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Intuition in Analytic Philosophy

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RESUMEN

Este artículo no busca hacer una contribución directa a nuestra comprensión de la intuición. Más bien, busca estudiar el concepto de intuición implícito en buena parte de la filosofía analítica contemporánea, y proponer una explicación de por qué es como es. El concepto analítico de intuición ha sido clarificado parcialmente por otros, especialmente Berit Brogaard y David Chalmers. A partir de su trabajo, se ofrece el embrión de una explicación, en parte histórica y en parte sistemática, de por qué dicho concepto es como es. Se verá que el concepto de intuición típicamente analítico es bastante distinto de lo que se denominará *el concepto tradicional de intuición* de la filosofía occidental, y se explicará el porqué de esa diferencia. Si la explicación es buena, se iluminarán tanto algunas características estables de la tradición analítica como algunas restricciones veladas de la teoría sobre la intuición presentes en la filosofía analítica actual. Así, sin ser una contribución directa a nuestra comprensión de la intuición, el artículo busca hacer una contribución indirecta al indicar una perspectiva informada históricamente sobre el pensamiento analítico contemporáneo respecto a la intuición.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *intuición, tradición analítica, metodología analítica.*

ABSTRACT

This paper does not aim to contribute directly to our understanding of intuition itself. Rather, it aims to address the concept of intuition implicit in much contemporary work in the analytic tradition, and to propose an explanation for its taking the shape it does. The analytic concept of intuition has already been partially clarified by others, notably Berit Brogaard and David Chalmers. Drawing on their work, I offer the beginnings of an explanation – partly historical, partly systematic – of why the analytic concept is as it is. We shall see that the characteristic analytic concept of intuition is quite different from what I shall call the *traditional concept of intuition* in Western philosophy, and I shall explain why it differs as it does. To the extent that my explanation is successful, it will illuminate both some enduring features of the analytic tradition, and some otherwise hidden constraints on intuition-theory in contemporary analytic philosophy. Thus, even though it does not contribute directly to our understanding of intuition, the paper aims to contribute indirectly by pointing us toward a historically informed meta-perspective on contemporary analytic thought about intuition.

KEYWORDS: *Intuition, Analytic Tradition, Analytic Methodology.*

I. THE PLACE OF INTUITION IN CONTEMPORARY ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Making generalizations about “analytic philosophy” is dangerous business. For instance, in 1949 Arthur Pap expressed a common view that analytic philosophers were united in “the unanimous practice of the analytic method [i.e., logico-linguistic analysis] as a powerful instrument of criticism” (1949: ix). However, as historical research on analytic philosophy has shown, the perception of unanimity here was largely illusory, grounded in superficial similarities rather than deep, philosophically significant agreements.¹ Thus, G. J. Warnock came to observe in 1958 that there was in fact no unanimously endorsed *method*, but at most “a large measure of uniformity in *practice*,” among analytic philosophers “overlying, and to a great extent concealing from view, considerable diversity in aims and doctrine” [Warnock (1958), p. 40, my emphasis].² Over the ensuing half-century, it became increasingly obvious that there were in fact no substantive philosophical views or methods shared by all and only analytic philosophers, so that by the early 1990s Richard Rorty could say, with more than a little plausibility, that “analytic philosophy is now the name not of the application of [logico-linguistic] methods to philosophical problems, but simply of the particular set of problems being discussed by philosophy professors in certain parts of the world” [Rorty (1992), p. 374 n].

Against this historical background, it is striking that many are now prepared to treat *appeal-to-intuition* as (in some sense) *the* method of contemporary analytic philosophy. Although philosophy in the analytic tradition is now so eclectic that no one in their right mind would talk, as Pap did, about a *unanimously endorsed* analytic method, there is a widespread impression that appeal-to-intuition is so common in contemporary analytic practice that it is, in some sufficiently loose sense, *characteristic* of contemporary analytic philosophy on the whole. Herman Cappelen has recently dubbed this the “Centrality” thesis: “contemporary analytic philosophers [characteristically] rely on intuitions as evidence (or as a source of evidence) for philosophical theories” [Cappelen (2012), p. 3].

If the Centrality thesis is true, then, despite its eclecticism, we might consider *appeal-to-intuition* the *characteristic* or *prevailing* method of contemporary analytic philosophy, something not defining the boundaries of the tradition in its present state, but marking the center thereof. But before we get too carried away with this notion, we should consider

whether the plausibility of the Centrality thesis might be grounded in a contemporary manifestation of Pap's error: seeing substantive philosophical agreement where there is none. In fact, Cappelen raises the Centrality thesis only to argue (in effect) that this is so, and hence that the thesis is false. I cannot present the details of Cappelen's argument here, but it will suffice to say that it turns upon the claim that there is not a shared, philosophically significant concept of intuition in play among contemporary analytic philosophers. The Centrality thesis assumes that there is such a concept, since: (1) if analytic philosophers' appeals-to-intuition are not appeals to *the same sort of thing*, then they do not indicate anything truly *characteristic* of analytic philosophy (except perhaps at the level of "surface grammar"), and (2) if the sort of thing appealed to is not at least *purportedly* capable of justifying philosophical views, then the practice of appealing-to-intuition will not be philosophically significant in the way described by the Centrality thesis.

