

ROLE OF INTUITION IN CONTEMPORARY EPISTEMOLOGY

DR. SHIVPUJAN SINGH YADAV

Associate professor,
Deptt. Of Philosophy,
K.G.K.P.G.College Moradabad .

ABSTRACT

In the contemporary discussion of philosophy, intuitions are an extremely important factor. It is standard practice to reject theories in the areas of epistemology, ethics, semantics, and metaphysics simply because they are in direct opposition to popularly held intuitions. In the present investigation, we take a naturalistic stance toward the study of epistemology in order to look into the role that epistemic intuitions play in knowledge acquisition. Consequently, this is the issue that we regard to be the most important: Should we use our intuition to back up our opinions in the area of epistemology, or should we stick to the facts? This question will be seen as demanding the application of an epistemic 'ought': should we depend on our epistemic intuitions as evidence for or against our epistemo-logical theories insofar as we want to develop a correct epistemological theory? (Q) needs to be expanded significantly from its existing state. It is dependent on (a) what it is and (b) what we want it to do for us as to whether or not we are able to place our confidence in anything. Even if Sam may have more confidence in Marie than in George to care after his children, he may entrust his fish to any one of the three of them. In order for us to provide a response to question (Q), we need to first analyze the following two inquiries: Are you able to provide me a definition of epistemic intuitions? Furthermore, which epistemological viewpoints are the ones that we look for? In the paragraphs that are to follow, we will respond individually to each of these issues.

Keywords: Epistemology, Intuition

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has seen a significant shift in the emphasis of metaphilosophical inquiry toward considerations of intuitions and, more particularly, the role that intuitions play in philosophical inquiry. It is commonly accepted that the 'standard philosophical approach' (whatever that is) is one in which 'intuitions' (whatever they are) play a vital role. Therefore, a significant portion of the body of literature that seeks to evaluate the efficacy of traditional analytic philosophy's methods is dedicated to the question of whether or not the field's widely-perceived reliance on intuition is justified. Proponents of the latter argue that the use of intuitions should be defended, while critics of the former argue that it should be attacked.

It's possible that you've deduced from the way that I've been sounding that I'm not totally convinced on the concept that intuitions are essential components of canonical philosophic methods. You are correct; I do have some misgivings about this. Because of the

contemporary focus placed on intuitions, I believe that the conventional philosophical systems have exaggerated the significance of the role that intuitions play in philosophical inquiry. Despite the fact that it is deserving of the name "orthodoxy" to acknowledge the relevance of intuitions for conventional approaches, in recent times it has been increasingly fashionable to throw this orthodoxy into question, which means that I am not alone in my doubts.

Philosophers' use of 'intuitively'

In general, philosophers who have written on the methodology of modern philosophy tend to agree that intuitive discoveries are very important in this area of study. According to Alvin Goldman (2007), a conventional viewpoint, "[o]ne thing that distinguishes philosophical methodology from the methodology of the sciences is its extensive and avowed reliance on intuition." (p. 1) Why do many philosophers take it as a given that philosophical procedure depends on intuitive leaps? What gives rise to this attitude? It is common practice for philosophers to cite themselves as claiming that they rely on their "intuition," which suggests that this may be a contributing element.

The relevance of this information may be argued either way. In light of these and other reasons, Deutsch (2010) and Cappelen (2012) argue that it is far less feasible than is often supposed that philosophers are reliant on intuitions. They say this for a number of reasons, including those listed above. There's also the possibility that philosophers often rely on their intuitions, even if they don't always call it "intuition" when they want to indicate this. It is acceptable to believe that chemists often rely on their sensory experiences as evidence. For instance, while examining a specific sample, one could rely in part on the visual impressions one gets when investigating the color of a component.

Nevertheless, it would not come as much of a surprise if the perceptual experiences of scientists were seldom cited in writings that were published in the most prestigious scientific journals. We expect the journal to explain the outcomes of the experiment in an objective manner since it is a tacitly recognized fact that the researcher's epistemic access to the findings of the experiment is mediated by perceptual experience. In a similar vein, one may make the case that the conclusions reached by the aforementioned thought experiments are simply promoted as truths, despite the fact that the philosopher's reasoning for these conclusions relies on the philosopher's having experienced certain intuitions. This method is consistent; many philosophers who place a high weight on intuitions would probably react badly if the phrase was omitted from the text.

