

Book Reviews

Jennifer Nado (ed.), *Advances in Experimental Philosophy and Philosophical Methodology*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016, 179 pp.

Philosophical methodology has rarely been scrutinized and a subject to various opposing accounts as much as in the last decade. One of the reasons for this are challenges raised by the naturalistic movement of experimental philosophy (xphi), which offered a negative perspective and many critiques of, generally speaking, the dominant view in contemporary philosophy about what philosophy is all about, and the significance of its distinctive method, i.e. intuitional methodology. By using methods of empirical sciences and conducting numerous researches relevant to various disciplines in philosophy, experimental philosophy challenges the overly reliance on the method of cases and intuitions as a source of evidence. As time progressed, initial experimentalist's challenges required several modifications as they received a lot of criticisms by philosophers who endorse intuitional methodology as well as those who are skeptical of it. So this volume is about experimental philosophy in relation to intuitional methodology, and attempts of "reexamining its roots—to articulate just what the targets, aims, and methods of experimental philosophy really are" as Jennifer Nado states in the introductory part (4). And each of the contributing articles gives, in one way or another, a new perspective on how experimental philosophy is to be understood, or in what direction it should advance. In this fashion they provide a useful insight into the metaphilosophical issue from experimental philosophy's point of view. This volume is one in the series *Advances in Experimental Philosophy* edited by James R. Beebe and in many levels brings insightful perspective on the currently highly debated topic in metaphilosophy, that of appealing to intuitions.

In the first article of this volume, Jonathan Weinberg, discusses the relation between the two important epistemological and methodological notions: *reliability* and *trustworthiness*. The latter is especially important in the light of Weinberg's new perspective of how experimentalist's challenge should precisely be formulated. Weinberg starts his discussion with questioning the hypothesis that it is reasonable to accept some source of evidence only on the basis that it is a reliable one. This would be true, Weinberg continues, if reliability is the "main determination of the methodological trustworthiness" (12). But since any degree of reliability less than perfect is consistent with the high degree of untrustworthiness,

Weinberg argues that the notion of baseline reliability is methodologically inadequate. That means that even if intuitions are regarded as a reliable source of evidence, they are, methodologically speaking, untrustworthy. For one thing, the weakness in our inferential recourses can transform a highly reliable source to an inadequate one, and for another, intuitions do not have sufficient power to enable us to decide between two competing theories. To furthermore support his thesis, Weinberg discusses some theoretical implications of the current philosophical practice. One of them is the high vulnerability of philosophical theories to counterexamples where it is enough just to find one such example to overrule the theory, considering that this is not standard procedure in other sciences. For this reason Weinberg investigates the possibility of a different philosophical methodology. He proposes that we should ask ourselves whether philosophical truth must have exception-intolerant form and, consequently, whether we should put more weight on methodology that is exception-tolerant. Even if we decide that modally strong claims—such as “knowledge is...”, where “is” is an identity claim—are worthy of philosophical pursuit, there are plenty theoretical results that are of value in achieving in philosophy in the exception-tolerant manner. The example of that are generic claims, as one such claim in epistemology, e.g. knowledge is justified true belief, is very useful piece of epistemological lore, according to Weinberg. And since the classical philosophical method of appealing to intuitions is not very useful in testing rival philosophical generics, Weinberg sees precisely this area as an appropriate place for experimental philosophy. It can give us tools for measuring the preference of one theory over the other, which are not just “hand-waving, it-seems-to-me kinds of ways” (29). According to this view, experimental philosophy could take the role of cleaning up philosophy’s data set.

In “How to Do Better: Toward Normalizing Experimentation in Epistemology”, John Turri is reviewing five cases where philosophers—or to be precise epistemologists—have deeply mischaracterized the “commonsense epistemology”, conception they very frequently appeal to. For instance, epistemologists, almost unanimously advocate the idea that knowledge requires reliability and that this is a matter of common sense. But when this hypothesis is put to test, results show that knowledge judgments are insensitive to the information about reliability. Turri conducted a survey where participants, typically in similar percentage, attributed knowledge to both reliably and unreliably gained processes. He found the same results in the cases of contextualism, epistemic closure principle, truth-insensitive theories of justification, and knowledge attribution in “fake barn” cases. In each of these cases epistemologists typically argue that their proposed theory is “intuitive”, “has basis in ordinary language”, or that it is “a defining feature of commonsense epistemology” (40). But when tested, subjects typically do not respond as theory predicts. Turri concludes that the standard practice in analytic philosophy is to rely on “introspection and anecdotal social observation to characterize commonsense epistemology” (45), and that this has two potentially significant implications. First is a negative perception of the contemporary academic philosophy where people are suspicious of the possibility that important philosophical questions can be answered from the armchair. Second relies on the fact that people cannot relate to judgments

that philosophers treat as obvious, intuitive or commonsensical (e.g. judgment that the “brain-in-the-vat” and normal human are equally justified in their beliefs, or that the agent in the “fake barn” case does not have knowledge). The role of preliminary experiments conducted by experimental philosophy can help to avoid these mistakes and thereby put researchers on more promising paths by avoiding the false start.