Cappelen's argument has attracted considerable attention and critique.³ From the latter there has emerged a sort of overlapping consensus about the concept of intuition implicit in analytic practice (which I shall call *the analytic concept of intuition*). For instance, Berit Brogaard (2014) argues that the writings of contemporary analytic philosophers contain many indicators of a tacit, shared conception of intuitions as "special kinds of intellectual seemings" with the following features:

1. They are mental states that "form immediately upon considering [the object of the intuition] and not as a result of extensive, explicit reasoning" [Brogaard (2014), p. 388].
2. They confer *prima facie* but not *ultima facie* justification, and can be overridden by other evidence [Ibid.].
3. They pertain to propositions that "cannot be confirmed or denied by perception or science" [Ibid.].
4. They are associated with a special phenomenology, consisting in a feeling of "attraction to certain propositions ... an urge (or inclination) to believe, merely based on understanding, that is so intense that we have a hard time envisaging that others may not feel the same way" [Ibid.].
5. They are evidence-recalcitrant, i.e., intuitive seemings don't stop *seeming* the way they do when confronted with contrary evidence [Ibid., p. 389].

This description overlaps considerably with Cappelen's own notion of what would count as a philosophically-significant concept of intuition. The difference is that Brogaard finds a pattern of appeals to *intuition-in-this-sense* in the writings of contemporary analytic philosophers where Cappelen does not. Why? It is because she accepts "two relatively uncontroversial features [of philosophical language or practice] indicating reliance on intuitions that Cappelen does not consider" [Brogaard (2014), p. 389]. According to Brogaard, when a philosopher endorses a proposition p that is (i) "not explicitly inferred from other premises, argued for in previous publications or explicitly treated as an assumption" and (ii) "takes it for granted that there won't be huge resistance to p among fellow philosophers" despite the fact that "there is no widely known argument for p elsewhere, and the author provides no argument for, or reference to arguments for, p ", [Ibid.] then the philosopher is implicitly relying on (i.e., appealing to) intuition. In short, Brogaard takes *boldly endorsing a proposition and assuming that others won't object* as an indicator of appeal to intuitions-qua-seemings, and she sees plenty of this going on in contemporary analytic philosophy.

David Chalmers (2014) makes some similar points in his response to Cappelen. He agrees that "the special epistemic status of intuitions, and in particular their special role in justifying other claims, is the key to the use of the notion in philosophy," and, like Brogaard, he says that this "does not depend on exhibiting a justification for them," but that it "at best ... depends on exhibiting an intuitive justification, along the lines of 'This seems obvious'" [Chalmers (2014), p. 536]. However, Chalmers is not convinced that intuitions actually have this sort of special epistemic status; all he claims here is that analytic philosophers commonly treat them as if they do. "What [*really*] matters for the use of intuitions in philosophy," according to Chalmers, is a certain sociological fact, "their dialectical justificatory status," which concerns "how a subject supports a claim to someone else" [Ibid., p. 537]. "What is distinctive about appeals to intuition," Chalmers says,

is that intuitive claims are taken to have a dialectical justification that is broadly noninferential. That is, they are taken to be dialectically justified (for all parties) in a way that does not depend on an inferential, perceptual, memorial, introspective, or testimonial dialectical justification [Ibid., pp. 537-8].

This coheres nicely with Brogaard's second indicator of appealing to intuition, namely "tak[ing] it for granted that there won't be huge re-

sistance to p among fellow philosophers” despite the fact that “there is no widely known argument for p elsewhere” [Brogaard (2014), p. 389]. With this “minimal” (as he calls it) notion of intuition spelled out, Chalmers argues that “as long as philosophers rely on claims with a broadly noninferential dialectical justification, ... a version of the widespread view that philosophers rely on intuitions [i.e., the Centrality thesis] can reasonably be said to be vindicated.” Chalmers (2014), p. 538].