It may seem reasonable to view philosophers as depending implicitly on intuitions, even when they don't use the term "intuition" or its cognates; often, wording like this will be included in what appears to be a suitable paraphrase.

Take, for instance, the well-known argument that Gettier (1963) presented about the

conditions under which a subject might know a proposition. In contrast to what was previously said, Gettier does not address intuition but rather gives a scenario and the inferences that may be drawn from it:

Let's say that Smith and Jones are looking for employment and are in the process of applying for jobs. And let's imagine that Smith is in possession of compelling evidence of the following logical conjunction:

(d) Jones is the man who will get the job, and Jones has ten coins in his pocket.

In response to question (d), Smith can claim that the president of the company assured him that Jones would be selected in the end, and that Smith personally only ten minutes ago counted the money that was in Jones's pocket.

The successful candidate has ten pence in his pocket, which is a corollary to the previous proposition (d).

Let us assume that Smith recognizes the logical relationship between premises (d) and (e), and that he accepts (e) as a result of the compelling evidence he has for (d). Smith has sufficient evidence to support the assumption that

The correct answer is (E). Let's imagine, however, that Smith is completely unaware of the fact that he, and not Jones, will be employed. In addition to this, Smith is completely unaware that he is in possession of ten pence in his own pocket. Even if Smith made (d) an incorrect claim and then derived (e), (e) will still be correct. As a result, the following is also accurate with our situation: In order for (i) to be true, (ii) Smith has to believe (e), and (iii) Smith's conviction that (e) is true has to be accurate. However, it is just as obvious that Smith does not know that statement (e) is true. Statement (e) is true because of the number of coins in Smith's pocket, but Smith does not know how many coins are in Smith's pocket. Therefore, it is evident that Smith does not know that statement (e) is correct. Smith instead grounds his confidence in (e) on a count of the money in Jones's pocket, who he incorrectly guesses will obtain the job based on the amount of coins Jones has. (the original emphasis is mine, p. 122)

Imagine, instead, that Gettier had written after the highlighted portion above, "in our example, then, all of the following are intuitively true..." It is difficult to understand how anything like this could have had such a significant effect. As a consequence of this, it would seem that the presence or absence of the word "intuition" and other phrases of a similar kind in a particular body of philosophical literature is not a particularly necessary guide to the epistemology of the conclusions that are presented in that book. Plausibly, one does not do any damage to a philosopher's aims by adding key stated premises inside of a "intuitively" in at least many of these cases. This is because intuitively refers to

something that is obvious. (I would suppose that the vast majority of philosophers wouldn't have a clue, even when reflecting back on their own work, as to whether or not the first presentations of well-known philosophical arguments truly made use of "intuitive" language. However, what does this say about the role that intuitions play in discussions of this nature? In light of such a premise, the following would become abundantly clear:

(Straightforward) If the term "intuitively, p" can be understood as a proper gloss for the philosopher's claim, then the philosopher relies on intuition.

In the event that Straight forward is right, it is not difficult to draw the conclusion that many philosophical debates depend on intuitions as proof. Since it is appropriate to characterize part of Gettier's argument as "intuitively, the subject does not have knowledge," Straightforward infers that Gettier's central claim, which is that the subject in the case under consideration does not have knowledge, is founded evidentially on an intuition (a natural candidate in this context would be the intuition that the subject does not have knowledge). Gettier's central claim is that the subject in the case under consideration does not have knowledge.

But there are reasons to doubt that Straightforward accurately captures the relationship between "intuitively" and epistemology; for one thing, it seems as if almost anything that one knows can naturally be embedded inside a "intuitively" in some contexts; for instance, if someone gave a philosophical argument for the view that there is no such thing as personal property and that as a result, nobody owns anything, it would be perfectly natural for me to point out that there is no such thing as personal property; however, this³ In order for this assertion about the clothing I own to be plausible, it must place a significant amount of weight on the intuitive thoughts or sentiments I have. On the other hand, this view seems to be contradictory at first. Despite this, there are some who like the idea.

