-physicalism works. Then, my interlocutor asks me whether my view collapses into either (i) substance dualism, or (ii) property dualism, or (iii) dual aspect theory. The thought is that *it must* collapse into one of these, given that these are exhaustive of the dualistic options. Either my

claim collapses into one of these more interesting accounts, or else my claim must put something new on the philosophical table.

If contemporary rationalism fails to account for the reliability of rational intuitions, then we are forced to either retreat to complete intuition-skepticism (the position that must be occupied by those who take naturalistic calibration seriously), or to give a new account of the reliability of rational intuition. I have outlined the US, which gives a new general metaphysical sketch of how rational intuitions could be reliable, and now I will explicate in more detail how this solution could be a genuine alternative to the contemporary rationalist's solution.

CHAPTER TEN:

Why We Should Accept an Undercutting Solution

Many philosophers are convinced that at least some of our philosophical rational intuitions are robustly modally reliable. One might, at this point, still be convinced that Cummins's general conclusion is right and that philosophical intuitions are epistemologically useless. But, for those who are open to the idea that some of our rational intuitions could be philosophically useful, consider again the following argument:

I. At least some of the problems of philosophy are problems about how to reason correctly, e.g., logical reasoning problems, and problems about rational justification generally.

II. These are problems which are not presented to us by the senses, but by reason itself.

III. Therefore, there are some problems of philosophy which derive from the cognitive capacity, power, or faculty of reason itself.

IV. Philosophical problems are solved either by empirical means or by non-empirical means.

V. Empirical investigation won't by itself solve problems about how to reason correctly.

VI. Therefore, non-empirical means are required for solving some philosophical problems.

VII. Since there are some problems in philosophy which derive from reason itself, and since empirical investigation will not, by itself solve these problems, reason itself is

the only cognitive capacity, power, or faculty that will non-empirically provide us with a solution to those problems.

VIII. Therefore, we must be able, in principle, to have authoritative rational intuitional access to some solutions for some philosophical problems.

The argument assumes, fairly uncontroversially, that at least some of the problems of philosophy are purely a priori matters in that they are underdetermined by empirical contingent experiences. And since the a priori is underdetermined by the merely empirical, it seems that the only viable candidate for a faculty that will solve the problems of reason is reason itself. If this is true, then the conclusion – that we must be able to have rational intuitions that solve some philosophical problems – directly follows. I want to use this argument as a kind of motivation for the thought that there *must* be some reason to trust at least some of our rational intuitions. Recall that this is not the only motivation I provide. I also argue that the intuition skeptic risks the worst kind of skepticism possible, which involves giving up philosophy all together. But, if that is not enough motivation on its own, this argument should do the trick.

Note, though, that this argument is not one that necessarily leads us to any of the *standard* versions of rationalism. One can believe in the truth of the conclusion while also believing that the best account of the mind-world connection is, for example, a version of idealism, or some other account that explains how there could be an intrinsic mind-to-world or world-to-mind connection. Since this argument seems convincing, and since there are problems with the standard rationalist account of intuition reliability, I will attempt to show that we have to outline a more robust metaphysical account of intuition reliability. Furthermore, it is *possible* to outline such an account. I will not try to give the definitively correct account here, but I will

suggest the various possible answers and give a general challenge to philosophers who think about rational intuitions to decide which account is the best one.

Recall the differences among the Overriding Solution, the contemporary rationalist solution, and the Undercutting Solution. The Overriding Solution is an attempt by the intuition skeptic to take on the CD and show that there is a way out of the dilemma; the Undercutting Solution is an attempt by the non-intuition skeptic to show that the CD does not actually apply to their suitably augmented kind of rational intuition, and that the corresponding account of reliability will have to show how it is possible for there to be a guarantee of reliability for rational intuitions. The contemporary rationalist solution I criticize here is a way of attempting to "undercut" the CD, given that it assumes that no external calibration is required for intuitions to be justified and useful. But, as I have argued, that attempt fails. Thus, I must now present the reasons we have for accepting the US.

Given what I have argued with respect to the partially constitutive character of intuitional cognitive phenomenology, and given the details of the Undercutting Solution that I endorse and the reasons for accepting such a solution, I am now left only with the problem of showing precisely what such an Undercutting Solution must provide.