II. THE CENTRALITY THESIS AND METHODOLOGICAL SCANDAL IN ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Let’s take stock of this exchange between Cappelen and two of his better-known critics. As I presented it, Cappelen’s claim is that the Centrality thesis is false because there is not a shared, philosophically significant concept of intuition in play among contemporary analytic philosophers when they make (what appear to be) appeals-to-intuition. The responses from Brogaard and Chalmers represent the best efforts of some of contemporary analytic philosophy’s brightest minds to find (evidence of) just such a concept of intuition. But, even if we agree that they have found evidence of a *shared* concept, it is hard to shake the impression that what they’ve found is a bit thin on philosophical significance. However unavoidable they may be [see Tucker (2013)], can “seemings” really do the work that the Centrality thesis ascribes to intuitions? Mere “seemings,” with associated “urges to believe,” having a special dialectical and *possibly* epistemic justificatory status – can the practice of appealing to such thin intuitions really be the centerpiece of *any* credible philosophical method, let alone the method characteristic of the most dominant philosophical tradition in the academy today?

Chalmers acknowledges that defending the Centrality thesis as he does “raises significant epistemological and methodological worries” for/about analytic philosophy, for “the kind of epistemic justification associated with intuitive judgments remains something of a mystery and we do not have widely accepted models of it” [Chalmers (2014), p. 10]. There are, of course, a handful of analytic philosophers who have fairly well developed models of intuition and intuitive justification, but the existence of these models does little to affect what is *characteristic* of analytic philosophy in this regard. Not only are they few in number, but there is considerable disagreement among the models. Thus, we cannot appeal to a consensus of experts to provide an authoritative notion of intuition

for the analytic tradition. We are left with the fact that most analytic philosophers who make appeals to intuition do so employing a largely unspecified concept of intuition. This in turn raises the methodological worries mentioned by Chalmers.

And Chalmers is not alone in noting the problem. Timothy Williamson (2004), too, has observed that, lacking shared, substantive account of the relationship between intuition and truth or reality, analytic philosophy seems to be in trouble:

...analytic philosophy has no agreed or even popular account of how intuition might work, no accepted account of the hoped-for correlation between our having an intuition that P and its being true that P. Since analytic philosophy prides itself on its rigour, this blank space in its foundations looks like a scandal. What is intuition? Why should it have any authority over the philosophical domain? [Williamson (2004), p. 109].

Now, if Brogaard and Chalmers are correct, there is a widely shared *implicit concept* of intuition at play in analytic philosophy, but this is far from a full-blown “agreed or ... popular *account*” of what intuition is and how it might work. To the contrary, this shared concept is so sketchy that most of Williamson’s “blank space” remains even after it is made explicit (and of course it’s even sketchier when it’s left implicit, as is normally the case in analytic practice). And this means that, if the Centrality thesis is true, analytic philosophy is indeed faced with a scandalous methodological deficiency.

III. THE SOURCE OF THE SCANDAL

I said at the outset that making generalizations about analytic philosophy is dangerous business, nonetheless I will proceed to make a number of my own. One of the safest generalizations one can make about analytic philosophy is that neglecting blank spaces in its foundations is something of a tradition in the analytic tradition. When Arthur Pap made his 1949 claim about a unanimously practiced analytic method, he was giving voice not to an idiosyncratic misunderstanding, but to a widely shared impression within the tradition. It was an erroneous impression, but few at the time were willing to acknowledge this. I say “willing” rather than “able” because the fact had been made clear over a decade earlier by several astute observers of the early analytic movement. In the early to mid-1930s, Susan Stebbing (1932-33), R.G. Collingwood

(1933), and Ernest Nagel (1936) were already pointing out that fundamental questions about the nature of this supposedly shared method had either been left unanswered, or were being answered in very different ways by leading analysts. Why were their observations ignored?

Collingwood's critique of analytic philosophy proposes an answer. As he saw it, the analysts' failure to clarify the principles upon which their method rested was no mere oversight, but an expression of an unarticulated skepticism about the possibility of constructive philosophical knowledge. On what then counted as "the analytic view," he explains, "the right answers to philosophical questions...are supplied not by philosophical argument, but by science and common sense," so that

[n]othing is left for philosophy except the task of analysing the knowledge we already possess: taking the propositions which are given by science and common sense and revealing their logical structure or "showing what exactly we mean when we say," for example, that that there is a material world [Collingwood (1933), pp. 141-2].

When asked to explain his philosophical position, Collingwood says, the analyst will mention only the commonsense and scientific propositions that form the *data* of analysis, and the philosophical propositions that form the *results* of analysis. But this leaves something out: "a third class of propositions" stating "the principles according to which it [analysis] proceeds":

Analytic philosophy...is a method resting on principles; ...these principles constitute or imply a constructive philosophical position, and ...the one indisputably philosophical task which exponents of the analytic method have imposed upon themselves is the task of expounding and justifying this position. But a great part of the attraction of the analytic method lies in its claim to have done away with the old idea of constructive philosophy; and the only comment which can now be made on that claim is that analytic philosophy does indeed involve a constructive philosophical doctrine, but, true to its character as a form of skepticism, declines the task of stating it [Collingwood (1933), p. 146].

