

Gerhard Heinzmann
L'Intuition épistémique

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The challenge taken up in this paper is to provide of symptoms of intuition enabling us to understand its function in the epistemic justification of our philosophical thinking. After a quick overview on terminological decisions and philosophical considerations on the decline of intuition in the 20th century, one wonders if the vision that we associate with the epistemic intuition is appropriately translated into a model which sees intuition in analogy to perception. We propose to replace the perceptual model of intuition with a competence model and show that the epistemic function of intuition requires the use of a semiotic system. Such a system is used intuitively if in an action situation, the “significant” and “representative” aspects of the action are interdependent. A request for legitimizing what is represented is not placed at the same level of thinking than strong intuition. That it may be both obvious and fallible has therefore nothing paradoxical. The last part of the paper shows that the interpretation presented does not remove us from the philosophical tradition. On the contrary, the focus on semiotic issues of intuition illuminates some classic problems in philosophy and makes possible to read anew the discussions about Descartes’ Cogito, Locke’s relation between simple ideas and their appearances or Kant’s distinction between forms of intuition and formal intuition.