As we have seen, there have been two contemporary attempts at squaring intuitions with philosophical practice: (i) a naturalistic calibration method, and (ii) some form of rationalism. For reasons that I have already given, it seems that both of these attempts have failed to give us what philosophers really want out of rational intuitions, which is modally robust reliability. What an account of rational intuition reliability needs to show is that there is indeed an intrinsic connection between rational intuitions and facts about the world, as CR asserts, but the account cannot afford to baldly assert that the intrinsic connection is there; instead, it must outline how

the connection is actually possible. Secondly, and in light of the failure of the naturalistic calibration method, an account of rational intuition reliability needs to show that intellectual seemings or spontaneous or unreflective judgments can be systematically manipulated, but that experimental evidence has never shown that rational intuitions can be systematically manipulated, *and also* that all the merely natural empirical facts underdetermine the truth of a priori rational intuitions.

With all of this in mind, consider an argument for an Undercutting Solution and against contemporary rationalism:

I. Unless we are complete global skeptics, we must think that we sometimes accurately represent the way the world actually is.

II. The best explanation for why we get the world right cannot be that we magically/inexplicably or accidentally get it right, *or* that the mind-world connection is merely analytic.

III. Contemporary rationalism's best account of the reliability of intuition says that there is some intrinsic relationship between beliefs/concepts and universals, but does not explain what the relationship is or how it is possible.

IV. An Undercutting Solution would give an account of how some rational intuitions could be necessarily connected up with the way the world actually is.

V. Therefore, an Undercutting Solution is a better solution than contemporary rationalism.

My argument hinges on one important thing, though: the two-part idea that (i) CR does *not* give an adequate account of how some rational intuitions could be necessarily connected up with the way the world actually is, and (ii) that a version of what I have called an Undercutting Solution *does* give an adequate account of how some rational intuitions could be necessarily connected up with the way the world actually is. I will present two possible ways of arguing that this is the case.

First, you will recall that Bonjour gives an argument for "Moderate Rationalism" that runs from the premise that since we are not going to be global skeptics, we need to believe that we have some genuine a priori knowledge (and thus that we are justified in trusting at least some of our philosophical intuitions as well). I think this is right, but also that the argument needs to be extended from mere justification to full and robust reliability. Thus, the argument should run as follows:

I. In general, empiricism is question-begging since it relies on substantive (synthetic) a priori knowledge as a suppressed thesis

II. Since we have to believe that we do have synthetic a priori knowledge, we also must think that there is a good metaphysical account of how synthetic a priori knowledge is possible

III. The best account of how synthetic a priori knowledge is possible is a version of the Undercutting Solution

IV. Thus, classical empiricism is false and the Undercutting Solution is more likely to be true

Of course, my thesis in this essay is not the same as Bonjour's, for two reasons. Bonjour is arguing in favor of some version of contemporary rationalism so that he can save a priori knowledge. My project, however, is to show that there must be a better account of the reliability of philosophical intuitions than contemporary rationalism, classical or contemporary empiricism, or Quinean pragmatic empiricism. I have reconstructed the argument that I would give in lieu of Bonjour's argument in *In Defense of Pure Reason*, and now we just have to replace "synthetic a priori knowledge" with "reliable rational intuition" to show that we are not only *justified* in trusting our intuitions, but that we are also in fact justified in believing that there is a correct account of the reliability of these intuitions.

The other argument is that *idealism* in any of its forms, if true, is a successful account of the reliability of rational intuition.[64] My argument is not that idealism is true, but that (i) there is something that we all must think is admirable about idealist theories in the sense that they guarantee an intrinsic connection between facts about the mind and facts about the world, and (ii) that if idealism is actually true, then it really is a solution to our troubles. It is not only a solution in the trivial sense that we just have to figure out what idealism has to say about rational intuitions; it is a solution in the sense that it shows how it could be possible for rational intuitions to be modally reliable, whereas the other purported solutions do not. Here, then, is the weakest form of idealism that would do the job:

The a priori features of the mind metaphysically necessarily determine (but do not cause) the a priori features of the external world.

[64] One might infer from my first argument that the Undercutting Solution *must be* a form of idealism. I do not wish to take a stand on this here. Idealism is certainly compatible with the US, but I want to leave open the possibility for those philosophers who think that all versions of idealism must be false that the US can be characterized in a non-idealist fashion.

This, if true, would mean that my authoritative rational intuition reliably leads me to philosophical truth. Recall, of course, that reliability does not logically entail veridicality. That is, it is conceptually or logically possible that my rational intuitions can go wrong sometimes and still be *reliable* intuitions. Notice also that this weak form of idealism does not necessarily entail, for example, Berkeleyan Subjective Idealism, which claims that the objective world is made up entirely of ideas (*and* the strong thesis that matter is impossible). It also does not necessarily entail other forms of idealism. However, *any* form of idealism would do the necessary work.

I am not arguing that idealism is the view that we must hold, but only that idealism is a viable candidate for solving the basic problems that an Undercutting Solution has to solve. Taking stock of our options, then, here are some of the possible metaphysical accounts at our disposal:

(1) **Descartes's theological rationalism**, which says that our rational authoritative intuitions are reliable because God is no deceiver

(2) **Leibniz's pre-established harmony**, which says that our rational authoritative intuitions are reliable because the structure of our minds was designed to be in a pre-established harmony with the facts about the world

(3) **Transcendental Idealism**, which is the weak form of idealism that I outlined above, most closely associated with Kant, and which entails that the basic structure of the mind limns the basic structure of the objectively real external world

(4) **Berkeleyan Idealism**, which says that there is nothing but ideas, and that God gives us these ideas, thus ensuring their reliability

(5) **Hegelian Idealism**, which says that the world itself is a rational system, and that the structures of the mind and our concepts themselves are identical to the objectively real world

These are all possible solutions because they metaphysically *guarantee* a connection between the structure of the mind and the structure of the world. While Descartes and Leibniz are both examples of classical rationalists, they do not fall victim to the criticisms I lay out against Bealer and Huemer, precisely because they give an explanation that guarantees an intrinsic and necessary connection between the mind and the world. The US, as I have explained it, is the general view that encapsulates options (3)-(5).

Perhaps none of the above options is desirable. This may be the case, and I am not arguing that anyone *should* believe in the truth of any of these accounts. Rather, I hold that if none of the above accounts satisfies you, then you must provide a different but equally metaphysically thorough account of how intuitions could be reliable. So far, it seems as though the standard contemporary rationalist view is not robust enough. It also seems as though the standard classical and contemporary empiricist views are not robust enough. We need something else to do the job. I have laid out the options that I am aware of, but I do not wish to argue that those options exhaust the logical space. Thus, it is open for the Rationalist Renaissance philosophers to give a more convincing metaphysical explanation of their views.

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

Conclusions

In this essay I have claimed that there must be some reliable rational intuitions, that none of the standard ways of accounting for reliable rational intuitions is satisfactory, and that the only account that will be satisfactory is one that adheres to what is set forth by the Undercutting Solution – especially the thesis that there must be an intrinsic mind-to-world connection that guarantees the reliability of rational intuitions. I do not spell out any specific theory of what this mind-to-world connection will look like, because there are a number of possible ways to flesh out such a connection, and the classical theories that do spell this out in more detail have been provided. Furthermore, I have made the case that the right solution to the problem of intuition reliability should reject both Experimentalism *and* the so-called Rationalist Renaissance, as I have spelled them out.

To be more specific, I have argued for the truth of the following interesting philosophical theses in this essay: (i) that Cummins's Calibration Dilemma is a serious worry for philosophical intuitions as long as intuitions are cashed out in terms of intellectual seemings or spontaneous or unreflective judgments; (ii) that experimental philosophy operates on a number of unwarranted assumptions; (iii) that there are good reasons for thinking that most philosophers concerned with intuitions have the wrong analysis of intuitions; (iv) that contemporary rationalism does not provide an adequate account of intuition reliability; and (v) that those who hope to ensure the reliability of rational intuitions must provide a more thorough metaphysical account of how it is possible – that is, they must provide an account that falls under the category of the Undercutting Solution.

The upshot of the main argument is that *if* you think that some of our rational intuitions are sometimes reliable, *then* you must believe that there is a metaphysical explanation that guarantees this reliability. This may seem like a rather weak thesis to some, since some philosophers may bite the bullet and claim that there really are no reliable philosophical rational intuitions, but I would argue that it is actually a rather strong thesis for a couple of reasons. First of all, I have argued that those who think that no philosophical rational intuitions are ever reliable are just accepting some version of philosophical skepticism or extreme scientism. Thus, while some may bite the bullet of Scientific Naturalism, it is still, on my account, clearly not a preferable stand to take. Secondly, it is a strong and interesting claim that, given the fact that most of us do assume that at least *some* of our most basic philosophical rational intuitions are reliable, we must reject both a purely naturalistic account and the accounts given by most rationalists. Since this leaves us with the burden of providing a better metaphysics of rational intuition, we have got to either accept one of the classical accounts listed in §10, or else attach a more thorough metaphysics to the basic framework provided by philosophers like Bealer and Huemer.

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