Collingwood describes this task as the analyst's "first duty," but on account of the tacit commitment to skepticism "he...not only neglects this duty but makes a merit of neglecting it and asserting that he has no constructive or systematic theory of his own" [Collingwood (1933), pp. 145].

Obviously, "the analytic view" has changed considerably since Collingwood's day. Such skepticism was indeed central to the analytic view as

represented in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and the central "talking points" of the Vienna Circle. But these views fell out of favor long ago. The analytic tradition has moved on, and is increasingly open to various sorts of constructive philosophical theorizing (and, by extension, constructive philosophical knowledge). But the debate over Cappelen's Centrality thesis suggests that the analytic tendency to neglect the philosopher's "first duty" has remained by-and-large the same. Could the basis for this tendency – namely, skepticism about constructive philosophical knowledge – have remained the same as well? At first blush this seems unlikely, since contemporary analytic philosophy has largely given up on principled opposition to constructive philosophical theorizing. Nonetheless, contemporary analytic philosophy is powerfully shaped by its past, and norms once accepted as matters of philosophical principle remain matters of established practice even though their original bases have been rejected or forgotten. Practical norms of this sort do not require practitioners to consciously endorse the views that originally shaped them. Rather, the doxastic attitudes of past generations have been institutionalized in a variety of philosophical research programs – Rorty's "particular set of problems being discussed by philosophy professors in certain parts of the world" – participation in which is something of a requirement for being part of the philosophical profession today. We can call this "institutional skepticism," on the model of the more familiar notion of "institutional racism." In this way, contemporary analytic work can be constrained by skepticism in a way that colors analytic philosophy on the whole, even if the conscious endorsement of such skepticism is not common among contemporary analytic philosophers.⁴

I submit that analytic philosophy's persistent avoidance of its duty to clarify its fundamental methodological commitments is one manifestation of institutional skepticism about constructive philosophical knowledge. But there are other manifestations as well, equally relevant to explaining the scandalous thinness of the analytic concept of intuition. These become apparent when we consider what kind(s) of constructive philosophical work would be required for a more adequate concept of intuition. This in turn can be clarified by way of an historical comparison with what we may call the *traditional concept of intuition* in Western philosophy.

The term "intuition" comes from the Latin verb *intueri*, usually translated "to look at," but perhaps better "to see into". Either way, *intueri* and its cognates (*intuitus*, etc.) standardly name, in Medieval, Latin-language philosophy from Augustine to Occam, the mind's direct, cognitive grasp of mind-independent reality, a state conferring what we might

nowadays describe (using Brogaard's terminology) as *ultima facie*, rather than merely *prima facie*, justification. Like "perception," it is an epistemic success-term in that it presumes the existence and presence-to-consciousness of some relevant extra-mental reality. Although the Medievals disagree over what kinds of realities could be grasped via intuition (e.g., God, universals, particulars, etc.), and over the ontologies both of the mental state itself and of the mind-reality connection involved, they tend to agree that intuition is a matter of the mind getting in touch with a reality beyond itself, knowing that reality as it is in itself, and achieving insight into its nature or its existential status or both.⁵ Call this the *core Medieval concept* of intuition.

Looking backward from the Medieval period, one finds similar concepts expressed in different terms in nearly every major philosopher in that part of the Western canon – for example, the concept of *nous* in Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus [see Long (1998)]. Looking forward from the Medieval period, matters are complicated by "the new way of ideas." Philosophers continue to talk about intuition as a cognitive power, but the rise of representationalism in the Modern era entails that few understand intuition in direct-realist terms. Both Locke [*Essay*, 4.2.] and Hume [*Treatise*, 1.3.1], for example, treat intuition as an immediate grasp of relations among ideas, and not of extra-mental reality. Kant's use of intuition in the context of his constructionist epistemology constitutes an even more radical departure from the Medieval notion. But something closer to that notion, sometimes in connection with the Latin terminology and sometimes in translation, is retained in (among others) Descartes [AT 10:368],⁶ Spinoza [see Nadler (2013)], Bergson [see Lawlor and Moulard Leonard (2013), section 3], and Husserl [see Willard (1995); Hopp (2012); Hintikka (2003)].⁷ There is therefore some reason to regard the core Medieval concept as the *traditional* concept of intuition in Western philosophy on the whole.

Clearly, the analytic concept of intuition that Brogaard and Chalmers have unearthed is very different from the traditional concept. The most obvious difference is that, far from being an epistemological success-concept, the notion of an intellectual seeming is easily defeasible. And it is hard to imagine what might account for this difference apart from some type and measure of skepticism. A connection between skepticism and the analytic concept of intuition may seem unlikely given the strong connection between intuition and justification in Brogaard's and Chalmers' accounts. The point, however, is that it is only a very weak form of justification. So weak, in fact, that Timothy Williamson takes

analytic intuition-talk to be a way of signaling skepticism: “What are called ‘intuitions’ in philosophy are just applications of our ordinary capacities for judgement. We think of them as intuitions when a special kind of skepticism about those capacities is salient” [Williamson (2004), p. 109]⁸.

