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The Problem of Intuitive Presence

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1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been much enthusiasm with questions about the nature and epistemology of intuitions. These questions have themselves animated a host of thorny first-order philosophical disputes in (among others) epistemology, philosophy of mind, and moral philosophy, as well as second-order discussions about the goals and methods of philosophy itself. However, many have expressed contempt for the philosophical study of intuition. A common complaint is that intuition is an inherently mysterious or (at best) elusive phenomenon. Building on these and other similar kinds of critiques, some have claimed that talk of a category of mental states called 'intuition' is simply confused and that appeal to it has given rise to what are effectively philosophical pseudo-problems.

One common line of response to these kinds of complaints has been to appeal to the historically influential perceptual analogy: the idea that intuitions and perceptual experiences are alike in many important respects. Proponents of this analogy claim that by framing the putatively elusive features of intuition in terms of the more tangible and concrete structures of perception, we can shed light on their nature and epistemology. For instance, phenomenalists about intuition claim that we can make progress in the study of intuition once we recognise that intuitions and perceptual experiences share a common *phenomenal character*. Call this the 'phenomenalist thesis'.

Despite the growing popularity of the phenomenalist thesis, insufficient attention has been given to the potential problems it raises for theories of intuition. A quick survey of the literature in the philosophy of perception reveals an array of problems in accounting for the phenomenology of perceptual experiences. This then raises the question: If we take the phenomenalist thesis seriously, would structurally similar problems arise for theories of intuition as well? I will argue that the answer is yes. I focus on the well-known problem of perceptual presence. My aim will be to show that commonalities in the phenomenology of intuition and perceptual experience suggest that a structurally similar problem arises for theories of intuition. I call this the 'problem

of *intuitive* presence'. I then go on to argue that an enactivist account of intuitions stands the best chance of solving this problem.

In this paper, I first explain and motivate the *phenomenalist* thesis (sec. 2). I then introduce the problem of perceptual presence (sec. 3) and articulate the structurally similar problem of intuitive presence (sec. 4). Lastly, I survey solutions to the problem of perceptual presence and explore whether analogous proposals prove effective against the problem of intuitive presence (sec. 5). I conclude by suggesting that future inquiry on the nature of intuitions should focus on developing an enactivist view of intuitions.

2. The phenomenalist thesis

According to a widely shared view, perceptual experiences are mental states characterised in part by their distinctive phenomenal character. Proponents of this view have adopted a variety of labels to describe this feature of perceptual experiences. For example, some define it as a kind of phenomenal or assertoric 'force' which makes it seem as if one could tell that the contents of perceptual experiences are true (Pryor, 2000; Huemer, 2001; Heck, 2000). Others define it instead in terms of the feeling of being 'pulled' or 'pushed' to assent (Sosa, 2007, p. 47; Koksvik, 2020) or of being immediately *presented* with how things are in the world (Chudnoff, 2013; Bengson, 2015). Despite important differences among these many descriptions, they all share a common core claim: namely, that perceptual experiences have a phenomenology that purports to *reveal* the world to us (Siegel & Silins, 2015). Examples prove helpful to clarify this phenomenal character of perceptual experiences.

Suppose you see a purple wall in front of you. You carefully examine its shape, textures, and the way in which its hue changes slightly as you move your eyes across its surface. Now compare this with the case in which you just imagine a purple wall in front of you. What is the difference between seeing the purple wall and imagining it? Here is one important difference: whereas your perceptual experience will seem to *reveal* to you that there is a wall right there, your imaginative exercise will fail to do so. At most, your imagination will make you aware of an *internal* representation of a wall. Similarly, supposing or assuming there is a wall in front of you will not *reveal* a wall to you in the same way that your perceptual experience does. Instead, it will at most make you entertain the possibility that this proposition is true. And even if you come to believe or judge that there is a wall in front of you, this belief or judgement will at most represent that this is true—but will lack the phenomenology that makes it seem as if the wall is *revealed* to you.

Phenomenalists about intuition argue that similar examples prove apt to characterise the phenomenology of intuitions. By comparing and contrasting intuitions with other mental states, they seek to establish that intuitions have a phenomenology that is strikingly similar to that of perceptual experiences (Chudnoff, 2013; Bengson, 2015; Koksvik, 2020). Phenomenalists diverge in how they flesh out this proposal and in how they characterise this phenomenology. But it is important to emphasise that such disagreements are set against a backdrop of substantial consensus (Koksvik, 2017). Yet there is still no well-established vocabulary to capture such points of agreement. I propose one such vocabulary here: I contend that a core claim of all phenomenalist accounts is that, like perceptual experiences, intuitions also have a phenomenology that purports to *reveal* the world to us. Accordingly, I take it that the examples phenomenalists use to articulate their claims prove apt to illustrate at least this phenomenal feature of intuitions. To explain, consider the example from Elijah Chudnoff (2013, p. 50), who invites readers to entertain the following proposition:

P1 Two circles can have at most two common points.