If the Straightforward story isn't the right one to describe what "intuitively" is doing, then what's the point of employing philosophical jargon or even simply appropriate paraphrases of philosophical language? It is possible that this is being used simply as a hedge, which is an attractive explanation. Hedge clauses are used when the speaker does not want to make a definite commitment to the intended topic. For instance, instead of saying "the Red Sox play the Rangers tonight," one may say "I think the Red Sox play the Rangers tonight" or "I heard that the Red Sox play the Rangers tonight." Both of these expressions are examples of hedge clauses. In the same way that one may use "intuitively" to soften a philosophical argument, stating something like "intuitively, this is a case of justified belief" rather than "this is a case of justified belief" demonstrates less confidence than simply saying "this is a case of justified belief." That the evidential source arises from any such condition as intuition is not a commitment of such use, according to the hedging hypothesis; the word just serves to express a lower commitment.

Even if terms such as "intuitively" are often used in philosophical literature, the availability of the hedging hypothesis demonstrates that it is not a simple matter to provide evidence dependency on intuitions. This is the case despite the fact that phrases such as "intuitively" are frequently employed. In spite of the fact that the linguistic facts do not provide any proof, this does not contradict the use of intuitions as key evidence in philosophical issues. In the end, it is possible that the situation calls for more theoretical thought on the epistemology of the relevant fields.

Now is the time when a couple of these topics will be on our minds.

Intuition and perceptual experience

If we disregard the implications of language, what other reasons do we have for supposing the significance of intuitions in philosophical debates? There are certain judgments that seem to be more philosophical than others that appear to be more empirically plain, and the difference between the two might form the foundation of an argument. Consider the following, which occurred to me just now as I was typing: I was certain that an automobile had just driven by because I heard a loud whooshing sound coming from outside the window to my left, which was facing in the direction of the closest street. This event set off a chain reaction in my brain, which finally led to the idea that a vehicle had just passed by. What are some of the ways in which this process is different from arriving to philosophical knowledge, as opposed to just experiential understanding?

The 'super-super-Spartans' of Hilary Putnam's (1963) example are creatures that have phenomenal experiences just like our pain, but who do not have such dispositions. Therefore, let's say that someone who begins by accepting the view that pain is a disposition to a certain kind of behavior (such as saying 'ouch', wincing, etc.) considers this. It does not seem that there is any obvious sensory experience that is comparable to the sensation of whooshing that I encountered.⁷ It is OK to claim that intuition is not what is doing the justifying in this situation; nevertheless, if you do not also present an alternate story, it will not be of any use to anybody.

According to the standard approach used by philosophers, the following is an overview of the argument for why intuitive thoughts are significant.

The 'What Else?' Argument (WEA)

1. Sometimes, all one needs are certain "armchair methods" to arrive to plausible philosophical conclusions.
2. In many of these situations, there is no sensory experience that can serve as reason because there is none.
3. Third, all justified beliefs involve either direct sensory experience or the

participation of an intermediate.

4. The most probable prospects for these types of encounters are ones using one's intuition. As a result, sometimes people are able to correct their philosophical ideas with the assistance of their intuitions.

A variety of assertions that are up for debate may be found in the WEA. Armchair skeptics may challenge Premise 1 (perhaps including skeptics who take their cue from experimental philosophy, which I will describe in more detail in the next paragraphs). Some individuals, particularly Quinean empiricists, would argue that (2) is not true because they believe that all of our justified beliefs, including the philosophical ones that are at stake, are ultimately justified by our sensory experience. This line of thinking leads them to conclude that (2) cannot be true. But some rationalists, like myself, will reject that third premise and propose an alternative explanation of justification in such cases, one that does not depend on intuitive knowledge. This is because we believe that intuitive understanding is not always reliable.⁸ On the other hand, the WEA does seem convincing when seen for the first time; I think it encourages at least some philosophers to embrace the belief that intuitions play key roles when it comes to armchair methods.

When I think about a philosophical thought experiment, I have a phenomenal experience in the form of an intuition. I believe that this experience is comparable to the phenomenal experience that is constitutive of sensory perception, at least in some significant respects, according to a supporter of the World Experience Account (WEA). This is the experience that I think is similar to the phenomenal experience that is constitutive of sensory perception. At the very least, it performs an analogous purpose in terms of explaining things.