This presents us with an interesting counterpoise: Brogaard and Chalmers associate appeals-to-intuition with confidence in the relevant propositions or judgments, but Williams associates such appeals with the opposite, with skepticism. Who is right? I’m inclined to think they both are, that we have here a case of opposite but equally-apt descriptions of the same state of affairs, as when we describe the same cup as both half-full and half-empty. Analytic philosophers look to intuitions-as-seemings for justification; arguably they provide *some* [see Tucker (2013)], so the glass is half-full. But the justification they provide is quite weak: *prima facie* but not *ultima facie*, possibly not even epistemic but merely dialectical. And so the glass is half-empty. In this way, analytic intuition-talk simultaneously conveys both confidence and skepticism about the related judgments, for, on the Brogaard-Chalmers account, the confidence appropriate to intuition is very modest, a confidence tempered by skepticism.

The justificatory weakness of intuition on the analytic conception is related to another difference between it and the traditional conception, namely: instances of the traditional conception were always accompanied by robust accounts of the ontology of cognition, but this is not so in analytic philosophy. Whether intuition was taken to be a matter of a mind coming into direct contact with a Platonic Form, an Aristotelian essence, or a sensible, concrete particular, historical claims to direct cognitive grasp of extra-mental reality are regularly supported by elaborate accounts of the ontology of the human mind, its acts, their objects, and how all these relate to one another in an act of intuitive knowing.⁹ But this is hardly characteristic of analytic philosophy.

It is, of course, true that the analytic tradition has paid vigorous attention to both epistemology and the philosophy of mind – the two sub-disciplines in which an account of the ontology of cognition would be most at home – for most of its history. However, I submit that most of this attention has been directed away from the issue that matters most for a sufficiently robust theory of intuition, namely the nature of consciousness. In analytic epistemology, the theory of justification (or criteriology) has long overshadowed the ontology of cognition as the topic of focal interest. Meanwhile, analytic philosophy of mind has been dominated by attempts to treat consciousness in empirical or materialistic terms. One might say that this is a way of paying attention to con-

sciousness; but one might equally – and in fact more plausibly – say that this is a way of refusing to take consciousness seriously on its own terms. For one who finds convincing the idea, defended in different ways by Thomas Nagel (1974), David Chalmers (2003), and others, that consciousness is irreducibly subjective, that we can only get at it “from the inside,” most of the history of analytic philosophy of mind looks like a huge evasion of, rather than genuine engagement with, the issue.¹⁰ This, I submit, is another manifestation of the analytic tradition’s institutionalized skepticism, in this case taking the form of *skepticism about philosophical knowledge of mind and cognition*.

This is also apparent in the fact that, to the extent that some analytic philosophers have been (or are) open to a first-person approach to consciousness, their efforts in this vein appear rather limited in comparison to the efforts of the best non-analytic representatives of the first-person approach. These are, in my view, Husserl and other realist-phenomenologists following his lead. A brief comparison between Husserl’s approach and the norms of contemporary analytic philosophy will demonstrate the point.

Husserl’s account of cognition begins with an account of propositions. In the context of late 19th- and early 20th-century German and British philosophy, propositions were commonly understood to have the following features: (1) they are not spatio-temporal; (2) they are not identical with sentences, but *may* serve as the meanings or senses of sentences; (3) they cannot be perceived by the senses, though they are somehow grasped; (4) the same proposition *may* be grasped by many people; (5) they are mind-independent; (6) “when the proposition *is* related to a mind, its relation is, or principally is, that of an *object* of thought or of the so-called ‘propositional-attitudes’;” (7) “description of a proposition does not essentially involve a reference to any particular mind or act of thought with which it may be involved on occasion;” (8) “its description does essentially involve mention of its references *to*, or intendings or meanings *of*, certain things (which it is *about*), plus description of how these references are related to one another;” and (9) “the proposition is what is underivatively true or false, while opinions or sentences or statements are true or false only because they have a certain relationship to a proposition” [Willard (1984), pp. 180f]. Thus understood, propositions are much like Platonic Forms: they are unchanging bearers of truth and meaning/content which are capable of existing apart from both the words in which they might be expressed and the minds which direct the use of those words.