Chudnoff claims that after considering P1, readers will likely visualise two circles intersecting and that this will elicit an intuition that P1 is true. Moreover, he points out that this intuition will have a phenomenology that is strikingly similar to that of perceptual experiences. Now, Chudnoff's claim is *not* that imagining two circles intersecting will

itself seem to reveal to you this mathematical fact; rather, his contention is that this episode of imagining gives rise to an intuition which has this characteristic phenomenology. In line with my proposed terminology, I take Chudnoff to be saying that, similar to how a perceptual experience of a purple wall seems to simply *reveal* the purple wall to you, your *intuition* that P1 is true (and not your visualisation) seems to *reveal* to you the mathematical fact that two circles have at most two common points. By contrast, Chudnoff claims that considering the following alternative proposition is unlikely to elicit a mental state with a similar phenomenology:

> P2 If a quadrilateral is inscribed in a circle, the sum of the products of the two pairs of opposite sides is equal to the product of the diagonals.

After reading P2, readers might be puzzled or curious about whether this proposition is true, but considering it will most likely not seem to *reveal* to you whether P2 is true or false. And even if one may come to believe or judge that P2 is true by arriving at some proof of this claim, this belief or judgement will be importantly distinct from an intuition that P2 is true—which would purportedly immediately *reveal* this claim to be true.

John Bengson (2015) adopts a similar argumentative strategy in support of his phenomenalist account of intuitions. One of the examples he appeals to in order to motivate this account is the well-known Gettier case. The following is one variation of this thought experiment:

> *Goldfinch*: Arjun sees what appears to be a goldfinch in the tree. He then comes to believe that there is a goldfinch there. Unbeknownst to him, Arjun sees only a cardboard cut-out of a goldfinch behind which there is a real goldfinch hidden completely out of sight. Does Arjun know there is a goldfinch in the tree?

Bengson's (2015, p. 711) suggestion is that Gettier intuitions—such as the intuition that Arjun does not know there is a goldfinch in the tree—will bear important similarities to perceptual experiences. In line with the vocabulary proposed above, I take Bengson's claim to mean that, similar to how your perceptual experience of a purple wall will seem to *reveal* a wall in front of you, your intuition about *Goldfinch* will purport to *reveal* to you that Arjun does not know there is a goldfinch in the tree. Moreover, Bengson (2015, p. 717) contends this intuition will be importantly different from the mental state that ensues after considering the following claim:

> P3 1,729 is the smallest number expressible as the sum of two positive cubes in two different ways.

Bengson expects that readers will not have a mental state with a similar phenomenology as an intuition about a Gettier case. That is, considering P3 will unlikely elicit a mental state that seems to *reveal* to you that this is true or false. And although one might even come to believe and judge P3 to be true (say, after going through some calculations), the resulting mental state will be rather different from an intuition like the one had in response to *Goldfinch*.

Relying on a host of other similar examples (all of which purport to show a marked contrast in the phenomenology of intuitions and of other mental states), phenomenalists seek to establish that intuitions and perceptual experiences are mental states defined (in part) by their common phenomenal character (Chudnoff, 2013; Bengson, 2015; Koksvik, 2020). In line with the discussion above, I propose we interpret this thesis in terms of the claim that both intuitions and perceptual experiences have a distinctive phenomenology that seems to *reveal* the world to us.

For the sake of argument, I will grant this phenomenalist thesis in what follows. Thus, I use the unqualified term 'intuition' to refer to mental states that have the phenomenology that purports to *reveal* the world to us. My aim is to explore a heretofore neglected facet of this proposal: namely, that if we take the perceptual analogy seriously (in the way that phenomenalists develop it), then a version of the well-known problem of perceptual presence arises for theories of intuition.

As a first step to developing this claim, I begin by giving a brief overview of discussions about the problem of perceptual presence.

3. The problem of perceptual presence

Suppose you are now looking at a red apple under ordinary visibility conditions: lighting is good, you are facing the apple straight-on, there are no mirrors around, etc. In these conditions, you will likely have a visual experience that seems to reveal a red apple to you (one which you could pick up and eat if you so pleased). Now consider: What if what you were looking at was just a red *apple peel*, perfectly positioned to look just like an apple? Would you be able to tell? That is, would you recognise you were not looking at an apple but just a well-positioned *apple peel*? Most likely not.

Consider another case. Suppose you are blindfolded and handed an object. As soon as you grab it, you have the perceptual experience that seems to reveal that you are holding a large glass bottle. Now suppose that what you were handed was just a curved piece of heavy glass in the exact shape of your hand. If this were the case, would you realise that you were holding a well-positioned piece of glass rather than a whole bottle? Again, most likely not.

These examples underscore a puzzling fact: although our perceptual experiences seem to reveal whole three-dimensional objects to us, the visual stimuli we receive from them are greatly restricted. We *seem* to be visually aware of a whole voluminous apple, but it is patently clear that we receive visual stimuli from only its front face. We *seem* to be aware of a whole bottle in our hands, yet we receive tactile stimuli from only the part of the bottle that is in contact with our hand. Since we receive sensory stimuli from only the front face of an apple, why does our visual experience not seem to reveal to us an apple-part instead—i.e., something that could be either a whole voluminous apple or a perfectly well-positioned apple peel? Similarly, why does our tactile experience seem to reveal to us a whole bottle and not just a bottle-part—something which could be either a whole bottle or just a heavy piece of glass of the exact shape of our hands? Do we just assume, judge, or believe that we perceive a whole apple or bottle, or is there some other explanation for why our perceptual experience seems to reveal to us more than the sensory stimuli we receive from the world? These are the questions that characterise the 'problem of perceptual presence' (Noë, 2004; Leddington, 2009; Kind, 2018).

Two clarifications about this problem are in order. First, it is important to emphasise that the problem of perceptual presence is a puzzle about the *nature* of perceptual experiences—in particular of their phenomenology. An adequate solution to this problem must account for the fact that perceptual experiences seem to reveal more to us than do the sensory stimuli we receive from the world. The problem of perceptual presence is thus not *itself* about the epistemology of perceptual experiences. This is not to say that solutions to this problem have no bearing on debates about the epistemology of perceptual experiences. But these epistemological questions are secondary to the primary issue of the nature of such experiences.

Second, the problem of perceptual presence relates to another (distinct) prominent issue about the nature of perception: namely, that of *what* is the object of experience (Clarke, 1965; Strawson, 1988). For instance, when looking at the front face of the apple, do you actually perceive an apple or only the front face of an apple (i.e., some object which is shared by apples and perfectly well-positioned apple peels)? Solutions to the problem of perceptual presence are orthogonal to this more robust ontological matter. The problem here is that of accounting for the *phenomenology* of perceptual experiences. And note that the phenomenology of our perceptual experience of an apple remains unchanged, regardless of whether the object of experience is an apple or merely an apple surface. In both cases, you will seem to see a whole voluminous apple in front of you.

In sum, the problem of perceptual presence is a puzzle about the nature of the phenomenology of perceptual experiences. In particular, it concerns the question of what accounts for the fact that perceptual experiences purport to reveal objects out in the world to us, even though it is patently clear that we receive sensory stimuli from only

parts of those objects at any one time. In the next section, I explain how a version of the problem of perceptual presence arises for phenomenalist theories of intuition.

4. The problem of intuitive presence

As a first step to developing the arguments in this section, let's once more consider the examples discussed in the previous sections.

P1 Two circles can have at most two common points.

As already discussed, Chudnoff claims that considering P1 will likely prompt the reader to visualise two circles intersecting and that this will elicit the intuition that P1 is true. I want to focus on some important details of this series of mental events. In particular, I want to call attention to the fact that in this imaginative exercise, you will have considered no more than one concrete realisation of two circles intersecting. Even so, your visualisation will suffice to elicit an intuition that seems to reveal to you that for *every pair of circles*, they will intersect in at most two points. With these considerations in mind, I want to now highlight some structural commonalities between this intuition and the kinds of cases used to motivate the problem of perceptual presence.

Recall that the problem of perceptual presence gains traction in light of examples of perceptual experiences that purport to reveal to us whole objects, even though it is patently clear that we receive sensory stimuli from only parts of those objects at any one time. Similar observations prove apt to characterise your intuition about P1. That is because your intuition will seem to reveal to you the purported mathematical fact that *every* pair of circles has at most two common points, even though it is clear that you do not entertain all and every case of how two circles can intersect. For instance, you most likely did not consider circles in non-euclidean geometry or circles mapped onto three-dimensional planes. Nevertheless, your intuition about P1 will have a phenomenology that seems to reveal to you a universal fact about *all* circles. In effect, this demonstrates that the intuition that P1 is true has a phenomenology that greatly outstrips the small set of concrete examples which you explicitly entertained in your imaginative exercise. How do we account for this gap between your intuition and what you directly entertain in your mind? Do you have this intuition because you believe, judge, or simply infer that all pairs of circles will be like the ones visualised? Or is there some other explanation for the fact that your intuition outstrips your visualisation of this one set of circles intersecting? These are the kinds of questions that characterise what I call the 'problem of *intuitive* presence'.

To further elucidate the nature of the problem of intuitive presence, consider another example. Previously, we looked at the case of *Goldfinch* in which Arjun sees a cardboard cut-out of a goldfinch hanging on a tree behind which there is a real goldfinch hidden (sec. 2). As already discussed, considering a Gettier case like *Goldfinch* will elicit an intuition that the character in this scenario will not know a given proposition (in this case, that Arjun does not know there to be a goldfinch in the tree). I want to again consider details of this progression of mental events. First, in considering the scenario described, the reader will bring to mind those things *explicitly* mentioned in the scenario (e.g., that Arjun is walking through a grove and that there is both a goldfinch cut-out and a goldfinch in the tree) plus some other small details (e.g., that Arjun has two eyes and that the tree has leaves). Second, after being prompted to assess whether Arjun knows there is a goldfinch in the tree, it will likely seem to the reader that he does not know as much.

Once more, I want to draw out some commonalities between this intuition and cases of perceptual experience that outstrip the sensory stimuli received from the environment. Note that although your intuition seems to reveal to you that Arjun does not know there is a goldfinch in the tree, you most likely did not explicitly consider this when entertaining the details of this scenario. After all, nowhere in *Goldfinch* is there any mention that Arjun's predicament *rules out* that he knows there is a goldfinch in the tree. Indeed, as many have observed, it is perfectly compatible with the case of *Goldfinch* that Arjun knows as much (Williamson, 2007; Ichikawa & Jarvis, 2009; Malmgren, 2011;

Saint-Germier, 2021). For instance, suppose Arjun knows that in this grove he strolls through, people tend to put up goldfinch cut-outs and that on all such trees there is always at least one real goldfinch. Arjun thus presumably knows that even if he is mistaken about whether he sees a real goldfinch or just a cut-out on a tree, he is sure there will be one real goldfinch on it. Arjun would then arguably know that there is a goldfinch in the tree. And note that this is just one among a host of ways in which we can "fill in" *Goldfinch* to make it the case that Arjun knows this. This then underscores a gap between what the scenario of *Goldfinch* describes and what your intuition about this case seems to reveal to you—viz., that Arjun actually doesn't know there is a goldfinch in the tree. Your intuition about *Goldfinch* thus has a phenomenology that greatly outstrips the details of the scenario which you entertained. Again, I contend that insofar as similar considerations motivate thinking there is a problem of perceptual presence, then we should think that an analogous problem of intuitive presence arises for theories of intuition.

So, there are important commonalities between some representative cases of intuitions and instances of perceptual experiences that characterise the problem of perceptual presence. The perceptual experiences in question purport to reveal objects in the world to us, even though we receive stimuli from only some parts of those objects. Similarly, I have argued that some representative cases of intuition seem to reveal to us things we do not (or cannot) directly entertain in our minds. Thus, I contend that a version of the problem of perceptual presence arises for theories of intuition. This is the problem of intuitive presence.

For the remainder of this paper, I explore solutions to the problem of intuitive presence. But before proceeding, it is important to highlight a structural *difference* between this problem and the problem of perceptual presence. Consider again an example of the latter: your perceptual experience that there is an apple in front of you after you receive sensory stimuli from its front face. As we saw, this case raises the question of why you have one kind of perceptual experience rather than another: namely, why do you have a perceptual experience of an apple (which greatly outstrips the information received from the environment) rather than a perceptual experience of just an apple's front face (which better tracks the sensory stimuli received)? This is the kind of question that characterises the problem of perceptual presence. Now, consider the case in which visualising one concrete realisation of circles intersecting gives rise to an intuition that P1 is true. Note that this progression of mental events raises a structurally different question: Why does being in one kind of mental state with a certain content (a visualisation of circles intersecting) cause *another* kind of mental state with a content that greatly outstrips the first one (an intuition that all circles intersect in at most two points)? To underscore the difference at stake, suppose the problem of intuitive presence were indeed perfectly analogous to the problem of perceptual presence. If so, then the right question to ask would be, Why do you have one kind of *visualisation* rather than another? That is, why do you have a *visualisation* that seems to reveal that every pair of circles has at most two common points rather than just *visualising* that those circles considered do? The fact that this question is nonsensical highlights the structural difference between the two problems.

Despite this important difference, I maintain that the problem of intuitive presence is indeed a *version* of the problem of perceptual presence. That is because at a certain level of abstraction, both raise a similar kind of question: How do we account for the fact that some mental states purport to *reveal* more to us than what we would reasonably expect them to? For instance, after receiving sensory stimuli from only the front face of the apple, we may reasonably expect to have a perceptual experience that seems to reveal only that, yet we have a perceptual experience that seems to reveal a whole apple. Similarly, after visualising a single instance of two circles intersecting, we may reasonably expect to have an intuition that seems to reveal only that *those* particular circles have at most two common points. However, we have the intuition that seems to reveal an abstract truth about *all* circles. The mental events involved in these two cases are, of course,

distinct. But, arguably, both bear the important structural commonality mentioned above. In this sense, I take it that developments in debates about the problem of perceptual presence may prove instructive for tackling the problem of intuitive presence. I develop this idea further in the next section.

5. Sketching a solution

In this section, I consider and evaluate potential solutions for the problem of intuitive presence. My approach will be to survey prominent accounts attempting to solve the problem of perceptual presence and then sketch analogous proposals for the problem of intuitive presence. I then assess these analogous proposals. My aim is to show that we have good reasons to further explore the prospects of an enactivist view of intuitions.

5.1 Doxastic accounts

One potential solution to the problem of perceptual presence invokes doxastic accounts of perceptual experience. The core claim of these accounts is that beliefs, judgements, or inclinations to believe or judge are poised to shape perceptual experiences. Assuming this is right, it can be argued that when you receive sensory stimuli from the front face of an apple, you judge or believe (or have an inclination to judge or believe) that there is a whole voluminous apple there. Moreover, this can presumably be taken to give rise to a perceptual experience that seems to reveal a whole voluminous apple to you.

Although seemingly plausible, some have argued that appealing to doxastic states or inclinations cannot help us solve the problem of perceptual presence. The famous Kanizsa triangle visual illusion is useful to clarify this position (see figure 1).

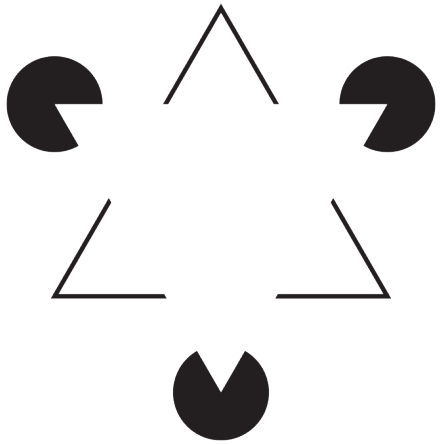

Figure 1: Kanizsa Triangle

Most people will have a visual experience that seems to reveal an upright solid white triangle when they look at figure 1. It is, however, clear that there is no solid white triangle there. The Kanizsa triangle is thus another instance of the problem of perceptual presence: your perceptual experience of a solid white triangle outstrips the sensory stimuli received from figure 1. Now, what is crucial to emphasise is that most people will not believe or judge (or be inclined to believe or judge) that there really is a white solid triangle there. Thus, there seems to be no relevant doxastic state or inclination we can invoke to account for the gap between what we see in figure 1 and our perceptual experience of seeming to have a white triangle revealed to us. This, then, suggests that appeals to doxastic accounts of perceptual experience will fail to solve the problem of perceptual presence.

Analogous considerations can be given for the problem of intuitive presence. To illustrate, consider the well-known case of Mary the neuroscientist:

> *Colour blind*: Mary knows every scientific fact there is about colour vision. Sadly, Mary was born entirely colour-blind. As a result, she sees everything in shades of black and white. After undergoing corrective surgery for this condition, she sets eyes on a red rose for the first time. Does Mary learn something new at that moment?

If the reader is like me, you will have an intuition that seems to reveal to you that Mary does learn something new. Furthermore, I contend that this intuition is another instance of the problem of intuitive presence. For, note that this intuition outstrips the details of the scenario described in *Colour blind*—which does not mention that Mary does learn something new. What is crucial to emphasise is that some people who report having this intuition ultimately reject it. For instance, Frank Jackson (2003) claims that he shares this intuition, but he argues that since it turns on a mistaken conception of the nature of perceptual experience, then we should conclude that Mary does not learn something new when she sees the red rose. Jackson thus presumably does not believe or judge (nor is he inclined to believe or judge) that Mary learns something new in this case. But if Jackson does not believe or judge (nor is inclined to believe or judge) as much, then there does not seem to be any relevant doxastic state or inclination we can appeal to in order to explain his intuition. This, then, arguably shows that doxastic accounts of intuition cannot help us solve the problem of intuitive presence.

In sum, solutions that invoke doxastic accounts of intuition seem to fail because there are cases of people who have an intuition that p yet do not believe, judge, or are inclined to believe or judge that p. To a first approximation, this argument might seem compelling. However, proponents of doxastic accounts have adopted two different strategies to try to show that their views can indeed capture these kinds of cases. The first strategy is to acknowledge that one can have an intuition that p and not believe or judge that p but to insist that in these cases one will nevertheless have an *inclination* to believe or judge accordingly (Williamson, 2007; Earlenbaugh & Molyneux, 2009). So, when Jackson has an intuition that Mary learns something new, he will not believe or judge that this is the case, but he will still be *inclined* to believe or judge as much—an inclination which he eventually resists. The second strategy is to claim that having an intuition that p is reducible to a doxastic state or inclination with a *different* content—other than p. One way of fleshing out this proposal is to say that having an intuition that p is the same as having a belief (or an inclination to believe) that one is in a mental state M that provides evidence for p (see, e.g., Conee, 2013; Tooley, 2013).[1] Crucially, this falls short of actually believing or being inclined to believe *p itself*. So, when Jackson has an intuition that Mary learns something new, he may indeed not believe or be inclined to believe accordingly; however, he still believes (or is inclined to believe) that the mental state he is in after considering *Colour blind* provides evidence that Mary learns something new.

In effect, both these strategies claim that having an intuition is the same as having a doxastic state or inclination of some sort. If this is correct, then the objections discussed above would fail: there is indeed *some* doxastic state or inclination we can appeal to in order to try to account for the problem of intuitive presence. However, it is notable that both these strategies have themselves been independently criticised. For instance, Chudnoff (2013, pp. 41–44) argues that proponents of the first strategy face a dilemma: either the doxastic inclination in question is conscious or it is not. He explains that if it is conscious, then it should be apparent to anyone who has an intuition that p that they have an inclination to believe or judge accordingly. However, he points that there are cases in which we have intuitions without any such doxastic inclinations. I agree. As already mentioned, I have the intuition that Mary learns something new when I consider *Colour blind*. However, I can safely report that I do not have a *conscious* inclination to believe or judge as much. To claim otherwise would effectively beg

1. Notably, the views advanced by Conee and Tooley are about the nature of *seemings*. Here, I am taking on the plausible (and widely endorsed) assumption that intuitions are *seemings*.

the question. This, then, leads us to the second horn of the dilemma: the doxastic inclination is unconscious. Chudnoff argues that if this is the case, then it is hard to see how the doxastic inclination contributes to the overall *phenomenal* character of our intuition. And since the problem of intuitive presence is a puzzle about the phenomenology of intuitions, then I contend that appealing to this first strategy will fail to solve this problem.[2]

Let's now turn to critiques of the second strategy—specifically of the claim that having an intuition that p is the same as having a doxastic state or inclination that one's mental state is evidence for p. Recent arguments by Michael Huemer (2013) suggest that this proposal fails. His arguments focus on cases of perceptual experiences, but as we will see, they apply just as well to cases of intuitions. In effect, Huemer contends that believing or being inclined to believe that one's mental state is evidence for p is not necessary for having a perceptual experience that p. Consider the case of an external world sceptic who neither believes nor is inclined to believe that her mental states are evidence for claims about the external world. Nevertheless, this sceptic presumably still has perceptual experiences that seem to reveal there is an external world to her. Similar considerations extend to cases of intuitions. A person who is convinced intuitions do not provide evidence for anything whatsoever presumably still has intuitions that seem to reveal things to her—even if she neither believes nor is inclined to believe that her intuitions provide evidence for any particular claim. Taken together with the other arguments discussed above, this objection shows that, in at least some cases, there does not seem to be a doxastic state or inclination we can appeal to in order to explain cases of the problem of intuitive presence.

In sum, there are reasons to be sceptical that doxastic accounts will help us solve the problem of intuitive presence. Now, I am not claiming that these critiques provide knock-down arguments against attempts to invoke doxastic accounts for this purpose. However, I maintain that they underscore significant concerns about such an approach. In light of these issues, I suggest we explore alternative solutions.

2. For additional critiques of this first strategy, see Koksvik (2020, ch. 2.7) and Bengson (2015).

5.2 Imagination-based solutions

Another recently influential attempt to solve the problem of perceptual presence appeals to capacities for *imagination*. The particular conception of imagination at issue in this proposal refers to the distinctive mental state of forming a *mental image*. In this view, to say that one imagines a white cup is to say that one has a quasi-perceptual image of a white cup in the "mind's eye".

Imagination-based solutions to the problem of perceptual presence rely on two central premises: i) that episodes of imagination and perceptual experiences share a similar phenomenological profile and ii) that by virtue of this, episodes of imagination are poised to contribute to the phenomenal character of perceptual experiences (Kind, 2018; cf. Nanay, 2010). The first of these claims gains traction in light of empirical findings, which show that imagination and perceptual experiences can sometimes be indistinguishable (Perky, 1910). Building on these findings, many have argued that imagination and perceptual experiences (at least sometimes) have a similar phenomenology (Nanay, 2010; Kind, 2018). This is not to say that imagination has *precisely* the same phenomenal character as perceptual experiences. After all, imaginings will not purport to reveal things in the world in the same way that perceptual experiences do. But given there are at least some significant phenomenological similarities, it seems plausible that imaginings may sometimes contribute to the overall phenomenal character of perceptual experiences. When taken together, these claims offer a natural solution to the problem of perceptual presence. On this account, when we receive sensory stimuli from the front face of an apple, we will come to imagine that there is a whole apple there. This episode of imagining will have a particular phenomenological profile that is poised to contribute to the overall phenomenal character of our perceptual experience. Thus, our imaginative and perceptual capacities

work in tandem to produce a perceptual experience which seems to reveal a whole voluminous apple there.

We can outline an analogous imagination-based solution for the problem of intuitive presence. To get this proposal off the ground, we can appeal to the idea that similarity in the phenomenology of mental states is transitive. This means that if some mental state A has the same phenomenology as another mental state B, and B has the same phenomenology as mental state C, then A and C have the same phenomenology. Now, if episodes of imagination and perceptual experiences share a similar phenomenological profile, and so do perceptual experiences and intuitions, then imagination and intuition presumably have this same phenomenological profile. Furthermore, given that imagination is poised to shape perceptual experiences by virtue of having this common phenomenological profile and if intuition also shares that same profile, then we should conclude that imagination is thereby poised to shape intuitions as well. Accordingly, it can be argued that what explains the fact that intuitions outstrip what one directly considers in one's mind is that imaginative capacities contribute to the overall phenomenal character of intuitions.

To a first approximation, this solution to the problem of intuitive presence may appear promising. After all, appeals to imagination seem well suited to account for the problem of perceptual presence, and if we accept that phenomenological similarity is transitive, then we should expect appeals to imagination to aptly explain cases of the problem of intuitive presence as well. Although seemingly compelling, I will now argue that this argument fails. To begin, note that it is indeed clear how episodes of imaginings can help us account for the gap between the sensory stimuli we receive from the world and what perceptual experiences seem to reveal to us. For instance, it is plausible that when we receive sensory stimuli from the front face of an apple, we form a mental image of an apple—which, in turn, contributes to having a perceptual experience of a whole apple in front of us. However, similar considerations do not seem available for instances of the problem of intuitive presence. Consider once more the intuition that two circles have at most two common points. Now, I contend there is no particular mental image that can help us account for this intuition. For we obviously do not conjure a mental image of all and every pair of circles intersecting in our minds (this would be impossible). And nor does there seem to be a single identifiable mathematical property of circles that we can imagine which would bridge the gap between what this intuition purports to reveal to us and what we directly entertain in our minds. After all, if we had such a mental image of a mathematical property, I would expect to be able to pinpoint that property. However, I expect that like me, the reader will be somewhat befuddled if asked to identify what exactly is this property of circles you purportedly imagine when you have this intuition. In this sense, there seems to be no particular mental image we can invoke to explain the gap between our intuition that circles intersect in at most two points and what we directly entertain in our minds. Thus, even if imagination-based solutions prove apt for the problem of perceptual presence, I maintain they fail to account for the problem of intuitive presence.

5.3 An enactivist solution

Another recently influential solution to the problem of perceptual presence invokes enactivist theories of perception. The central tenet of such views is that actions play a fundamental role in perceptual experiences. However, proponents of enactivism diverge widely in how they develop this thesis. In what follows, I will focus on the popular sensorimotor formulation of enactivism defended by Kevin O'Regan and Alva Noë (2001), as it is perhaps the one that more fully engages with the problem of perceptual presence.[3]

3. Although I do not have space to develop this here, the arguments in this section can be made compatible with other influential currents of enactivist theorising, such as radical enactivism (Hutto & Myin, 2012) or autopoietic enactivism (Weber & Varela, 2002; Di Paolo, 2005). However, to achieve this, I believe we must make recourse to some additional resources from ecological psychology—specifically to the notion of 'mental affordances' (McClelland, 2020).

Sensorimotor enactivism builds on the commonplace observation that over the course of life, people learn how bodily actions modulate the sensory stimuli they receive from the environment. For instance, repeated exposure to apples will afford understanding of how, among other things, walking towards an apple will make it look bigger, how moving one's head around it will allow one to see its other sides, and how its colour changes under different kinds of lighting. Likewise, after receiving myriad auditory stimuli from the world, we gain an understanding of how a sound gets louder when we move closer to its source, how running past its source at a certain angle will change the pitch, and that sounds are perceived differently underwater. These patterns in how bodily actions affect perception are denominated *sensorimotor contingencies*. The main idea of sensorimotor enactivism is that perception depends on implicit mastery of these sensorimotor contingencies. So, to have a visual experience of an object, one must have an ability to predict, *inter alia*, how bodily actions would modulate the sensory stimuli received from that object.

Sensorimotor enactivism offers a natural solution to the problem of perceptual presence (Noë, 2004, p. 59 ff.). On this view, even if a perceiver directly attends only to an apple's front face, their deep and rich understanding of their sensorimotor relations to the apple would suffice to produce the visual experience of a whole voluminous apple. Likewise, what explains the perceptual experience that one is holding a bottle even when one is in direct contact with only parts of it is that one has mastery of how moving one's hand would change the sensory stimulus received from the bottle. More generally then, what explains the gap between what perceptual experiences purport to reveal to us and the sensory stimulus received from the environment are these abilities for predicting how bodily actions would affect what one attends to.

The suggestion that enactivism about perception can resolve the problem of perceptual presence raises the question of whether an analogous view for intuitions is apt to solve the problem of intuitive presence. In what follows, I assess the viability of this proposal. But, before proceeding, it will be useful to quickly address an objection in the offing. Although enactivism has proven widely influential, many contest its tenability (see, e.g., Block, 2005; Prinz, 2006). Accordingly, one might question whether similar concerns would not carry over to enactivism about intuition. Although I do not have space to fully engage with this concern here, it is noteworthy that all such concerns about enactivism turn on doubts about the putative relation between perception and *sensory* capacities. Given that by all accounts intuitions do not directly involve sensory capacities, I find there is little reason to think concerns would carry over to enactivism about intuitions. And so, I put these concerns aside.

Roughly, enactivism about intuitions is the view that actions play a fundamental role in giving rise to intuitions. What kinds of actions? One proposal that immediately suggests itself is that, analogous to enactivism about perception, intuitions depend on *bodily* actions. However, this proposal is ultimately untenable. Bodily actions affect what sensory information we gain from our *environment*. But since most intuitions do not seem to reveal to us things about our environment, it is hard to see what difference bodily actions would make to them. Instead, I contend that we should focus on the connection between intuitions and *mental* actions. The notion of a 'mental action' refers to episodes in which agents make use of their cognitive capacities to affect what they intellectually attend to.[4] Paradigm examples of mental actions include, *inter alia*, counting back from 10, deliberating whether to get up from the sofa, manipulating a mental image, and mentally considering the details of a fictional scenario. In all these cases, agents employ cognitive effort to modulate what they attend to in their minds.

Focusing on this notion of mental actions suggests the following formulation of enactivism about intuitions: intuitions depend in some fundamental way on our understanding of how mental actions would affect what we attend to. This version of enactivism offers a promising solution to the problem of intuitive presence. To explain, consider

4. This definition of mental action is compatible with many of the recent attempts at defining this term (see especially O'Brien & Soteriou, 2009).

once more the intuition that P1 is true—i.e., that two circles can have at most two common points. On the enactivist solution sketched here, this intuition can purportedly be explained by recourse to an ability to predict how mental actions would affect what one directly attends to in one's mind. Plausibly, the ability in question is that of predicting how some further acts of manipulating mental images of two circles would yield a similar result to the single case of circles intersecting visualised. In other words, this ability would involve an understanding of how these further acts of mental imagery would reveal that for whatever pair of circles one brings to mind, those circles would intersect in at most two points. So, although one brings to mind only the case of the two *specific* circles, this *ability to predict how further acts of imagining would render a similar result* accounts for the phenomenology of being revealed a universal truth about *all* pairs of circles.

To further elaborate this enactivist solution to the problem of intuitive presence, consider once more the intuition that Arjun does not know there is a goldfinch in the tree. As we saw, this intuition outstrips the verbal description in *Goldfinch*. According to the enactivist account of intuitions sketched above, we could bridge this gap by making recourse to an ability for predicting how mental acts affect intellectual attention. I contend that we think of this ability as that of predicting how further mental acts (of, say, visualisation or imagination) could "fill in" the details of *Goldfinch* to render it a case which *rules out* that Arjun knows there is a goldfinch in the tree.

In sum, enactivism about intuitions seems to offer a viable solution to the problem of intuitive presence. Of course, a fully satisfactory evaluation of this proposal will require fleshing out the enactivist theory of intuitions in more detail. There is not space to provide such a detailed articulation here, but it is important to pause and make at least two further observations about this view. First, there is an objection in the offing that is worth addressing. The objection starts from the claim that imaginative exercises are plausibly mental actions. After all, I can easily direct my attention to imagine, say, a dancing fox or a seal wearing a knitted jumper. This then raises the question of whether there is a version of enactivism about intuition in which imagination plays a fundamental role in intuitions. If so, then concerns I raised for imagination-based solutions to the problem of intuitive presence would presumably carry over to this enactivist solution as well (sec. 5.2). The concern would be that there is no *particular* mental image that is poised to account for the gap between what intuitions purport to reveal to us and what we directly attend to in our minds.

In reply, it is first important to emphasise a crucial feature of the enactivist view sketched above. Note that although this view posits a link between intuition and mental actions, this is not to say that mental acts are *themselves* constitutive elements of intuitions. Instead, the view is that intuitions depend on an *ability to predict how such mental acts would modulate intellectual attention*. So, even if certain intuitions are linked to imagination, this does not mean intuitions will depend on any particular imaginative exercise—but only on an understanding of how imaginative exercises *would* change what we attend to. Thus, the enactivist view is not vulnerable to the critique I raised to the imagination-based solutions to the problem of intuitive presence.

Second, it will be useful to compare and contrast this enactivist view of intuitions and an account of the nature of *expert* intuitions recently advanced by Chudnoff. According to this account, *expert* intuitions are grounded in superior capacities for solving problems (Chudnoff, 2020). Chudnoff fleshes out this idea in terms of the claim that expert intuitions stem from superior strategies for seeking solutions within a given *problem space*. Let us quickly clarify these terms. A problem space refers to all elements in a problem as well as their potential configurations and the end goal. A search strategy in problem-solving refers to a particular way of (i) representing a problem space, (ii) exploring different states within the problem space, and (iii) gathering information about which of those states gets one closer to the goal and which do not. Chudnoff's main contention is that improved performance in any of these three components of a search strategy engenders expert intuitions (Chudnoff, 2020, ch. 3). For instance, consider expert intuitions in chess. The problem space in a chess match encompasses all of the

chess pieces in their initial configuration, the permissible operations on those pieces, all possible configurations of the board accessible through those operations, and the goal (winning the match). In line with Chudnoff's account, we can say that expert intuitions in chess can be traced back to superior performance in either representing the many possible configurations of the chess board or in exploring these configurations and gathering information about which of them contribute to the goal of winning the match.

Crucially, Chudnoff's account of expert intuition is compatible with the enactivist view of intuitions sketched above. To clarify, suppose a chess grandmaster's expert intuition about a particular match stems from a superior capacity for representing the relevant problem space. Specifically, imagine that this is because she has the capacity to narrow down the large problem space of a given chess match to only those few configurations that are likely to lead her to win. In line with Chudnoff's suggestions, we can account for this capacity in terms of an enactivist view. Specifically, we can say that the chess grandmaster has an ability to predict how further mental acts of exploring the whole problem space would modulate her attention and thus gather information about which configurations would prove more conducive to winning that match.[5] This ability may then guide her in narrowing down the problem space accordingly. Thus, I contend that Chudnoff's view of expert intuitions can be (at least partially) fleshed out in terms of the enactivist view of intuitions.

Now, despite this degree of compatibility between the two views, note that they are importantly different. Perhaps the most notable difference is that Chudnoff's account is restricted to *expert* intuitions, whereas the enactivist view sketched out above can presumably account for any intuition whatsoever. In this sense, the enactivist view has a broader applicability. A second important difference is that the enactivist view identifies a particular kind of ability that underwrites intuitions—viz., an ability for predicting how certain mental actions modulate attention. Chudnoff's account, however, specifies a more general structure undergirding expert intuitions. And in this sense, it can presumably be made compatible with other accounts of the nature of intuitions as well. I will refrain from exploring this proposal in detail here. Instead, I would like only to emphasise that despite the commonalities suggested above, the two views considered are indeed distinct.

In conclusion, the enactivist view of intuitions sketched above offers a plausible solution to the problem of intuitive presence. This view is not prone to the objections raised to imagination-based solutions to the problem of intuitive presence. Furthermore, although this enactivist view is compatible with Chudnoff's recent account of the nature of expert intuitions, the latter is more restricted in its scope and is presumably compatible with alternative views of the nature of intuitions. In this way, I take it that this enactivist view is a promising and novel account of intuition that merits further attention.

6. Conclusion

I have been arguing that if we take the perceptual analogy with intuition seriously in the way that phenomenalists have developed it, then a version of the well-known problem of perceptual presence arises for theories of intuition. I have denominated this the problem of intuitive presence. This concerns the problem of accounting for the fact that the phenomenology of intuitions outstrips what we can directly entertain in our minds at any one time. I then surveyed different accounts purporting to solve the problem of perceptual presence and considered whether analogous accounts would be apt to solve the problem of intuitive presence. After identifying flaws with solutions to the problem

5. These observations suggest that enactivism about intuitions proves relevant to debates about the so-called 'expertise defence' (see, e.g., Williamson, 2007). The expertise defence claims that although studies demonstrate that ordinary people's intuitions are prone to epistemically irrelevant factors, training in philosophy gives rise to a kind of expertise that vindicates philosophers' use of intuitions in inquiry. One prominent way of fleshing out this proposal focuses on the idea that philosophical training engenders expert intuitions. Given we can flesh out the notion of expert intuition in terms of the enactivist view of intuitions (as suggested here), then the latter view may arguably help buttress the expertise defence.

of intuitive presence that invoke doxastic states and inclinations, or episodes of imagination, I offered a sketch of an innovative and promising enactivist solution to this problem. These arguments are suggestive for future research on the nature of intuitions, as they indicate that enactivism about intuitions should be investigated further.[6]

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