One can take the analogy to varying degrees of seriousness; at its most extreme, one could consider intuition to be a form of sensory perception, caused by the (presumably abstract) entities that are the subject of the relevant judgment; for instance, it's possible that my moral intuitions are sensitive to moral facts as a result of a causal interaction with the Platonic form of the Good. Kurt Godel is credited with coming up with this mind-boggling but mathematical perspective, despite the fact that very few people take him seriously.

The assumption that reliability alone is sufficient for supplying evidence does not seem to be especially practical, which is a difficulty for a reliabilist defense of intuitions as evidence. Reliabilist defenses of intuitions as evidence face this problem. Let's say for the sake of argument that my unusual psychological make-up drives me to assume that individuals have inherently decent hearts when the weather is lovely but that this trait disappears when the clouds roll in. Let's assume it's also true that I've never seen this correlation in myself; that would mean that the connection is completely unconscious. The reliabilist stance at issue would have it that the intuition that people are naturally good gives evidence for me that it is sunny, which is improbable given that the sun is a trustworthy signal for me. However, the

intuition that people are naturally good provides proof for me that it is sunny. Under these circumstances, it is not required for me to evaluate whether the sky is clear or foggy based on my considerations of human nature and the priorities that I have for the subject matter. The critical arguments against reliabilism have been greatly inspired by other similarly esoteric thought experiments, such as the case of Norman the clairvoyant presented in Bonjour's (1980) book.

Next, we will go on to an argument against experientialist rationalism after a short discussion of potential reasons for experientialist rationalism.

An intuition cannot fulfill an epistemic role comparable to that of perceptual experience, according to the argument from blind irrationality. This is because such a function would be in direct conflict with the objective character of rational standards. This is a significant topic that is covered in further depth in Section III of Ichikawa and Jarvis (2013). In order to present it, we begin by reviewing its history and doing an analysis of the several epistemic purposes that experiences may perform.

Put your natural inclinations to the side for a moment and picture Boris and Natasha engaged in a game of chess. Since Natasha is playing White, it is now up to her to make the first move. Figure 1 shows the arrangement of the components that should be used.

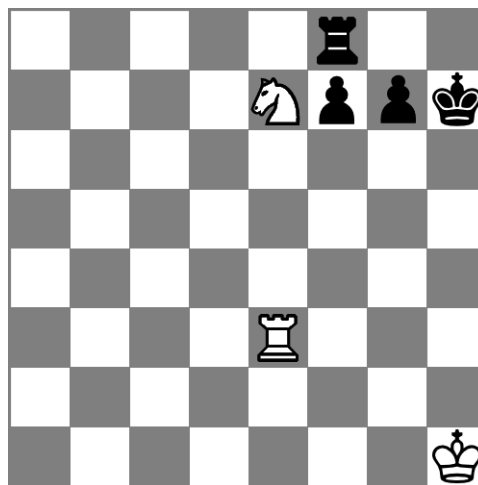


Figure 1

If Natasha plays Rh3#, which puts the black king in checkmate, she has a good chance of winning the game. This move involves advancing her rook all the way to the right side of the board. Even though he was acquainted with the game, Bullwinkle was unaware that Natasha had a move that may potentially win the game for her. The fact that he is blinded and so unable to read the board should not come as much of a surprise to anybody. Because he is not familiar with the configuration of the board, he has no way of knowing that Natasha is in a position to win the game.

This is a problematic argument due to the fact that some philosophers may argue that Jack does not need to be falling short of the norms of rationality if he doesn't have any intuition to the effect that it is impossible to change the past. This is a difficult argument due to the fact that some philosophers may argue that Jack does not need to be falling short of the standards of rationality. This is a response that I have never found convincing, and Benjamin Jarvis and I explain in our work the reasons for this reluctance on our parts. In spite of this, at this point in the survey essay, it is necessary for us to move on to other subjects.

Experimental philosophy

As we have seen, the received knowledge holds that intuitions are utilized as evidence in contemporary philosophical conversations; nonetheless, this is something that may be debated. What does this imply for the school of thinking known as 'experimental philosophy' in contemporary philosophical discussions?