Propositions of this sort played an important role in early analytic philosophy, in the work of Frege (1892), and in the early work of Moore (1899) and Russell. However, they all treated propositions as if they themselves were the objects of consciousness, and this ultimately derailed any hope of a direct-realist theory of cognition.¹¹ By contrast, Husserl, borrowing an idea from Lotze,¹² treats propositions as properties of mental acts. They are intrinsically-intentional, Ideal entities which, when exemplified in occurrent acts of consciousness, constitute the intentional bearings of those acts themselves. They are thus not *what* acts of consciousness are *of*, but the “of-nesses” of acts of consciousness.

From this foundational point, Husserl proceeds to distinguish numerous respects in which acts of consciousness may *resemble* or *differ from* one another, and in so doing he discovers numerous features of consciousness as it appears from the first-person perspective. Some of the more central features include:¹³

1. Objective Reference: the central or primary intentional bearing which determines what the act is centrally or primarily about, i.e., the object of the act
2. Interpretive sense: sub-intentionalities determining *presentational character* of the object, the “aspect” under which, or perspective from which, it is presented to consciousness, whether in bare conceptualization or in perception.

1 and 2 together constitute what Husserl calls the act’s “matter.” To this he adds:

3. Quality: the subject’s attitude toward the object; what we would call a “propositional attitude”, except that, for Husserl, the attitude is not normally directed at a proposition, since normally, for him, the object of consciousness is not a proposition.

1-3 together constitute what Husserl calls the act’s “intentional essence.” This is the minimum set of features necessary for a complete act of consciousness. The “intentional essence” alone gets you an act of “conceptualization”, which is a perfectly adequate way of cognizing abstract objects, like logical and mathematical facts, essences, propositions, etc. Although Husserl tends to use “intuition” as a synonym for “perception,” conceptualization of *abstracta* would count as a form of intuition on the traditional conception. But more is required for an intuition of a

concrete object. Mere conceptualization of a concrete particular is an “empty intending” or a “purely signitive” act in which an object is thought of in a determinate way, but is not intuitively present. However, there is always given, within the intentional essence of such a conceptualization, “clues” concerning how to bring the concrete object to intuition. These clues are yet another feature of consciousness that Husserl calls

4. Horizon: Horizons are further sub-intentionalities given in the experience, always empty or “purely signitive”, but revealing what Husserl calls “Ideal law connections” between various elements of experience, which can be exploited to vary the experience so as to achieve what he calls *fulfillment* of those sub-intentionalities.

There is much to say about horizons, but I must forgo that to say a word about *fulfillment*. This is a matter of having the object itself present to consciousness, as opposed to merely having one’s consciousness directed, emptily, toward that object. It is a matter of directly experiencing *the object itself* that was previously only “thought of”, and of finding it to be *as it was thought of*. This experience of the object itself involves the addition to consciousness of relevant sensory phenomena, which Husserl calls:

5. *Sensa*: similar to “sense-data” in the analytic tradition, except that they are not normally the objects of consciousness for Husserl, whereas they normally were taken to be the objects of consciousness by analytic sense-data theorists. (For Husserl, they would be objects of consciousness only in cases where one is actually thinking *about* sense-data).

Far from being objects of consciousness, *sensa* alone don’t even pertain to, let alone constitute, any definite object or type of object. They do so only in relation to an

6. *Interpretation of Sensa*: Husserlian interpretations are not “activities”, but, as with the matter’s interpretive sense, further sub-intentionalities which provide a sort of presentational character; but here they give the *sensa* a particular presentational character, as presenting one object rather than some other, whereas the matter’s interpretive sense gives a particular presentational character to the object, as being thought of thus-and-so.

So, following the horizontal “clues” given in conceptualization, one can (in principle) change one’s experience in various ways governed by Ideal laws in order to bring the object – the very thing to which the act is directed by the objective reference – to sensory intuition. And in doing so one can recognize that the sensations/perceptions and the conceptualizations are *of the same object*. That is, we can experience the correspondence of thought with perception, a correspondence which consists in their sharing the same “matter”. And through this union we experience the object itself. As Dallas Willard puts it:

...the identity of the intention or “matter” in the conceptualization, on the one hand, and in the perception (intuition), on the other, ... brings the “fullness” of the object through the perceptual act to the act of conceptualization or mere meaning. This latter is then ‘filled full’ of the reality of the object itself [Willard (1995), p. 151].

A simple analogy might help to get the point across. We all know that a square peg won’t fit in a round hole, but a round peg will. The features of the hole (or rather of the positive structure bounding the empty space of the hole) determine what objects can come through the hole. Similarly, the structural features of particular acts of consciousness enable certain objects to “come through” the act to the conscious subject itself.