The move from talking about the main experimentalist’s target, i.e. philosophical intuitions as part of what makes philosophy methodologically unique, to the talk about thought experiments, where intuitions are generated is proposed by Joshua Alexander in his article “Thought Experiments, Mental Modeling, and Experimental Philosophy”. He thinks that this should be done by considering two dominant approaches to thought experiments in the philosophy of science: the “argument view” and the “mental model view”. The underlying idea behind the first view is that thought experiments are nothing more than colorful arguments and that they can be reconstructed as premises and assumptions leading to the conclusion. According to the second view, thought experiments are not solely arguments because narrative of the thought experiments allows us to “mobilize cognitive recourses that would not otherwise be available” (58), in terms of manipulation of mental models in our imaginations. In other words, without the narratives in thought experiments, our ability to arrive at the conclusion they are intended to support would be compromised. According to Alexander, placing a philosophical cognition in the center of the debate along the suggested lines actually makes experimental philosophy, as an empirical study about philosophical issues, more important rather than less. To clarify this thesis, Alexander discusses one of the most controversial claims in experimental philosophy, namely the claim that people think differently about the narratives used in thought experiments. This is what he calls the “narrative incompleteness” problem, according to which many details in fictional narratives are often left out for the reason to be as less distractive as possible. Now, even though some opponents of experimental philosophy would argue that this feature of fictional narratives shows that there is no philosophical disagreement but instead that people simply have different fictional narratives in mind, Alexander claims that this should not be understood as a critique of experimental philosophy. It rather underscores the relevance of experimental philosophy because it investigates how people think about fictional narratives used in philosophical thought experiments, that is, to what information used in narratives people are responding. To conclude, by reframing the discussion in terms of thought experiments instead of intuitions, Alexander is maintaining that arguments against experimental philosophy could be reinterpreted in a way to actually support a need of experimental philosophy.

The only paper in this book that does not examine prospects of experimental philosophy in a positive way is “Gettier’s Method” by Max Deutsch. He aims to revisit the broadly endorsed metaphilosophical view—also endorsed by the experimentalists—that analytic philosophy employs method of cases and that intuitions are essential part of this method. As can be extracted from Deutsch’s paper, there are two interpretations of the “intuition-view” that are under his attack:

- (i) Gettier cases are examples of appealing to intuitions as evidence, and
- (ii) Gettier cases are examples of both arguments and appealing to intuitions as evidence.

Concerning the first interpretation, Deutsch argues that Gettier does not appeal to intuitions, and that since intuitions play no role in his argument against the traditional JTB theory of knowledge, his thought experiments are not examples of the method of cases. Deutsch's reasoning is as follows. (I) Gettier nowhere uses the term "intuition", and nowhere argues that we should accept his cases on the basis of intuitiveness. And the possibility that Gettier might appeal to intuitions implicitly is rather weak, according to Deutsch. Furthermore, (II) Gettier is not vague about the justification for his conclusions, and provides an explicit argument stated in his first case as follows: even though Smith believes truly and with justification that the man who will get the job has 10 coins in his pocket, his belief is merely lucky one and does not amount to knowledge. Regarding the second interpretation that Gettier cases are examples of both arguments and appealing to intuitions as evidence, Deutsch does not undermine its possibility, but insists that there is no evidence to suggest that such a possibility is actual. Even more puzzling for Deutsch is what he calls the "usual view", according to which Gettier does presents argument against the JTB theory, but he does not present argument for premises of this argument. Instead, as this view suggests, these premises are supported by intuition alone. Deutsch argues that explicit argument for the conclusion that Smith does not know that the man who will get the job has 10 coins in his pocket, namely, the presence of luck, qualifies as a good reason for denying Smith's knowledge. And concludes that it is a mistake to understand Gettier cases in a way that he intended for intuitions to reveal the falsity of JTB theory of knowledge. The further reason Deutsch discusses of why we should reject the view that thought experiments are about appealing to intuitions is that the post Gettier literature proceeded in an entirely intuition-free way (e.g. Michael Clark (1963), Alvin Goldman (1967)).

The problem for Deutsch's view could potentially be an interpretation that the order of explanation goes the other way around, namely, via abduction Gettier is arguing that the anti-luck premise is the best explanation of the truth of the conclusion that Smith does not know. This could pose a problem for Deutsch's position only if the anti-luck condition is intended to be fully abductive, and he thinks that this is extremely unlikely. One reason is that at the time of publishing Gettier's article, it would be highly controversial and unorthodox to take conclusions as granted in order to abductively argue for the anti-luck condition. It is more likely, according to Deutsch, that Gettier intended it the other way around. Additionally, the so-called producer-consumer distinction serves as a further reason not to accept Gettier cases as paradigm examples of the method of cases. As Deutsch sees it, Gettier himself could not use intuitions as evidence since the process of constructing thought experiment is anything but "passive sort of cognizing characteristic of intuiting that something is so" (85). And even thought, we as consumers, might experience intuitions about his examples, this is irrelevant for its evidential status since Gettier construed his cases as counterexamples, and presumably had evidence for it before we get the chance to read them.

In the next article titled “Intuitive Diversity and Disagreement” Ron Mallon considers a subset of critiques against the experimental philosophy, specifically, the subset that argues that, even though Platonic armchair method (i.e. the method consulting a priori intuitions about general philosophical truths) is a bad methodology, it is not wildly employed by philosophers. And this subset of critiques offers alternative explanations of what exactly philosophers employ in such cases. Mallon’s aim is to argue that experimental philosophical challenge—or at least one version of the challenge, namely the argument from disagreement—poses the same problem for these alternative interpretations of the philosophical method as it does for the Platonic armchair method. This is because Mallone holds the following two assumption: (i) the challenge “need not depend on attacking a distinctively Platonic armchair, or on any eccentric psychological construal of the relevant mental states” (108), and (ii) intuitions “pick out the sorts of seemings or judgments involved in our target cases” and also “behavioral manifestations of those judgments produced in response to philosophical thought experimental surveys” (100).

One of the alternative interpretations under Mallone’s critique is the suggestion that philosophers do not actually appeal to intuitions as evidence. One example of this alternative interpretation is presented in the previous section when discussing Deutsch’s view. First of all, Mallone rejects the underlying idea of this alternative interpretation that just because an author gives an argument for the proposed conclusion, it follows that author’s spontaneous judgment that p plays no evidential role. According to Mallone, this is not a valid inference, for both spontaneous intuition as a source of evidence and reasons why intuition is considered to be true can be held at the same time. And this is, in Mallone’s view, supported by many thought experiments where it is obvious that they are not to be understood as pure arguments, because in order to be valid, they must be supplemented with substantial assumptions about topics under investigations (e.g. assumption about the nature of knowledge). But even if we allow that philosophers do appeal to intuitions in their arguments, critics would further argue that they need not to do so, and thus variability in intuitional judgments would no longer pose a problem for philosophy. And at this point, Mallone shows in what way this alternative explanation does not avoid the problems of the argument from disagreement. Namely, experimental philosophy criticizes “*actual* rather than *possible* practice” (115), and thusly still presents the problem for philosophical practice. The other alternative interpretation that Mallone considers in his paper is the mentalist approach, which takes that intuitions do not reveal some abstract reality as the Platonic armchair approach does, but rather facts about human concepts, or some other psychological mechanisms that produce intuitions. But nonetheless, mentalist approach is also affected by the argument from disagreement, because its proponents are interested in shared concepts. And whether some particular concept is common cannot be revealed from the armchair.

Jennifer Nado further develops the idea of “reexamining roots” in the paper “Intuitions and the Theory of Reference” she coauthored with Michael Johnson. The general idea that they develop is that experimental philosophy is especially relevant in the theory of reference, but reasons for its rel-

evance cannot be extended to other fields of philosophy. To show this, they focus on the particular experimental study conducted by Edouard Machery et al. where they find that cross-cultural differences in responses to Kripke's Gödel case undermine the viability of the intuitional methodology. Nado and Johnson argue that reports in such surveys is primary methodology in the theory of reference, but do not show, as Machery et al. claim, that relying on intuitions is a bad methodology. The reason is that such reports (i.e. judgments about cases) are "instances of speakers applying terms to things that have been generated under controlled conditions to test the predictions of different theories" (148). And cases of people applying terms for things are primary data for theory of reference. They furthermore argue that this reason is not straightforwardly applicable to other fields, since the correct application of terms, such as "time" and "consciousness", depend on some extra-linguistic facts that are not easily accessible, and therefore intuitions about those terms would be of little evidential use. So, the assessment of intuitions as a source of evidence will vary from field to field and consequently, so will the relevance of experimental philosophy.

In the last paper of this volume, "Intuitive Evidence and Experimental Philosophy", Jonathan Ichikawa claims that experimental studies are relevant for philosophical methodology, but only in the limited sense. His account of intuitions, that is intuitional methodology, is that it is a mischaracterization of philosophical practice to claim that intuitions are used in a central evidential way. But he also argues that this fact alone does not make experimental studies redundant (which is the usual stance for someone who denies evidential role of intuitions). Namely, he agrees with proponents of experimental philosophy that their surveys and interpretations of those surveys do not, in any clear way, depend on the assumption that intuitions have an evidential role. This is defended from the standpoint that empirical investigation of intuitions can be relevant for philosophical methodology even though they do not play evidential roles, since evidential role is not the only role of epistemic significance. However, Ichikawa thinks that this alone is not enough to defend experimental philosophy. He argues that even though experimental philosophy survey's results do not essentially make use of intuitions the same does not hold for their analysis. In other words, the replacement of the term "intuition" with any other non-problematic term in their analysis cannot be done straightforwardly. And this is where Ichikawa sees the biggest challenge for the defense of experimental philosophy, although not as big to make it irrelevant. For example, proponents of experimental philosophy often claim that intuitions are susceptible to order-effect which makes them not suitable as evidence. Even under the assumption that intuitions are not to have an evidential role, the fact that they are so susceptible should be the reason to doubt one's ability to rationally respond to the available evidence, and seek guidance how to proceed thereafter. To sum up, philosophical biases are epistemically relevant, and it is worthwhile to engage in attempt to detect them.

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