It is a historically well-established fact that the development of experimental philosophy was partially based on the idea that intuitions played key roles in generating evidence. This is a well-established historical reality.¹⁶ A condensed version of this position maintains that armchair philosophers have been putting their faith in declarations about which intuitions are widespread, with each person thinking that their own intuitions are a fair proxy for those of the wider public. However, the empirical investigation of this question is what determines whether or not an individual's intuitions are idiosyncratic, and some experimental philosophers have uncovered evidence that many of the significant intuitions are idiosyncratic. The aforementioned experimentalists claim that surveys of the intuitions of laypeople have showed substantial diversity in intuition. A great number of arguments are fallacious because their proponents made the assumption that everyone would have the same "Gettier intuition," despite the fact that this is not the case. In a similar line, it is considered that the fact that some intuitions are susceptible to biases and order effects diminishes the evidential value of certain intuitions.

It is arguable as to whether the kind of survey data uncovered by experimentalists indicate that philosophical intuitions vary in ways that were not expected. Some advocates of informal ways have argued that the study findings should be interpreted to mean that different groups of people choose to utilize slightly different concepts, rather than to have revealed very separate intuitions. This is despite the fact that the survey research did find really distinct intuitions.

Others have pointed out that although it is possible that the surveys would uncover disagreements, these disagreements do not invalidate the evidentiary use that professional philosophers put their own intuitions to (Kauppinen (2007), Williamson (2011)). This is due to the fact that the latter are the result of specialized knowledge, which the laypeople polled shouldn't be expected to give because of their lack of experience. Since we do not have the

space to delve into depth about these concerns, let us instead consider how strongly certain assumptions about the evidential role of intuitions in contemporary philosophy weigh into the experimentalist critique. In particular, what would take place if it were discovered that armchair philosophers never or mostly never utilize their intuitions as proof (as was described earlier)?

According to the research conducted by Joshua Alexander and Jonathan Weinberg (2007), it does not make much of a difference whether or not intuitions are used as evidence since the facts discovered by the relevant surveys go beyond such specific issues. Timothy Williamson (2007) contends that philosophical arguments often proceed on the basis of known facts about instances rather than psychological intuitions towards them. He writes that this is the standard practice. Williamson (2007) states, in response to this restrictionist challenge, "Timothy Williamson has also developed a more radical response." ... He compares the practice of philosophy to the methodology of the scientific method, in which objective evidence is given more weight than one's own subjective perceptions. In a similar vein, we should not take Gettier's evidence as his intellectual appearing that it is not an instance of knowing but rather as the modal fact that such a circumstance is not an instance of knowing. However, traditional analytic philosophers have no reason to consider Williamson's arguments as a source of solace in any way. The results of the experimental philosophers cannot be understood in terms of intuitions since they are based on counterfactual evaluations made by various participants in different contexts. However, a deeper examination at the experimental materials reveals relatively little discussion of intuitions and a concentration, instead, on direct assessments of claims, which is in keeping with the typical philosophical usage of framing the results in terms of intuitions. This is done in accordance with the common philosophical use of the word.

It is unclear how far this observation can take us; however, Alexander and Weinberg are correct when they say that the methods of experimental philosophy do not rely in particular on claims about intuitions, rather than other types of psychological states; one can run the experimentalist critique in terms of "considered judgments" just as easily as one can run it in terms of "intuitions." Because no matter what sort of psychological claim is made, the experimental techniques that are now available (which are often surveys) can only reveal the people's intuitions, beliefs, or well reasoned evaluations. This is the case. Arguments against the evidential relevance of intuitions were presented in the part that came before this one. These arguments appear to be rather general arguments against the use of psychological evidence in philosophical discussions.

Herman Cappelen (2012), in direct contradiction to Alexander and Weinberg, maintains that the usefulness of experimental philosophy would become doubtful if we abandoned the assumption that intuitions perform vital evidential roles. Cappelen's argument is that if we did so, the value of experimental philosophy would become questionable.

As a result of the fact that philosophers do not rely on intuitions about thought experiments,

it may be argued that studies of such intuitions have no direct value for philosophical arguments or theories. This is the "Big Objection" that might be made against experimental philosophy. ... In conclusion, if philosophers don't rely on people's intuitions, then evaluating people's intuitions is a pointless activity from a theoretical standpoint.

My assumption that her desk is made of bamboo may be wrong, though, and there are other lines of reasoning that may refute it. Even though testimony was not a part of my first evidence, I could receive testimony to the effect that she often decorates her office with fake bamboo, which would undermine my perceptual reason. However, this testimony would not be part of my initial evidence.