Of course, the sensory aspect of the experience never presents the whole object all at once – there will be hidden parts, parts which we can usually bring to intuition by following further horizontal “clues” about how to vary our experience of the object. But here is the important point for Husserl’s direct realism: all of these variations will be variations of an experience of the same object. This is yet another feature of consciousness:

7. Noetic-constancy/object identity: an act’s primary object-directedness, its objective reference, can remain constant through a vast number of possible variations in the other elements of consciousness. We can express this colloquially by saying that the “same object” can be presented from a vast number of perspectives or under a vast number of descriptions, in conjunction with a vast number of different attitudes, in conjunction with a vast number of differing configurations of *sensa*, or no *sensa* at all, and so on.

This noetic constancy is not itself another intentionality. It is rather, a feature of consciousness that supervenes on the relationships among the previous six intentionalities and sub-intentionalities.

Husserl has much more to say about the intrinsic features of different states of consciousness. But already this is enough to see that his ontology of cognition is quite different from anything widely known, let alone widely accepted, in the analytic tradition. Propositional attitudes have been widely discussed in analytic philosophy, but mainly (it seems to me) in connection with either Frege's puzzle or with attacks on "folk psychology" by reductive or eliminative materialists. To the extent that the claims of a first-person account of consciousness have received a wide hearing in analytic circles, the focus has been almost entirely on *qualia*, or *phenomenal consciousness*, which would seem to correspond to Husserl's *sensa*. Indeed, the norm among analytic philosophers is to treat "phenomenology" as if it was merely a matter of tracing the qualitative, sensuous elements of experience. We have already seen an example of this peculiarity in the characterization of intuitions as having a "special phenomenology" consisting feelings such as *attraction* to certain propositions, *urges* to believe them, and so on. This is a fateful move for the Centrality thesis, as the inability to detect feelings of this sort in one's own experience is, for some philosophers, a major reason to reject not only the Centrality thesis, but the idea of intuition altogether. For instance, Cappelen says:

[B]y introspection I cannot, even with the best of will, discern a special feeling that accompanies my contemplation of the naïve comprehension axiom, Gettier cases and other alleged paradigms of the intuitive [Cappelen (2012), p. 117].

But clearly there is a lot more to intuition than this, and surely Cappelen can discern some of it: that his contemplation of the naïve comprehension axiom is *of* or *about* the naïve comprehension axiom, for instance, and that it is presented a certain way (in English, or in the symbolic language of set theory), and so on. This is all part of the *phenomenology* of intuiting (qua conceptualizing) the axiom, on the Husserlian view of consciousness [see Kasmier (2002)].

Not only do analytic philosophers tend to understand phenomenology in this narrow way, they also have paid considerably less attention to other important features of consciousness even when the term "phenomenology" is not in play. Whether or not one wants to classify it as a matter of/for phenomenology, analysts have paid far less attention to in-

tentionality, for instance, than to qualia. There are individual analysts who work on intentionality, but their insights tend to be neither as penetrating nor as extensive as Husserl's when it comes to the issues most relevant to intuition, namely the possibility of direct-realist cognition. For instance, Tim Crane's *Elements of Mind* (2011) focuses mainly on what he calls the *object-directedness* and the *aspectual shape* of consciousness. These correspond to Husserl's *objective reference and interpretive sense*, respectively. This is a good start, but, as the above list shows, there's considerably more to consciousness than these two features. More to the point, however, as with individual analysts' theories of intuition, individual analysts' theories of consciousness will do little to impact what is *characteristic* of analytic philosophy on the whole.

The foregoing comparison between Husserl and certain norms concerning the approach to consciousness in the analytic tradition is supposed to provide *prima facie* evidence for the idea that analytic philosophy's institutionalized skepticism about constructive philosophical knowledge manifests itself not only in its neglect of its own foundations, but also in the neglect of key data concerning mind and cognition, the kind of data of which Husserl makes full and free use. There is an important historical tale to be told about the original reasons for this skepticism. Alas, it is a long tale and I do not have the space to tell it here. In closing I will simply observe that, (i) to adequately address the scandalous blank space in its methodological foundations, contemporary analytic philosophy requires a theory of intuition, as widely accepted as the "characteristic method" of appeal-to-intuition itself, which presents it as far more epistemically potent than the phenomenon that Brogaard and Chalmers discuss, and (ii) this in turn would seem to require a theory of consciousness capable of supporting a direct-realist theory of cognition. However, given the presence of institutionalized skepticism in the analytic tradition, it is unlikely that any such theories will emerge and take root in the analytic context.

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NOTES

¹ See Michael Beaney (2000); Hans-Johann Glock (2008); Aaron Preston (2007).

² I understand the difference between “practice” and “method” along the lines of Plato’s distinction between *empeiria* (“knack”) and *techne* (art or skill) in the *Gorgias*. In both cases, the key difference is the presence or absence of philosophical understanding and justification. A practice or *emperia* is something one must engage in relatively unreflectively because it is not susceptible to reflective, rational understanding. Even in the best cases, its only justification is that “it seems to work,” but we don’t have any idea why it works. Plato thought *oratory* was like this. A *techne* or method, by contrast, is a practice that is both philosophically understood and justified. Not only does it work, but we have a theoretical grasp of why and/or how it works, and hence a genuinely philosophical justification for engaging in it.

³ See the symposia in *Philosophical Studies* 2014, vol. 171, and *Analytic Philosophy* Dec. 2014, vol. 55, issue 4.

⁴ For an extended discussion of this phenomenon, see my *Analytic Philosophy: the History of an Illusion*, Continuum, 2007, ch. 6.

⁵ Augustine speaks of our knowing Forms “by the intuition of the rational mind” (*rationalis mentis intuitu*) in *De Trinitate*, 9.6.11. Other Medievalists have us intuiting particulars, and even existence itself. See Owens (1980), Williams (2013), Kaye (2015), Spade and Panaccio (2011). Thanks to Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams for a helpful discussion of Anselm’s use of “intuitus”.

⁶ Cf. Bonnen and Flage (1999), ch. 1. Representationalism is a problem for Descartes, too. However, things are more ambiguous with him than with Locke or Hume. For instance, Descartes equates intuition with the light of nature which, in the second Meditation, seems capable of directly grasping the essence of a piece of wax, and this is suggestive of something closer to direct realism. Cf. Nadler (1989), O’Neil (1974), and Hulbert (1993).

⁷ Hintikka’s piece contains a brief but helpful survey of the history of the concept of “intuition” in Western philosophy.

⁸ Importantly, Williamson does not think that intuitions are intellectual seemings, but only normal operations of our capacities for judgment.

⁹ This is as true of Husserl as it is of Aristotle or any of the Medievalists. See Willard (1982).

¹⁰ There is an important historical tale to be told concerning how the contest between first-person and third-person approaches to consciousness and the mental relates to the origin and development of analytic philosophy. I do not have the space to tell it here.

¹¹ The Development of Moore’s thought on the ontology of cognition is especially instructive on this point. For a brief overview, see section 2 of Preston (2006).

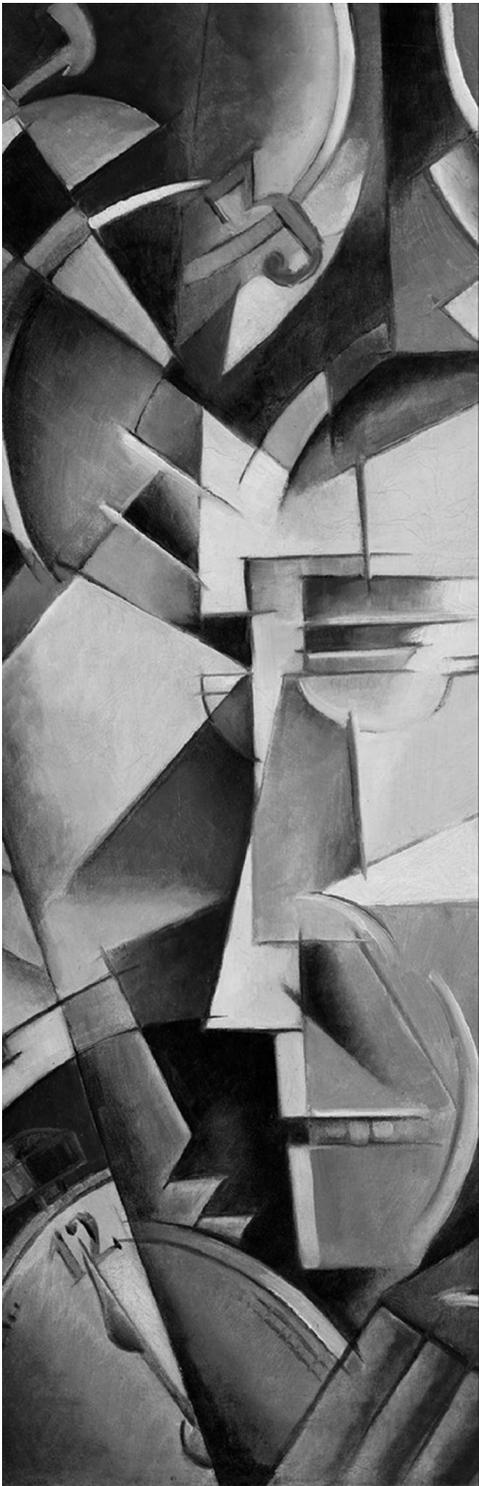
¹² Lotze, *Logic*, Book II, Ch. ii; Cf. Willard (1984), pp. 182 ff.

¹³ This list draws heavily on Willard (1984), and on Hopp (2011).

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REASONS WITHOUT PERSONS

Rationality, Identity,
and Time

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