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Article

Good sense: A philosophical analysis of intuition, epistemology, and practical decision-making

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Abstract: This paper delves into the philosophical concept of "good sense," examining its epistemological foundations, psychological components, and its essential role in practical decision-making. Drawing on a broad spectrum of philosophical thought, this work explores how intuition, folk knowledge, scientific reasoning, and language intertwine to guide human decisions. We argue that "good sense" emerges as a vital tool for survival, particularly when individuals lack complete knowledge and must rely on practical, context-sensitive judgments. The discussion extends to real-world implications, such as decision-making in business, everyday life, and ethics, and how "good sense" shapes our understanding of morality, survival, and communication. This analysis concludes by highlighting the importance of "good sense" in reconciling human knowledge with the unpredictability of the world.

Keywords: good sense; intuition; psychology; epistemology; decision

Here it comes, here comes another day
Another decision on the way
Well here it comes, here comes a covered display
of preferences to make
Well here it comes, here comes a knock on the door
Open it for an opportunity
Well here it comes, here comes another day
for memories to be made
Eyes wide open
Eyes wide open all the time [1]

1. Introduction

Human beings face countless decisions every day, ranging from the mundane to the existential. However, in most situations, individuals are not armed with complete knowledge. Instead, they must rely on practical judgment, often formed by intuition or "good sense." This paper examines good sense as an epistemological tool that enables individuals to navigate the uncertainties of life. In addressing questions about knowledge and decision-making, we will explore whether good sense serves as a rational mechanism or whether it is based on a more subjective, culturally constructed intuition.

Good sense, often invoked in daily life but rarely analyzed philosophically, is fundamental for making decisions in the absence of certainty. In practical terms, it can be found in various contexts: in the decision to trust one's gut feeling, to make a decision based on prior experience, or to follow societal norms when faced with

ambiguity. By analyzing these instances, we seek to uncover the psychological (in a philosophical approach) and epistemological foundations of good sense, drawing on insights from major philosophical traditions.

2. Cultural and historical dimensions of "good sense"

Throughout history and across cultures, the notion of good sense has manifested in varied but structurally similar ways, always pointing toward a form of practical, intuitive judgment capable of guiding human action under conditions of uncertainty. In ancient Greece, this idea took the form of phronesis, Aristotle's [2] term for practical wisdom, which he distinguished from theoretical knowledge (episteme) and technical skill (techne). Phronesis involves context-sensitive deliberation aimed at the good life and is acquired through lived experience and moral habituation. It is precisely this capacity to act rightly in particular situations, without rigid rule-following, that captures the essence of good sense.

In Confucian philosophy (Confúsio [3]), particularly in the Analects and the writings of Mencius, good sense appears as a harmony between li (ritual propriety) and yi (righteousness or appropriateness). These concepts guide individuals to respond correctly to the shifting demands of social roles and emotional nuance, not through calculation, but through cultivated intuition. Such Confucian sensibility resists both formalism and relativism, grounding moral judgment in a communal logic of relational awareness, an analogue to good sense, as the intuitive grasp of what fits best in an ambiguous context.

In indigenous oral traditions (Geertz [4]), especially those of Native American, Aboriginal Australian, and African cosmologies, good sense is preserved, not through codified theory, but through narrative transmission, proverbs, and collective memory. Elders pass down context-sensitive insights about survival, kinship, and environmental harmony, often embedded in metaphors and moral tales. These are not "less rational" than scientific knowledge (although we are not considering a particular scientific method parameter here). Actually, they are adapted to different epistemic needs, often prioritizing sustainability, attentiveness to patterns, and interdependence. Here, good sense is not a mere abstract reasoning. Instead, it is the preservation of adaptive behaviors across generations.

Even in Islamic thought (Al-Attas [5]), one finds the concept of hikmah (wisdom), which blends philosophical reason with spiritual discernment, allowing for decisions that balance moral law (sharia) with situational judgment (ijtihad). In this way, good sense operates as a bridge between divine command and human fallibility.

Across these traditions, be they Greek, Confucian, Indigenous, or Islamic, we see that good sense is not confined to the Western canon or to modern logic. Instead, it arises globally as a response to complexity, fallibility, and the need for timely, situated judgments. Despite differences in expression, these traditions converge on a common insight: when knowledge is partial and life is urgent, good sense must guide truth.

3. The necessity for decision-making and epistemological questions

3.1. Why decide?

In order to guarantee their survival, the humans have created a necessity to decide on something that could provide them the best outcomes, despite the situations whatsoever. Of course, we have this intrinsic will to maintain our integrity, and considering the metaphysical fact that every action has a corresponding reaction, not considering all the inconsistencies behind this (i.e., the fact itself that this metaphysical fact would be an effect of a previous cause), we have to act in order to produce our expected results.

Assuming the truth of the above paragraph, the following analysis remains: which rational basis do we rely on to make those decisions? That is an epistemological question. We know that the scientific approach is considered the best course of decision since it is a database formed by a series of experiments tested in a variety of pertinent scenarios by different persons in different times and places. This pretty much guarantees that the so-called scientific fact is reliable in almost every situation that we can be in front of.

However, we know that nothing is 100% correct in this world (put aside the correctness of the possibility that something could be 100% correct), and we know that science, due to the presupposed precision that it has, is not an obvious activity, and it demands a lot of effort if we want to be some kind of specialist in a very specific and restricted field of knowledge. Thus, to be a scientist is not a very common or a very fast way to be a "good decision-maker" in life. We need to follow some other path.

Some people can simply follow a mystic way, either by going through tarot cards, luck, and a religious idea of destiny, or they create their own science, what we could call folk knowledge, as we see when our mothers say that we should stay away from rain and the night if we do not want to get a cold. Supposedly, the first group could have a solid basis, although an intangible one, since its vicissitudes are provoked/described by unknown forces from beyond (greater than us), while the second group, tangible as it is, could be mutable and not a very good way to talk about the world in its "true" manifestation.

A bigger problem arises when we have to deal with the relation between facts and word/expression meanings, since one has to build a consistent compromise between each one of the pairs, aiming to avoid ambiguity. By the way, the decision to construct this relation has also been made because the humans use the language to "transport" events from one place to another. For example, it is very useful to be able to describe that a storm is coming, and the more precise the description is, the more that information is useful to the other humans, who will be interested in surviving as much as the speaker. Therefore, we have to avoid ambiguity to deal more precisely with the dangers that the world could come up against us.

So, when we mix all of those cited factors, which are science, mysticism, and folk knowledge (respectively organized in a rational rank: reliable, optimal, and practical), and the necessity to express these opinions to somebody in order to create a more powerful group of survivors, we have what we could call "good sense". What is it exactly, and what are its basic properties from a philosophical (essential) point of view?

3.2. Good sense and intuition

In our daily lives, we are often forced to make decisions without access to complete knowledge. Take, for example, the decision that a manager faces when selecting the best candidate for a job. The ideal decision would be based on a thorough review of qualifications, skills, and experiences. However, due to time constraints, incomplete information, and the unpredictability of human behavior, the manager must rely on an intuitive judgment, an instance where good sense plays a pivotal role.

This situation is not unique to business but can be applied universally to various areas such as politics, medicine, and ethics. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* [6], Thomas Kuhn demonstrates how scientific paradigms shift not through objective analysis alone, but also through shifts in the scientific community's collective "good sense". This process often relies on intuitive judgments about the adequacy of a given framework, especially when dealing with anomalies or problems that cannot be solved within existing paradigms.

In contrast to the objective, formalistic nature of scientific reasoning, intuition offers an alternative approach to decision-making. In the case of an emergency medical situation, a doctor might have to rely on his or her intuition to decide whether to administer a treatment, especially when faced with incomplete information about the patient's condition. This type of decision-making, grounded in both experience and intuition, is considered by many scholars to be a form of "good sense".

This section will further explore this relationship, referencing works like *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (Popper [7]) and *The Philosophy of Science* (Nagel [8]), where the tension between intuition and scientific rigor is often debated. Is good sense merely a fallback when scientific knowledge is absent, or can it stand on its own as a legitimate epistemic tool?

Popper explicitly states that there is no logical method for discovering scientific theories. The generation of hypotheses is often an intuitive, creative, or even accidental process. However, the validity of these hypotheses does not depend on how they were discovered but on whether they can withstand critical testing. Unlike traditional empiricism, which emphasizes verification, Popper argues that scientific knowledge advances through falsification. No matter how intuitively compelling a hypothesis may seem, it remains speculative until subjected to empirical testing.

Popper rejects the classical inductive view of science (that knowledge is built by accumulating verified observations). Instead, he sees science as a cycle of conjectures and refutations. Intuition may guide the formulation of conjectures, but only those that survive attempts at falsification contribute to scientific knowledge.

For Popper, science progresses not by proving theories true, but by eliminating false ones. This means that even the most intuitive theories must be subjected to rigorous attempts at falsification. Popper grants intuition a place in the origin of scientific ideas but denies it any role in their validation. Knowledge, for him, is not about justified belief through induction but about bold hypotheses that withstand rigorous attempts at falsification. It is easier to find a flaw than to say that it works for every possible situation.

Following a similar path, Nagel defends the traditional distinction between the context of discovery (how scientific ideas originate) and the context of justification

(how scientific claims are validated). He recognizes that intuition, creativity, and sudden insights often contribute to the discovery of hypotheses but insists that these intuitions must be tested through empirical and logical means.

He argues that scientific explanations require a systematic and logical structure rather than reliance on intuitive plausibility. Intuitions can be misleading if not critically examined through formal methodologies, such as deductive reasoning and empirical testing. While acknowledging the importance of intuitive thinking in mathematics and theoretical physics (where certain axioms and models emerge intuitively), he emphasizes that these intuitions gain scientific legitimacy only when they are formulated within a logical framework and supported by empirical data.

Although Nagel does not explicitly frame his discussion in terms of paradigms (as Kuhn would later do), he recognizes that major scientific breakthroughs often begin with intuitive leaps. However, he insists that these must be rationally reconstructed and empirically validated to become part of scientific knowledge.

Nagel remains within the logical empiricist tradition, integrating intuition into a broader framework of verification, while Popper revolutionizes the philosophy of science by arguing that intuition is irrelevant to the truth of a theory: what matters is its falsifiability.

Good sense, then, as a form of intuition, often operates below the threshold of conscious reasoning. Philosophers have long debated the validity of intuition as a foundation for knowledge. While some, like Descartes, see intuition as a reliable foundation for knowledge (especially when it comes to mathematical truths), others, like Hume, argue that intuition is inherently unreliable and prone to error.

In everyday life, examples abound where good sense serves as a guide to decision-making. Consider the moral dilemma of whether to help a stranger in need. In the absence of a strict ethical framework or knowledge of the stranger's background, many individuals rely on their sense of empathy and moral intuition to make the right decision. Good sense, in this case, operates as a bridge between abstract ethical theories and real-world action, guiding decisions based on an immediate sense of right and wrong.

In contrast to formal logical reasoning, intuition, in the context of decision-making, can be seen as a means of navigating uncertainty. For example, a manager who must make a strategic decision without full information might rely on his or her "gut feeling" about the right course of action. Philosophers like Bergson (in *Creative Evolution* [9]) argue that intuition can guide us to an understanding that transcends the limitations of analytical thinking.

3.3. Intuition, logic and epistemology

Roger [10], talking about a very important thinker of good sense, Pierre Duhem, gives us an approach to a famous paradox in epistemology in general, asking what the origin of the origin of things will be. He says, "*Logic, or our ability to link propositions with one another, allows us to deduce one truth from another; but that ability, by itself, merely gets us back to first principles or axioms*". That means that the humans could not rely only on logic, especially when we talk about the phenomenon of a primordial decision (the first ever possible decision!). He continues, "*We also need a faculty that*

allows us to intuit the truth of the first principles or axioms, that is, bon sens (good sense)", at least to start a chain of good decisions using logic in the future. But, we still ask ourselves, should we (can we) simply abandon intuition, since logic is allegedly better (safer) than our animal behaviors?

The problem of theory underdetermination, where multiple theories can explain the same empirical data, poses challenges for scientific rationality. Duhem proposed "good sense" as the faculty enabling scientists to choose between such theories. Understanding this concept is crucial for insights into scientific decision-making processes. Duhem's "good sense" refers to the non-formal, intuitive judgment scientists employ when empirical data alone cannot determine theory choice. It encompasses intellectual virtues, like impartiality and prudence, guiding scientists toward theories that offer natural classifications of phenomena.

Shaw [11] critiques the traditional view that interprets Duhem's good sense as an individual virtue guiding theory choice. He argues that, within Duhem's framework, theory choice is either a non-issue (i.e., it's not a devastating epistemological crisis; it's part of how science works) or determined by empirical and formal criteria. Shaw proposes that "good sense" should be understood as a collective attribute of scientific communities, shaped by education and social practices, thus advocating for a social epistemological perspective over a virtue epistemological (Virtue epistemologists are philosophers who understand knowledge and justification in terms of intellectual virtues (traits like open-mindedness, intellectual courage, and intellectual humility) rather than solely in terms of formal logic or reliability. The movement gained prominence in the late 20th century and continues to be influential today. Names like Ernest Sosa, John Greco (reliabilists), Linda Zagzebski, and James Montmarquet (responsibilists) are good representatives of the virtue epistemologists.) one.

Other analyses have linked Duhem's good sense to virtue epistemology, emphasizing the role of intellectual virtues in scientific reasoning. This perspective aligns with the view that scientists' character traits significantly influence theory selection processes. Ivanova [12] examines "good sense" as Duhem's attempt to provide a non-rule-based account of rationality in theory choice. She discusses David Stump's linkage of good sense to virtue epistemology but highlights significant differences between Duhem's views and those of virtue epistemologists. Ivanova offers an interpretation that aligns more closely with Duhem's scientific methodology and motivations.

Ivanona and Paternotte [13] also argue that understanding good sense in this light better captures its properties and addresses limitations in previous interpretations. They suggest that good sense facilitates agreement within scientific communities, thereby playing a crucial role in theory choice.

Contemporary discussions highlight the multifaceted nature of Duhem's good sense, encompassing both individual virtues and social epistemic practices. Recognizing this complexity enriches our understanding of rationality in scientific theory choice.

4. Defining "good sense"

4.1. Good sense and semantics

It is not unusual to hear someone saying, “Use the good sense in that situation” or even “Let him use his good sense about that matter…”, but we ask ourselves, do they really know what the good sense is? This might be trickier than we think, since there are some peculiarities in the definition of “good sense” that can make this concept a very open one.

Good sense is not only about facts but, of course, about language too, and we are not talking about “being polite in using language” (which is probably an intuitive aspect involved in good sense’s definition), but we are talking about the necessary relation between reality and language. Inasmuch as we can perceive the reality, we do it by describing and creating it using language.

Thus, if there is a notion called “good sense” related to how we should deal with the world in order to promote our survival, this same notion is related to language. This means that we can abstract events of the world and reduce them into sentences. Now, we always have to remember how to use the meanings of words and expressions, considering which world we captured those relations from (i.e., the relation between the word and the object; that is, semantics). Yes, there are words and meanings respectively linked to all possible and imagined worlds whatsoever. Let us see some examples from our actual world, though. The reader should decide which option has the “best” relation with the sentence given:

Ex. That idea is very important!

a. It has great value.
b. It is difficult to understand.
c. It is known by many people.
d. It has a long history.

For now, there is not any standard way to choose the “correct” answer for this. Notwithstanding the fact that all of these options seem to be related to the notion of a “very important idea”, we have to choose only one. But, just to be sure, let’s analyze them thoroughly.

We could safely say that a “very important idea” is analytically identical to option a, “it has great value”, so any good user of the language would promptly choose this one. And guess what? This is the “right” answer. However, one could say that every really important idea was once also very difficult to understand (and, maybe, it is until the present time, like the good sense concept!), otherwise this would be just an ordinary idea, since anyone can think of it. Thus, option b would not be “so wrong”, after all.

Well, let us take a look at option c. Despite the fact that the concept of knowledge yields another article of discussion, we could simply use the usual sense of something that is “known”, which is something that has been heard of. For example, so many people who do not have a clue about what the theory of relativity or quantum mechanics are about probably have heard about them, and, much more likely, these physics theories are considered, for some reason, very important to these people. Maybe they think or they have heard that these theories have made a lot of relevant things to improve our technology and, thus, our comfort. So, it’s very plausible to suppose that a “very important idea” spreads like fire, even to those who are not acquainted with the respective subjects whatsoever.

Finally, for option d, this obviously changes depending on the time of the

utterance. But, normally, every important idea is remembered across decades, and it is naturally considered a time frame worthy of the title "it has a long history".

In summary, it seems, indeed, that all four options could be valid, but still, we think that there is a "more correct" answer for the challenge, and although we chose this without effort, we still do not know what criteria we used on this complex matter. Not even the analytical argument was enough to convince us about the absolute aspect of the *a*'s correctness.

Of course, the same process has occurred inside the head of the confectioner of this challenge, and we should understand, in the next session, visualizing the basic components of this decision process, what this thing is that we should call a "good sense decision" based on the psychological state of the good sense.

4.2. What do the philosophers say?

What exactly is "good sense"? Philosophers have long argued that intuition, or common sense, is an essential component of human understanding. Good sense, as we define it here, is not merely the ability to make decisions rationally or logically; it is an amalgamation of lived experience, cultural norms, and intuitive judgment that guides our decision-making. It is the ability to make choices with a sense of rightness, even when complete rational analysis is unavailable.

For instance, a chef might not always follow a specific recipe but, instead, rely on his or her sense of what combination of ingredients works best. Here, "good sense" is a form of non-expert knowledge, developed through years of experience and guided by personal intuition about taste, texture, and balance. This reliance on intuition in culinary practice is similar to the broader role of good sense in everyday decision-making.

Philosophically, the connection between good sense and language is pivotal. Good sense reflects the capacity to navigate the world in a way that is coherent with societal norms. Wittgenstein's later philosophy in *Philosophical Investigations* [14] emphasizes the role of language in shaping our reality. It is through language that we come to express and articulate our sense of what is appropriate, meaningful, or correct in a given context. In turn, this affects how we make decisions based on "what feels right."

We will explore how works like *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel [15]) and *The Birth of Tragedy* (Nietzsche [16]) discuss the tension between intuition (or instinct) and rational thought, offering rich insights into the development of "good sense."

Hegel associates intuition with the earliest stages of consciousness, particularly Sense-Certainty (Sinnliche Gewissheit), where knowledge is direct, immediate, and unreflective. This level of knowing assumes that objects are simply "there" as given, without mediation or conceptual determination. Intuition alone is inadequate, since it does not grasp the universal, only isolated particulars. Through dialectical development, consciousness moves from immediate experience (Anschauung) to mediated conceptual understanding (Begriff).

In perception (Wahrnehmung), consciousness begins to recognize that objects have properties and relations beyond mere immediate presence. In understanding

(Verstand), consciousness forms conceptual structures that go beyond intuition. While intuition is a necessary starting point, true knowledge (Wissen) only emerges when intuition is integrated into the rational, self-conscious activity of Spirit (Geist). Rational thought (Vernunft) synthesizes intuition, perception, and understanding into a higher unity, culminating in Absolute Knowledge (Absolutes Wissen).

In summary, for Hegel, intuition is an initial, undeveloped stage of knowing, insufficient on its own. True knowledge requires rational mediation, dialectical development, and the self-conscious activity of Spirit. Rational thought does not reject intuition but rather overcomes and incorporates it into a more complete system of knowledge.

Nietzsche contrasts two fundamental artistic and philosophical forces: the Apollonian (rationality, order, individuation) and the Dionysian (intuition, chaos, primal unity). This dichotomy provides insight into his view on the relationship between intuition and rational thought. Associated with dreams, form, and structured knowledge, the Apollonian represents clarity, individuation, and logical comprehension. It aligns with the philosophical tradition of Socratic rationalism, which seeks truth through reason, definitions, and conceptual clarity. Nietzsche criticizes Socratic thought for overvaluing logic and suppressing more intuitive, instinctive modes of knowing.

The Dionysian embodies intuition, chaos, ecstasy, and the dissolution of individual identity into a greater whole. It is linked to music, intoxication, and mystical insight, providing a direct experience of reality that transcends rational categories. Nietzsche sees this as a deeper, more authentic mode of knowledge, one that reaches beyond the limits of reason.

Greek tragedy, at its peak (Aeschylus, Sophocles), balanced Apollonian form with Dionysian intuition, producing an art that revealed profound truths about existence. However, Socratic rationalism (especially in Euripides and later Western philosophy) led to the decline of this synthesis, favoring reason over intuition. Nietzsche argues that rational thought alone cannot grasp the full depth of human experience. Socrates and later rationalists reduce the complexity of existence to logical structures, which Nietzsche sees as a form of decadence: a refusal to embrace life's irrational, tragic dimensions.

So, with all the arguments that we have seen from Popper, Nagel, Hegel, and Nietzsche, it is now clear that good sense is a natural state of mind, important not only to survival but to scientific discoveries too, since both activities work together for an extended future for us. Let us now do an analytical treatment on its components.

5. The "good sense" decision: Psychological and epistemological components

5.1. Basic components

Although all the options in the example 4.1 above seemed reasonable to choose for a "right choice", option a is still the answer (not "the best", the answer!). So, why? How can we be convinced of this? Let us list 5 reasons for option a to be the best answer:

(1) It is based on usefulness (psychological).
(2) It is essentially variable (epistemological).
(3) It should be acceptable to most people (epistemological).
(4) It must be rational in the Immanuel Kant sense: it must prioritize the state that allows you to continue to think, i.e., surviving (psychologically).
(5) It can be deduced by a limited load of information (epistemological).

Good sense is, therefore, the tool that we use when we have limited information to promote our safety.

The reason 1 means that the good sense state always chooses something useful. About a "very important idea", to be known by most people, to be difficult to understand, or to be old are not traces of something useful, but to have great value, whatever this value means, sounds good and useful. It is normal, though, to attribute the quality of a good sense decision to everything that is useful, but let us not enter into the "definition/something-being-defined" paradox.

Reason 2 explains why we have italicized the words above. Although being in front of something valuable is essentially a good thing, we don't know exactly what makes something valuable. It depends on the situation, the person, the time, the place, the current interests, etc. It is easy to see that this characteristic could be applied to the other options, but this does not make it unessential. It is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one.

The reason 3 is an a posteriori one, differently from the previous ones (a priori). This means that it can be checked only after we have decided that this option has been made by good sense. Yes, this sounds circular, but it does not change the fact that every good sense decision has this property by the definition that we are making right now in this paragraph. It is natural to think that something useful is not necessarily logical, so making a "reverse" definition, i.e., capturing good sense options after we have seen that people accepted them, is a practical tool for a practical concept. However, there is an a priori point too. To be "acceptable" means that the thing cannot be impossible to be described by the physics rules of that world, which reveals the importance of a formal science behind the good sense.

The reason 4 is related to the folk knowledge is that everyone wants to live, and they do whatever they can to stay alive, including making their own science in order to try to predict the nature rules and the integrity of their bodies. And this includes, of course, social rules. For example, it is not rational to harm people if you do not want to be harmed (Kant's categorical imperative). Eventually, you would suffer their revenge. Notice that this reason is the same as the previous one, but in the format of a special case, because the "natural laws" are being made up by a specific group of people (Hammurabi's code). It was important to show this reason, though, because it is a strong special case.

And the last reason, 5, is related to faith and the appeal to supernatural forces that supposedly rule the tracks of people's lives. Those who have faith, by definition, should not look for evidence or practical/physical reasons to state that their beliefs, the description of the world for them, are true. It is not about proof but about believing that the ultimate laws of the universe cannot be comprehensible for us. So, someone who makes a good sense decision makes this without knowing much about something, since they feel that the decision is right. Well, this seems to contradict the confection

of this article itself, because if this is just about feeling, guts, or intuition, there should not be any philosophical analysis whatsoever. But, we are actually making a philosophical analysis about intuition itself, and we have seen how many philosophers think that the link between intuition and rational thought is inextricable. So, insofar as giving reasons to intuition seems inconsistent, as would doing the same to faith, this is not a problem, because that is what philosophers do, after all (we try!). Either way, this is also a special case of 3, but without considering any epistemological grounding whatsoever.

Let us look at another example:

Ex. He had bad luck yesterday morning.

a. He received a gift.
b. He was given a pay raise.
c. He lost his wallet.
d. He ate breakfast.

The correct answer is c. Why so? We can answer this straightaway relating bad luck to the word "lost". In general, people want to gain, not to lose (although losing weight, in some cases, can be pretty convenient). Additionally, all the other answers are related to the promotion of survival (eating, more money, and gifts), so the reason 1 and 4 are met (c doesn't promote survival in many cases, which means, it is not useful or rational): By good sense, bad luck = losing money = death.

Of course there are other things that could represent bad luck, all related to losing something: to be ill (losing health), to have lost a job, or to be dumped by a girl/guy (losing love); so, it is a variable situation (reason 2). There's nothing wrong with the physics of all of the options (reason 3), and, related to reason 2, we do not know much about what the guy had inside his wallet (wallet's etymology leads us to the word "well"), but, in general, it contains valuable things. Maybe this wallet could bring him problems. For instance, this could attract robbers, and this might even kill him eventually (for reason 5, we need the good sense to decide). Okay, this is thinking too much, right? This is not too useful (reason 1) and barely acceptable by most people (reason 3), so we should discard this justification and assume that a full wallet is an advantageous thing to have.

5.2. Psychology, epistemology and ethics

Intuition, as a psychological mechanism, operates on a subconscious level, often guiding individuals toward decisions without the need for deliberate reasoning. Cognitive scientists, such as Daniel Kahneman in *Thinking, Fast and Slow* [17], have shown that intuition involves "fast thinking," a form of immediate, automatic processing that contrasts with "slow thinking," or deliberate rational analysis. In practical terms, good sense might often involve a gut feeling that a decision is correct, even in the absence of full reasoning.

Consider the decision of a seasoned firefighter when assessing the risks of entering a burning building. The firefighter does not conduct a detailed analysis of the structure's integrity but rather relies on his or her intuition: years of experience and a "sense" of what is likely to occur. This decision is based on good sense, which is shaped by experience, emotional intelligence, and an understanding of human

limitations. Psychologically, this aligns with what Kahneman refers to as "heuristics," or mental shortcuts that simplify decision-making in complex or uncertain situations.

The epistemological component of good sense is more contentious. Can intuition be trusted as a valid form of knowledge? As Immanuel Kant argues in *Critique of Pure Reason* [18], intuition is often seen as a precursor to experience. In Kant's framework, knowledge is built upon sensory input that is then processed by the faculties of understanding. In contrast, empirical psychologists, like William James (Crane [19]), argue that intuition itself can be a form of knowing, rooted in immediate perception.

In practical terms, consider the ethics of self-driving cars. These vehicles must make decisions in split seconds to avoid accidents. While programming these decisions involves rational algorithms, the ability of the car to make quick decisions in uncertain scenarios can be seen as an extension of the idea of good sense. Can we trust machine intuition in these life-and-death situations? This question highlights the modern implications of good sense, which increasingly extends beyond human experience into artificial intelligence.

6. Grammar and language: Consequences of "good sense"

Good sense guides us to make some grammar decisions. In general, we will always choose to use regular verbs, and we want to think that all the verbs work like that. For example, it is pretty rational for a child to say "I eated" (the regular ending) instead of "I ate". It is much more useful to use a general formula to improve the velocity of the communication, but we know that natural languages are not made to be easy. They were, simply, made! They were made by the use of different groups of people who have eventually gotten together and started to use different words to denote the same thing (actually, if we could be accurate, nothing is the "same thing" compared to another).

Good sense has made us decide f to build words for obvious sounds, like the onomatopoeias (neigh, the sound of the horse; bleat, the sound of the sheep; hoot, the sound of birds in general; blast, an explosion; slash, splash, cut, crush, crack, round, blink, fast, etc.).

About prepositions, we need to have good notions about time and space relations among the objects. For example, we have "destination" and "origin" when we talk about traveling, so we use "respectively" to and "from" to automatically express the distance that we are from places. This all helps us to speak the same information in less time.

And we have some pragmatic aspects of the language to be aware of based on good sense. The present perfect tense, for example, tells us that although we have a cause in the past for the present effects, the time of this cause is not important (Grice's maxim of Relevance [20]), since, based on good sense, it is not useful to be attached to the past (to a specific instant) while we are discussing and interested in the current events.

Ex. There has been an accident here.

It is true that it was important for the effectiveness of the warning to show what could make that place dangerous (statistical data about accidents there). Nevertheless, the objective of the speaker is to tell us that we should not go there now, since it is

very likely to have another accident there again and we could be the victims! The present perfect tense also avoids the reference to time in the conversation, making a cooperative person avoid asking about this irrelevant aspect (at least, this was decided by the speaker).

Good sense also makes you choose the best of the verbal tenses: if the instant is relevant to the chat, the simple past tense must be used. Ex. I recognized him when the Twin Towers fell in New York. As long as this fact is pretty well known around the world, it is presupposed the 11 September date when the fact comes up in the conversation. So, the speaker is free to use the simple past tense, which demands the expression of the event's specific time. This shortens the size of the sentence, and this is useful, as the good sense prescribes.

Notice the good sense being used in responses to the auxiliaries in grammar. If someone asks you, "Did you see my dog yesterday?" you should answer, "Yes, I did" or "No, I didn't". Same thing for "Will I see you again?"—that should be answered by "Yes, you will" or "No, you won't". This is useful, since you can avoid the repetition of the main verb used by the questioner and save time (important for surviving).

The relationship between good sense and language is not limited to philosophical abstraction; it is manifest in the practical use of language in everyday life. A speaker's "good sense" influences the way he or she constructs sentences, selecting words that are efficient and clear in communicating an idea. This has profound implications for both ethics and communication, where the effectiveness of speech can influence outcomes.

Consider the linguistic efficiency found in political speech. Politicians often rely on well-practiced, intuitive rhetoric to connect with the electorate. Their language is designed not only to persuade but also to resonate with the audience's "Good sense." In this context, language serves as an extension of practical judgment, helping to align collective thinking with the desired course of action.

Works such as Grice's *Logic and Conversation* show us the concept of implicature, which illustrates how speakers use intuition to convey meaning indirectly, and Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* [21] analyzes how speech acts shape social reality. Good sense is closely tied to the pragmatics of language, where intuitive decisions about meaning and context allow communication to function effectively (You can see a complete work about the relation between implicatures and indirect speech acts in The Philosophy Behind the Conversation: Implicatures and the Indirect Speech Acts (de SOUZA, [22]).

7. Mathematical alignment of "good sense" with decision models

Although this paper is grounded in philosophical inquiry, the structure of good sense aligns closely with contemporary mathematical models of decision-making under uncertainty. One such model is the Intuitionistic Fuzzy Three-Way Decision Framework (Yüksel, Rahadian, Eti, Dinçer [23,24]), which divides outcomes into acceptance, rejection, and deferment, based on degrees of belief and hesitation. This triadic structure parallels the function of good sense: it does not demand binary certainty, but instead, allows for hesitation, cautious optimism, or prudence when full

knowledge is unavailable. In this view, good sense acts as a heuristic threshold mechanism, dynamically assigning weight to options when traditional logic falters. This suggests that future empirical work could explore how intuitive judgments, shaped by experience and context, function as inputs in formal fuzzy decision systems. Let us see a practical example:

Scenario:

You are an emergency physician in a hospital. An unconscious patient arrives with no medical history available and unstable vital signs. You have 15 s to decide whether to:

a) administer a drug that might save the patient's life but also carries a risk of cardiac arrest in patients with a certain allergy;
b) wait for more information (lab results, family history);
c) avoid the drug entirely and rely on standard, less aggressive stabilization measures.

Applying the intuitionistic fuzzy three-way decision model:

This situation mirrors the structure of three-way fuzzy decision-making, in which choices are not forced into binary "yes" or "no" categories but instead include:

Acceptance: You estimate that the patient is unlikely to be allergic based on available visual cues and demographic patterns. Despite the uncertainty, you choose to administer the drug → Good sense manifests here as cautious optimism, relying on intuitive pattern recognition drawn from prior experience under pressure (epistemological, component 3 in 5.1 section above).

Rejection: You've recently treated two patients who had severe reactions to the same drug with similar symptoms. You decide against using it → Good sense acts here as protective intuition, rooted in emotional memory and risk aversion (psychological, component 4 in 5.1 section above).

Deferment: Neither data nor instinct leads you to a confident decision. You opt to wait a few more minutes for rapid blood tests, despite the urgency → good sense expresses itself as prudence: the capacity to strategically delay action in the absence of sufficient evidence (epistemological, component 5 in 5.1 section above).

Thus, we have an epistemological insight: this example demonstrates that good sense does not operate on binary logic but rather functions as an adaptive, intuitive heuristic that weighs degrees of belief, risk, urgency, and responsibility. It neither replaces scientific knowledge nor blindly trusts instinct. Its real function is to fill the epistemic gap when full information is unavailable. In fuzzy logic terms, good sense is the internal threshold-setting mechanism that tells you not just "yes" or "no," but also "not yet", "yes, under caution", or, why not, "Godspeed!"? (After all, God is trustworthy to a lot of people).

8. Limitations and future prospects of "good sense"

While good sense is highly adaptable and indispensable in uncertain contexts, it is not without serious limitations. Its reliance on intuition, although often efficient, opens the door to cognitive biases, cultural distortions, and moral inconsistencies (Rawls [25]). What one community deems "reasonable" or "commonsensical" might be interpreted as reckless or unjust in another. For example, in healthcare triage during

crises, decisions about who receives immediate treatment often involve not just clinical data but intuitive judgments about quality of life, age, or social value, all potentially infused with implicit biases. In legal sentencing, judges might appeal to "good sense" to explain discretionary decisions, but such intuition can reflect systemic prejudices rather than impartial wisdom. Even in political crisis management, reliance on gut feelings can amplify populism or paralyze action due to fear of backlash, demonstrating that unreflected good sense might fail to track truth or justice.

These risks expose the paradox of good sense: it is powerful precisely where knowledge is limited, but it is least reliable where moral stakes are highest and subjectivity is most dangerous. Therefore, while good sense is an essential epistemic tool, it should not be romanticized or absolutized. Philosophically, this aligns with the critique of common sense found in thinkers like Gramsci [26] and Bourdieu [27], who warned that dominant ideologies often disguise themselves as "natural" intuition. Good sense, then, must be continuously examined, not merely trusted.

To enhance its reliability, good sense must be integrated with formal evaluative systems that ensure accountability, transparency, and equity. This does not mean replacing human intuition with rigid algorithms, but rather creating hybrid frameworks in which good sense operates within constraints that temper its excesses. In this context, artificial intelligence offers both promise and danger: AI systems trained on biased data (O'neil [28]) might replicate human prejudices, but carefully designed models could also simulate context-sensitive judgment in ethically informed ways. Institutions, too, can adopt procedural safeguards that balance intuitive responsiveness with normative checks.

Future research might explore how such integrations could function, perhaps through "institutionalized good sense" mechanisms that preserve intuitive flexibility while embedding critical oversight. The goal is not to mechanize judgment but to redeem intuition as a reliable guide by placing it within systems that interrogate its foundations.

9. Conclusion

The concept of good sense, as both an epistemological and psychological tool, plays an essential role in human decision-making. While not infallible, good sense provides a reliable means for navigating the complexities of the world, particularly when faced with incomplete or ambiguous information. By drawing on the interplay between intuition, language, and experience, good sense emerges as a vital, though imperfect, component of human cognition. In a world where knowledge is often uncertain, good sense serves as a tool for survival, decision-making, and ethical action.

We have finally decided on some criteria for the definition behind the good sense. This philosophical analysis has arisen since it seems pretty obvious, although every obvious thing is actually a mystery. Of course, there should be good reasons for something to be obvious after all, and probably it is the good sense that makes us think that this is obvious (the fifth reason). It is pretty reasonable to think that people use good sense every day, considering that it is not so easy to make the best decisions based on the best way. To promote survival, we do not need only precision on the concept of the dangers that we might face, but we also need to decide something about

it rapidly! That is when good sense comes and shows its usefulness.

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