Even if intuitions weren't a part of our evidence, it's not too much of a leap to suppose that the results of experimental philosophy about intuitions might be used to undermine some of our philosophical notions. This is because intuitions have been shown to have a significant impact on how people make decisions. If we had data to indicate that certain philosophical intuitions are likely to be extremely erroneous in certain kinds of instances, then we would have excellent reasons to query whether or not we may have assessed appropriately regarding these sorts of instances. Imagine for a moment that I have been persuaded by a philosophical argument that a thought experiment reveals a situation in which causality is at play. If I found out that people like me are prone to being persuaded by the presence or absence of items that are manifestly unrelated to causation, it would motivate me to reassess my thinking to see whether or not I have been making this common mistake. This is the most useful framework for comprehending many of the most exciting instances of skeptical worries originating from experimental philosophy, in my view, and it is also the framework I will use. It is important to point out that this tactic for generating skepticism does not depend on the questionable assumption that intuitions are often considered as vital evidence in support of philosophical propositions. This is an important aspect of the tactic.

How worried should individuals who normally participate in "armchair philosophy" be about the skeptical arguments that are made by experimental philosophers? According to some of the latter, there is cause for alarm; Weinberg et al. (2001) is one such publication.

CONCLUSION

It is far from easy to evaluate whether this is true using linguistic evidence, yet it is often (though not universally) thought that contemporary philosophy relies in a certain way on intuitions in an evidential capacity. This is despite the fact that this assumption is not universally held. The argument for blind irrationality, in my view, presents a challenge to any epistemic paradigm in which intuitions work in a manner comparable to that of perceptions. Because of this, there are no clear inferences that can be made about the significance of experimental philosophy; yet, the skeptical pressure that it exerts requires that it be handled in a very cautious manner in order to prevent an explosion of widespread skepticism.

REFERENCES

1. Alexander, J., & Weinberg, J. (2007). Analytic epistemology and experimental philosophy, *Philosophy Compass*, 2(1), 56–80.
2. Bealer, G. (1992). The incoherence of empiricism, *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 66, 98–138.
3. Boghossian, P. (2003). Blind reasoning, *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 77, 225–48.
4. Bonjour, L. 1980. Externalist theories of empirical knowledge, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5, 53–73.
5. Cappelen, H. (2012). *Philosophy without intuitions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
6. Carroll, L. (1895). What the tortoise said to Achilles, *Mind* 4, 267–280.
7. Chudnoff, E. (2011). The nature of intuitive justification. *Philosophical Studies*, 153(2), 313–33.
8. Conee, E. & Feldman, R. (1998). The generality problem for reliabilism, *Philosophical Studies*, 89, 1–29.
9. Deutsch, M. (2010). Intuitions, counter-examples, and experimental philosophy, *Review of Philosophical Psychology*, 1, 447–460.
10. Gettier, E. (1963). Is justified true belief knowledge? *Analysis*, 23, 121–23.
11. Goldman, A. I. (2007). Philosophical intuitions: Their target, their source, and their epistemic status, *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 74(1), 1–26
12. Huemer, M. (2001), *Skepticism and the veil of perception*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
13. Ichikawa, J. J. (2012), Experimentalist pressure against traditional methodology, *Philosophical Psychology*, 25(5), 743–65.
14. Ichikawa, J. J. (manuscript), Who needs Intuitions? Two Experimentalist Critiques. Online: <<http://jonathanichikawa.net/papers/wni.pdf>>, retrieved 23 August, 2012.
15. Ichikawa, J. J., & Jarvis, B. W. (2013), *The Rules of Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
16. Kauppinen, A. (2007). The rise and fall of experimental philosophy,

17. Philosophical Explorations, 10(2), 95–118.
18. Kripke, S. A. (1980). Naming and necessity. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
19. Papineau, D. (2009). The poverty of analysis, Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume 83, 1–30.
20. Parsons, J. (1995). Platonism and mathematical intuition in Kurt Gödel's thought,
21. The Bulletin of Symbolic Logic 1, pp. 44–74.
22. Peacocke, C. (1992), A Study of Concepts. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
23. Putnam, H. (1963). Brains and behavior, in Mind, Language, and Reality:

