

Scepticism About Intuition

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Long after Pyrrho, epistemology wrestles with scepticism about our knowledge of the external world. We know about the external world through perception. But that knowledge is hard to understand. Because perception seems to be our only means to assess its own reliability, we appear to be caught in a kind of epistemic circle: how can we rationally trust a faculty whose trustworthiness can be known only in part through its own use? And so we face the philosophical threat of scepticism. But scepticism about our knowledge of the external physical world is not to be embraced: the threat is philosophical, even *academic*. Even when we are puzzled and philosophically threatened, we justly do not yield.

Epistemology wrestles, too, with scepticism about other sorts of knowledge. We know about the past through memory. That knowledge is hard to understand. Memory appears to be essentially involved in any assessment of its own reliability and thus we appear to be caught in a kind of epistemic circle. Here too, perhaps a bit surprisingly, scepticism has no charm.

We know other sorts of things too. We know that $2+2=4$, and moreover that 2 plus 2 *could not but* equal 4; that nothing is both true and not true—indeed that nothing could possibly be true and not true (and that it could not possibly be that there were anything both true and not true); that whatever has a shape is extended, necessarily so, and so on. We use the term ‘intuition’ for the faculty by which we know these things. Perhaps ultimately, according to the best explanation of this knowledge, it is essentially grounded in perception (or memory, or perhaps introspection). But no such position is, *prima facie*, plausible. Pre-philosophically, intuition appears to be a *sui generis* faculty delivering *a priori* knowledge.

This intuitive knowledge is hard to understand. Since intuition seems to be our only means to assess its own reliability, we appear to be caught in a kind of epistemic circle. And so we face the threat

David Sosa

of scepticism about our knowledge of this sort. Curiously, here many do adopt a sceptical posture. Scepticism about intuition is orthodox.¹

Contemporary philosophy's antipathy to intuition can, however, come to seem baffling. There is inadequate reason to move away from the intuitively attractive view that we have a faculty of intuition, in many ways akin to our faculties of perception and memory and introspection, that gives us reason for belief, and with it, often enough, gives us knowledge. The purpose here is to consider whether scepticism about intuition is more reasonable than a corresponding scepticism about other epistemic faculties. I am sceptical that it is.

1. One possible line of resistance to intuition derives from the alleged fact of widespread and ineliminable conflict of intuition.² There are of course serious issues about there being such variation in intuition. And in any case compare the degree of variation one encounters in, for example, eyewitness reports: we certainly do not think the fact that eyewitnesses vary systematically, and often quite dramatically, in reporting their experience shows that perception and memory are not reliable guides to external reality, are not faculties that provide reason for belief and ground knowledge.

Now although there are conditions and circumstances under which perceptions and memories appear to vary systematically (*e.g.*, in the stressful circumstance of witnessing a crime), there are also conditions and circumstances under which there appears to be systematic agreement: given time to inspect an item carefully in good light, subjects will agree on many of its perceptible features. The question is whether the situation is analogous with respect to intuition. But given the widespread agreement we do in fact find (alongside the widespread disagreement, to be sure), there is reason to suppose that relative to certain conditions and circumstances, there is systematic agreement with intuition too, just as with perception and memory.

But let us suppose, only for the sake of argument, that this is not so. Suppose that, with intuition, there is widespread and *terminal* conflict. What is to be made of that? Let us take for granted, too,

¹ Though *cf.* G. Bealer, 'A Priori Knowledge and the Scope of Philosophy', *Philosophical Studies* **81**, Nos. 2–3 (March 1996), 121–142.

² See J. Weinberg, S. Nichols, and S. Stich, 'Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions', *Philosophical Topics* **29**, Nos. 1 & 2 (2001), 429–460, and M. Bishop and J.D. Trout, *Epistemology and the Psychology of Human Judgment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 108–109.

Scepticism About Intuition

that opposing intuitions cannot both be true (though there might be a question about how this could be known, if not through intuition). So in any case of opposed intuitions, there is error. But error does not entail unreliability, only fallibility. Again, in cases in which perceptions or memories are opposed, often enough the opposition will be eliminated through variation of the circumstances (moving closer, turning up the lights). Once the disagreement has been eliminated, the guarantee of error has been eliminated too. The risk of error remains, of course.

If opposed intuitions, by contrast, will not be reconciled, then the error will not be eliminated. But on what grounds shall we believe that actual variation in circumstance is an adequate test for counterfactual variation? Perhaps in a case of opposed intuition, although the opposition, and thus the error, is not eliminated through changes in actual circumstance, still the error *would* not have persisted, or perhaps would not have arisen in the first place, had things been different. How is this to be ruled out?

My point is not to argue that the opponent of intuition here appeals to a false thesis; rather than rejecting (O) below, I am concerned about how the opponent of intuition proposes to account for her knowledge of it:

(O) If opposed intuitions cannot be reconciled, then at least one of them is unreliable.

A reasonable thought is that whatever enables generalization to something with appropriate modal strength from observed cases in scientific reasoning, that same process would enable us to argue from cases of recurrent opposition of intuition to the conclusion that intuition is not reliable. But it is at least controversial that what enables generalization to something with appropriate modal strength from observed cases in scientific reasoning does not essentially involve intuition. It is hard to see how opposition to intuition along this line does not itself ultimately rely on intuitive knowledge.

2. Is the defence of intuition offered here meant to support that conceivability is a guide to possibility? The truth is both weaker and stronger. On one hand, intuition is a guide to *reality*, not just to possibility. It is a guide to modal reality, to be sure; but the non-modal does not exhaust the real. On the other hand, to say that conceivability is a *guide* to possibility encourages a misunderstanding: an adequate understanding of the role of intuitions need not interpret them as working by way of *inferences* that take note of their existence. As with perception and memory, it is not *that* one intuits that *p* that grounds belief that *p*; it is the intuition itself,

David Sosa

with its content, which justifies. The 'ability/ibility' rhyme is an orthographic accident: it is not *conceivability* that is a guide to possibility, any more than perceptibility or recollect-ability is a guide to anything. Intuition is a guide to reality.

Now, perceiving something a certain way only sometimes gives reason to believe accordingly; similarly with intuition. One may not be well-placed. We do not fully understand this notion of being well-placed. It is easy to suspect that no non-circular understanding is forthcoming. Ultimately, to be well-placed to perceive may be just to be such that your perception gives reason to believe.

Consider the fact of egocentric perspective. Even if we are both looking at the same thing in good light, it will look different to you than it does to me. We have different perspectives. In some cases this may create a superficial conflict in perceptual belief. But we are comfortable with the idea that if I were where you are, I would have the sort of experience you are in fact having; and *vice versa*. This is enough to ground the postulation of an intersubjective reality; though the move to an objective reality is, if supported, still not entailed.

In the case of perception, change in perspective can be understood in terms of spatio-temporal repositioning. Consider now a case of conflicting intuitions. To me the Gettier subject lacks knowledge; suppose that according to you he has it. There is conflict. Is it superficial? Is it just that we have different perspectives? What is the analog, here, of repositioning? Can we dissolve the conflict by supposing that if you were in my position, you would have the same intuition as I do? But what is the content of the supposition that you are in the same position as I?

Perception involves a perspective on a physical space. And the idea of a perspective on the domain of abstracta is not readily available. But the case of *introspection*, ignored so far, is useful here. There is at best limited sense to be made of having a perspective on one's own mental states: there is not the requisite gap between subject and object. It would appear that the only way to share one's perspective on one's own states is to *have* them. In introspection, in other words, there appears to be no gap between one's introspective perspective and that on which one has it. Although we can conceive of epistemically debilitating or handicapping conditions (perhaps drunkenness, or sleep deprivation), conditions that might alter the way one sees one's own mental states, those conditions affect the states one is introspecting in ways correlative to their effect on one's

Scepticism About Intuition

introspection. Analogously, with intuition, to be, in the relevant sense, in your position—to share your perspective—requires having your intuitions.

Now, in the case of introspection, there is a corresponding ‘constitutionalist’ conception of reliability. Our introspective states are reliable, perhaps in some respects infallible, because of how they are constituted by what they are about. But even if we borrow a conception of *perspective* from introspection, we need not embrace the same account of the *reliability* of intuition as we do for introspection. (Indeed, on some views perception is sometimes constituted by what it is about; but for two perceptual states to share a perspective requires more than their being co-constituted. For introspection and intuition, all that is required for sharing a perspective is this co-constitution.) Unlike introspection, intuition is not plausibly infallible: the entities constituting your intuition may not *in fact* stand in the relation to each other that they do *in your intuition*. We can get it wrong about the domain of abstracta. With intuition, debilitating conditions, for example, can affect one’s intuition without affecting the reality about which one has intuitions.

So the reliability of intuition is not just like that of introspection. Not only are introspective states constituted by what they are about, but in part because introspective states are about one’s own other subjective states, there is no objectivity: the introspective state is not only determined by, but in effect determines, the nature of the states it is about. Not so for intuition: although intuitions are constituted by what they are about, they are about an objective domain, a domain whose nature is independent of how it is intuited to be. Accordingly, it is not the very state intuited that grounds intuitive belief; there is rather a role for intuition to play here akin to the role of perception. If intuitive beliefs had merely subjective content, if they made no claim on reality beyond the nature of the subject’s mentality, then we could expect the justificatory status of intuition more precisely to mirror that of introspection. But intuitive belief, like perceptual belief, makes an objective claim.

If intuition is reliable, then what accounts for the phenomenon of deep paradoxes—about vagueness or free will, for example—in which intuition seems to be at odds with itself? These are, indeed, difficult cases. Compare memory. We often find it difficult to remember how things went (take a case where how things went cannot be recovered through other means—there is no record). Did you empty the bedroom trash before taking the garbage to the curb a couple of nights ago? You have a hazy recollection, or perhaps

David Sosa

even a pretty clear one, of dumping that trash into the big outdoor bin; but could that be a holdover memory from last week? And you also vaguely, or perhaps not so vaguely, remember marching straight out to the garbage bin, directly after getting up from your desk, without stopping by the bedroom to pick up that trash—or are you just forgetting the quick detour to the bedroom? These memories are at odds. Not only do we ‘underproduce’ the relevant sort of state (some things we simply have no memory of), we also ‘overproduce’ (we have what appear to be opposed memories—one memory state too many). The case of paradox might be thought akin: intuition too overproduces. But fallibility is not proof of unreliability.

It is easy to imagine a challenge: at least the conflicting memory case is *in principle* resolvable by empirical means, while the case of intuition seems terminally irresolvable. But the defender of intuition takes this as a point in favour. Given that the paradox itself is not resolvable by empirical means (there is no decisive experiment to settle whether adding a grain to a non-heap can ever produce a heap, and it does not seem an empirical matter whether freedom requires the ability to do otherwise, to give just a couple of examples), we should not expect the conflict to be so resolvable. So there are truths that appear to be apt only for intuitive knowledge.

3. Again, suppose it were possible for empirical research to show, as supposed (for the sake of argument, in §1) above, that different people have competing intuitions, say, concerning the Gettier case. Suppose, as is claimed, the evidence shows that some people have the intuition that the subject in the Gettier example does know.³ What would that show about the thesis that intuition has justificatory force akin to that of perception?

I think it is clear that such people would not in the imagined circumstances be justified by those intuitions in believing that justified true belief is not sufficient for knowledge. And that coheres well with the view defended here: if intuition is supposed systematically to provide justification for belief, then differences in intuition should be accompanied by differences in which beliefs are justified. And it is implausible that people with the intuition that Gettier cases are cases of knowledge would, *ceteris paribus*, be justified as we are in believing that justified true belief is insufficient for knowledge.

³ See, for example, R. Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently...and Why* (New York: The Free Press, 2003).

Scepticism About Intuition

4. A distinctive and novel opposition to intuition, recently argued forcefully by T. Williamson, is to hold that its role can be filled by our ability to handle counterfactual counterfactuals.⁴ It might be thought that our handle on counterfactuals is less problematic than intuition itself: it is an ability we have anyway and it is (at least often) intelligibly derived from experience.

Williamson uses the Gettier case as his paradigm. And he is certainly correct that 'real-life' Gettier cases can easily be found that serve much the same purposes as did the original. His account of how Gettier cases are traditionally thought to constitute an objection to some analyses of knowledge has those cases relying crucially on, first, a possibility claim (possibly, there is a subject and proposition related as described in a Gettier case), and, second, a counterfactual conditional:

- (3) If there were a subject and proposition related as described in a Gettier case, then, for all subjects and propositions, either they are not related as described in a Gettier case, or the subject has a justified true belief in that proposition but does not have knowledge of it.

Williamson alleges that one could not substitute a claim of strict implication for this counterfactual conditional in producing the objection. The relevant strict implication

- (3*) Necessarily, for all subjects and propositions, either they are not related as described in a Gettier case, or the subject has a justified true belief in that proposition but does not have knowledge of it.

'faces the difficulty that we have much weaker grounds for it than for [the counterfactual conditional] (3)'.⁵ Hypothetical examples like Gettier's cannot be described in complete detail and not all of the missing details are irrelevant to whatever philosophical matters are in play. We 'simply envisage the case differently from' those unspecified ways that would be (unintentionally) relevant to the philosophical matters in play. 'We envisage Gettier's descriptions as

⁴ T. Williamson, 'Armchair Philosophy, Metaphysical Modality, and Counterfactual Thinking', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* **105**, No. 1 (December 2005), 1–23.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

David Sosa

realized in ways that minimize departures from actuality in respects about which nothing is explicitly stated'.⁶ Indeed (3*), Williamson holds, 'is quite probably false'.⁷

But Williamson's analysis here is not fully convincing. He has not yet done enough to preempt a tempting response: either our 'envisaged' case *does* strictly imply the consequent of (3*)'s embedded conditional, or else we have not done enough to reject the analysis. Either, that is, *by* envisaging the case 'as realized in ways that minimize departures from actuality in respects about which nothing is explicitly stipulated', we give ourselves sufficient grounds for (3*), or else we are not yet justified in rejecting (1).

Suppose the Gettier case, even *as we envisage it*, does not strictly entail that anyone who stands as envisaged in that case has justified true belief without knowledge. What makes us think that such a subject *would* nevertheless have justification without knowledge? Entitlement to the counterfactual conditional, here, seems no less demanding than entitlement to the strict implication. It is not as if we have extensive practical experience with subjects in circumstances similar to those of the envisaged case and have found, by something like empirical investigation, that they have tended to have justified ignorance, so that we are now in a position to assert the counterfactual with a confidence that rests on that experience. The case is normally hypothetical (even if, again, real-life cases can arise). It normally involves a circumstance that we have never encountered. The sort of judgment we make with respect to it is inconsistent with the possibility that someone is in the envisaged circumstance and *has* knowledge. The very *possibility* that someone be in those circumstances and have knowledge is supposed to be excluded. On Williamson's analysis, it does not appear to be: the counterfactual tolerates exceptions.

Williamson later notes that the 'evaluation of (3) is comparatively insensitive [to the specific course of the subject's prior experience]'.⁸ But the discussion that follows is problematic. Williamson says that any assumption that conditionals could somehow be divided into two drastically contrasted cases according to their sensitivity to experience is 'neither intrinsically plausible nor adequately supported by the evidence'.⁹ Just below that, however,

⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

Scepticism About Intuition

he admits, incoherently it seems, that such a distinction *can* be drawn: his point is now said to be only that it does not 'cut at the joints'.

Even if we focus just on the second claim, it seems fundamentally to demand a judgment on what is at issue: according to the defender of a distinctive role for intuition, there *is* an important philosophical distinction between the sort of *a priori* insight into an objective domain afforded by intuition (on one hand) and *a posteriori* empirical engagement with the physical world, grounded ultimately in perception (on the other). The assertion that this is not so cannot usefully serve as part of the argument here.

A second set of issues is raised when Williamson turns to the other sort of claim involved in Gettier cases (given his two-part analysis of these cases, above), the claim that such cases are *possible*. Here he considers whether the 'reliance on claims of metaphysical possibility involve[s] a distinctively philosophical use of intuition'.¹⁰ An opposing view is that an ability to 'handle claims of metaphysical possibility' might already be involved in our ability to handle counterfactuals.

Williamson develops this line by reminding us of Stalnaker's equivalences for necessity and possibility in terms of the counterfactual conditional: 'A is necessary' becomes 'If A were not the case, A would be the case', and 'A is possible' becomes 'It is not the case that if A were the case, then A would not be the case.' Williamson admits that these equivalences 'look unnatural at first sight'; but he sees them as having a simple rationale.

What remains implausible, however, is that we might *derive* our understanding of what it is for A to be necessary from any 'ordinary ability to handle' a counterfactual like 'if A were not the case, A would be the case.' Just think about how hard it is to assess counterfactuals with what we know to be necessarily false antecedents.

It does seem that we need no special faculty of intuition to evaluate, say, the indicative conditional, 'if you listen very carefully, you will hear the blood flowing in the veins and arteries of your ear.' And it might seem that intuition is equally unnecessary for the subjunctive 'if you were to listen very carefully, you would hear the blood flowing in the veins and arteries of your ear.' Perhaps, necessarily, a proposition is necessarily true if and only if it would be true if it were not. But it does not follow from any of these

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

David Sosa

observations that the faculty that is relevant to assessing the necessity of a proposition is simply the same ordinary faculty that is employed in the evaluating the claim about what would happen if you were to listen very carefully. Although an ability to handle claims of metaphysical possibility might already be involved in our ability to handle counterfactuals, that may be because our intuitive abilities with respect to claims of metaphysical modality cannot succeed our abilities with counterfactuals: if intuition is prior, then, too, it can be involved. But this arrangement does not encourage viewing it as dispensable.

One wonders, too, about how, on this line, to treat, for example, mathematics. Could this argument against the role of intuition in philosophy be reconstructed with 'mathematics' (and cognates) in place of 'philosophy'? Do we know that, necessarily, $2+2=4$ by employing our ordinary faculty of counterfactual evaluation to the claim that if $2+2$ did not equal 4, then $2+2$ would equal 4?

In any case, it is not clear to me that there is even as much structure in the use of Gettier cases as Williamson supposes (though he seeks to 'ignore most of the structure specific to Gettier cases, and concentrate on the logical structure they share with most other imaginary counterexamples to philosophical analyses'¹¹). In particular, it is not clear that an objection to the claim that knowledge is equivalent to justified true belief needs to depend on more than the observation that, possibly, an agent could have justified true belief without knowledge. In short, contemplation of the case envisaged seems to support the possibility claim *directly*, in the sense that we do not come to believe it as the result, in any relevant way, of a *derivation* from the possibility of the case together with (3) or (3*) above. It is not implausible that some counterexamples proceed in a way (and the Gettier case itself may be one such) that Williamson's analysis simply does not address: a case is described, not 'neutrally' as Williamson supposes it might be, but with partiality, as involving, among other things, for example, an agent who has a justified true belief but not knowledge. One intuits the possibility of that case. And that possibility is inconsistent with the analysis (this too is intuitive). One is then justified in rejecting the analysis.

Williamson elsewhere pokes fun at 'a professional philosopher' that he once heard 'argue that persons are not their brains by saying that he had an intuition that he weighed more than three pounds. Surely there are better ways of weighing oneself than by

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

Scepticism About Intuition

intuition'.¹² He jests; but a sympathetic reconstruction of the professional philosopher's argument might base it on an intuition that he does *not* weigh three pounds—because he is not the sort of thing that could have weight. And there are few bathroom scales that effectively indicate, for any given thing, whether it is the sort of thing that could have weight. It is not by putting the number 17 on the scale that we determine its inaptness for being weighed. And even if every coloured (minded) thing I put on a scale registers a weight, this does not show that colours (minds) are the sort of thing that can have weight—whether or not they can.

Putative examples of intuition are sturdy stock, not easily dissolved. And scepticism about their epistemic status should rather, it seems to me, be initially as far-fetched as the corresponding scepticism about the status of perception and memory.

5. So, to take stock: opposition to the reliability of intuition appears to involve a self-defeating appeal to intuition (or an otherwise obscure derivation of unreliability from error), that intuition is a guide to reality is not the claim that conceivability is a guide to possibility, claims to intuitive knowledge do not implicitly involve the claim that *facts about whether one is having* an intuition can serve as a legitimate ground for belief (other than a belief about whether one is having an intuition), variation in intuition is (as with perception) reasonably understood as possibly a function of different perspectives, the fact of variation in intuition, unaccompanied by constancy of justification, does not begin to undermine the claim that intuitions are systematically justificatorily relevant, and the epistemic role of intuition is not easily filled by other familiar abilities. Still, one might have a residual doubt.

In the case of perception and memory, we can claim some understanding of the *physical mechanism* by which those faculties operate. Perception provides epistemic reason for perceptual belief, it seems, because our perceptual states are caused by the physical world. Similarly, memory provides epistemic reason for belief because our mnemonic states are causally linked to earlier circumstances. Each of *these* claims is involved in the potentially problematic circularity noted early on; but within the circle of self-support there is, perhaps, a potentially clarificatory use of the notion of *causation*. We can understand how perception and memory could be reliable. This, it might be thought, justifies a

¹² T. Williamson, 'Philosophical "Intuitions" and Scepticism about Judgement', *Dialectica* 58, No. 1 (March 2004), 110.

David Sosa

differential attitude toward the varieties of scepticism at issue: without a mechanism to account for the reliability of intuition, its status is differentially unsatisfactory.

But this maneuver should dissatisfy. Our understanding of causation is inadequate to justify its dialectical role in this line of thought. If the comparison were with something better understood than causation, the ground would be firmer.

We need not insist that intuition *is* related to the reality it reveals in the causal way that perception and memory are. Even this is not trivial; if all propositions are abstract objects, then there is a question about how we might get to be *causally* related to a proposition even in perceptual or mnemonic belief. (At least, there are complications in this area—admittedly not developed here—that should discourage overconfidence.) But, in any case, *in addition* to that shared issue, there is another that, apparently, distinctively affects the possibility of understanding intuition in terms of a causal relation: not only are the *contents* of intuitive belief abstracta, so too, it seems, are the *objects* of those beliefs. Intuitions are about relations among abstracta. If abstracta are not spatio-temporally located, and if location is required for entering into causal relations, then intuition cannot be understood to be the causal product of what it is about.

So, let us grant the inapplicability of a causal mechanism in the case of intuition and grant that this inapplicability rests on the fact that the objects of intuition are abstract and, unlike objects and events in the physical world, not apt to enter into causal relations. Still, unless one thinks that this very fact (that they hold between physical events) gave causal relations an explanatory advantage (which, in this context, is not to be taken for granted), then it should be unclear why intuition is disadvantaged as alleged at all.

Let us pursue this further on behalf of the opponent of intuition. One might say: whatever one thinks of our understanding of causation, it can hardly be denied that we know of the holding of some causal relations in the world. We know of cases where, because of a causal relation, one type of event is a reliable indicator of another. This suffices for a differential attitude toward intuition: we know that causation, whatever it is, can link together states as required. Intuition is said to be reliable, but not in virtue of linking states together in a causal way. Absent an alternative form of linking, there is not only no *understanding* of the mechanism, there is not so much as a conception of it.

This demands detailed response. Compare *causation* with *determination*. We know of cases where, because of a *non-causal*

Scepticism About Intuition

determination relation, one type of event is a reliable indicator of another. Just to fix ideas—nevermind for now whether this, specifically, is a plausible model for intuition—the event of a sibling’s becoming a parent is a reliable indicator of the event of someone’s becoming an aunt or an uncle. And recall the case of introspection, in which my believing that I’m believing that *p* is a reliable indicator of—even if not caused by—my belief that *p*. The project will be, accordingly, to make sense of intuition’s being non-causally determined by the reality it represents. The relevant determination relation does not initially appear to be one of, say, partial constitution or logical determination or determinable/determiner.

Still, what is added to the claim of *reliability* by the abstract claim of *determination*? Plausibly, the best way to make out the relevant relation of determination would be in terms of modal co-variation. But reliability, too, will be made out in terms of modal co-variation. What is the substance of the claim that intuition is reliable *in virtue of* involving a determination relation with reality? Is there anything more to being a reliable indicator than being determined by that which you so indicate?

On the other hand, it is not plausible that a determination relation has to be specifically of the causal variety for it to be an adequate ground for reliability. Indeed, if perception is reliable, that is *not*, it seems to me, in virtue of involving, specifically, a causal—as opposed to a more general determination—relation to physical reality. (A counterfactual analysis of causation would sharpen the point here.) Whatever reliability perception might exhibit is thanks to the determination relation it stands in with physical reality. So the relevant problem for intuition, about whether determination is sufficiently substantial to account for reliability, seems to arise for perception and memory too: we are committed to a kind of *multiple realizability* thesis for reliability. Reliability consists in determination, not in any particular variety of determination relation. If d1 and d2 are determination relations, then that d1 is a causation relation and d2 is not does not plausibly make d1 a better candidate than d2 for grounding the reliability of one of its terms as an indicator of the other.

We do not have enough understanding of what causation adds to determination for it to serve the dialectical role alleged. Given, moreover, that whatever causation adds is intuitively irrelevant to the issue of reliability, the fact that the reliability of perception and memory can be understood as grounded in causal relations in particular should have no epistemic significance (beyond the fact

David Sosa

that this reliability can thus be understood as consisting in a determination relation). And we have no clear reason to suppose that intuition is not determined, non-causally, by the reality it represents.

6. The analogy between intuition on one hand and perception and memory on the other is fruitful. Our view of intuition cannot easily be dislodged by the fact of cross-cultural cognitive diversity: intuition—not that one is having an intuition—appears to provide reason for belief, just as perception and memory do. We could be clearer, in each case, about the mechanisms involved. It is plausible that in the case of perception and memory the mechanism is realized causally. But that is inessential to their status as epistemic sources. So the fact that intuition appears not to involve a causal relation specifically should not be seen as undermining its claim to epistemic status. Intuition is reliable in virtue of involving a determination relation. This is admittedly a potentially insubstantial answer—reliability may involve little more than determination. But it is anyway the same answer that would have to be given in the end by a defender of the epistemic status of perception and memory. Perhaps more is needed for a source to have the requisite status (self-support, inter-modal coherence); but intuition too exhibits these additional features.

So, to sum up: I am drawn to the following sort of argument against scepticism about intuition:

- (1) Here is some *a priori* knowledge—that $2+2=4$ —and here is some more—that everything is identical to itself.
- (2) If (1), then there is a special faculty (call it ‘intuition’) that grounds some knowledge.
- (3) There is a special faculty of *intuition* that grounds some knowledge.

If nothing else, the argument form can help locate our issue. The argument is valid and (1) is not plausibly denied. Whether (3) is even controversial depends of course on the nature of the faculty of intuition. On one view it reliably delivers states that engage epistemically with abstract objects, just as perception reliably delivers states that engage epistemically with concrete objects. Intuition is determined by the nature of the reality it reveals, just as, analogously, perception is. Perception is so determined by being caused; but that is inessential to the epistemic engagement. Both types of state are reliable indicators of an independent, objective, reality. If one opposes (3) on this interpretation of intuition, then

Scepticism About Intuition

one acquires the corresponding burden of finding an alternative conception with which to sustain the otherwise plausible (2).

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