

# What Intuitions Are Like<sup>1</sup>

ELIJAH CHUDNOFF

*University of Miami*

Some philosophers think that intuitions are a source of justification, and in particular a source of justification for beliefs about abstract matters, such as numbers, shapes, freedom, truth, and beauty. Other philosophers are more skeptical. They doubt that intuitions are a source of justification for beliefs about abstract matters, though they might concede that intuitions are a source of justification for beliefs about what our own implicit theories about numbers, shapes, freedom, truth, and beauty are. The motivation to defend one or the other of these orientations, non-skeptical or skeptical, drives most discussions about intuition. As a consequence most of these discussions focus on issues that seem to bear immediately on the epistemological status of intuitions: Are intuitions reliable? How could they justify beliefs about abstract matters? Do recent experimental studies of intuition provide reason for skepticism about intuition? Is skepticism about intuition coherent?<sup>2</sup>

Prior to all these questions, however, is the question: What are intuitions? Depending on what intuitions are, they might or might not be reliable, they might or might not possibly justify beliefs about abstract matters, they might or might not be embarrassed by recent experimental studies, and they might or might not be coherently foresworn.

---

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Selim Berker, John Biro, Aron Edidin, Robert D'Amico, Ned Hall, Kirk Ludwig, Charles Parsons, Jim Pryor, Greg Ray, Susanna Siegel, Alison Simmons, Ernie Sosa, Anand Vaidya, and Gene Witmer for helpful discussion of earlier versions of this work. John Bengson provided detailed comments on the most recent versions of it, and this input has been invaluable in shaping it into its present form.

<sup>2</sup> The bibliography contains references to relevant papers. Bealer and Sosa discuss the reliability of intuition; see (Bealer 1998, 2000), and (Sosa 1998, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2008). (Benacerraf 1973) and (Field 1989) raise metaphysical challenges to the view that intuitions can justify beliefs. (French 2007) and (Knobe and Nichols 2008) contain representative experimental work on intuition. (Bealer 1992) discusses the coherence of skepticism about intuition.

One sort of view of intuition is **doxastic**. Doxastic views of intuition are views according to which intuitions are, or are acquisitions of, doxastic attitudes or doxastic dispositions.<sup>3</sup> The simplest doxastic view is that intuitions are judgments. Most doxasticists think that intuitions are a special kind of judgment, perhaps pre-theoretical or spontaneous. And many doxasticists think that intuitions are not quite judgments, but are, rather, inclinations to make judgments.<sup>4</sup> Another sort of view of intuition is **perceptualist**. Perceptualist views of intuition are views according to which intuitions—like perceptual experiences— are pre-doxastic experiences that—unlike perceptual experiences—represent abstract matters as being a certain way. The idea is that in having an intuition, it seems to you that abstract matters are a certain way. But it is only if you take your intuition at face value that you judge or even form an inclination to judge that abstract matters are the way they seem to you to be. Perceptualist views differ from doxastic views in that according to them intuitions are not identical to doxastic attitudes or doxastic dispositions, but lead to doxastic attitudes and doxastic dispositions when taken at face value.<sup>5</sup>

The disagreement between perceptualists and doxasticists is not merely terminological. The reason why is that the two groups disagree about *what there is*. Doxasticists deny that we have, in addition to conscious judgments about or conscious inclinations to make judgments about abstract matters, pre-doxastic experiences that represent abstract matters as being a certain way. The disagreement, then, is not about which items out of a pool of items both parties antecedently agree exist to call intuitions. The disagreement is substantive. Perceptualists recognize a distinctive kind of experience that they think best plays the role of presumptive justification for our beliefs about abstract matters. I will call such experiences *intuition experiences*. Doxasticists deny that there are intuition experiences and think that unless we are to be skeptics about intuition, we must find our

---

<sup>3</sup> For ease of reading, I will often suppress “or are acquisitions of.”

<sup>4</sup> For doxastic views see: (Williamson 2004, 2005, 2007), (Goldman and Pust 1998); (Schwitzgebel and Gopnik 1998). Most of the philosophers that consider intuitions in an experimental setting are doxasticists; see the papers in (French 2007) and (Knobe and Nichols 2008). According to Sosa, intuitions are “attractions to assent” (Sosa 2007). Attractions to assent could be things that invite assent. Sosa rejects this understanding (pg. 54). They could be inclinations to assent. Sosa does not explicitly endorse this understanding. They could be something else. Even if they are, they seem to me to behave similar enough to inclinations to assent to count Sosa as a doxasticist.

<sup>5</sup> Bealer and Huemer defend perceptualism; see (Bealer 1998, 2000, and 2002), and (Huemer 2001 and 2008). Husserl and Gödel also defended perceptualist views of intuition; see (Husserl 1975) and (Gödel 1947).

way to an understanding of how judgments, judgments of a certain kind, or inclinations to make judgments can be what justify our beliefs about abstract matters.

I believe that there are intuition experiences, that these intuition experiences are our basic source of justification for beliefs about abstract matters, and that a perceptualist view of intuition provides the best theoretical setting within which to develop a non-skeptical view about intuition. I will not attempt to argue for all of these claims in this paper. In this paper I focus on the debate between perceptualists and doxasticists. In particular, I focus on two claims:

(DoxI1) Necessarily: If  $x$  has an intuition that  $p$ , then  $x$  judges, or has an inclination to judge, that  $p$ .

(DoxI2) Necessarily: if  $x$  judges, or has an inclination to judge, that  $p$ , then  $x$  has an intuition that  $p$ .

These claims constitute a first blush doxasticist view of intuition. Most doxasticists defend more sophisticated claims, and in particular wouldn't commit themselves to anything as strong as (DoxI2). Nevertheless, these two claims form a useful focal point. While I will build my case against doxasticism by directing criticism toward (DoxI1) and (DoxI2), nothing in my arguments hinges on weaknesses unique to them. All doxastic views of intuition that I am aware of entail claims close enough to (DoxI1) and (DoxI2) to fall within the scope of my discussion.

Here is the plan. In section 1, I will explore arguments against doxastic views of *perception*. The rest of the paper is aimed at defending analogous arguments against doxastic views of intuition. Proceeding in this way is intended both to challenge doxasticism about intuition, and to highlight some important similarities between intuition and perception. In section 2, I take up (DoxI1), and in section 3, I take up (DoxI2). In section 4, I will consider a positive consideration in favor of doxasticism about intuition, and I will explain the response to this consideration that I find most attractive.

## 1. Perceptual Experience

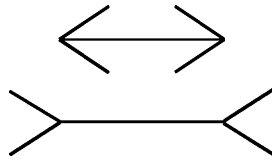
Doxastic theories of perception are theories according to which perceptual experiences are, or are acquisitions of, doxastic attitudes or dispositions. I will focus on doxastic theories of perception that entail the following two conditionals:

(DoxP1) Necessarily: If  $x$  has a perceptual experience representing that  $p$ , then  $x$  judges, or has an inclination to judge, that  $p$ .

(DoxP2) Necessarily: If  $x$  judges, or has an inclination to judge, that  $p$ , then  $x$  has a perceptual experience representing that  $p$ .<sup>6</sup>

In this section I will describe two arguments. The first is against (DoxP1). The second is against (DoxP2). My aim, however, is not to refute a largely abandoned class of theories.<sup>7</sup> Rather, it is to provide a background for exploring a largely accepted class of theories—i.e. doxastic theories of intuition.

*Against (DoxP1).* Below are the famous Müller-Lyer lines.



You might know that the two lines are the same in length, but still have a visual experience that represents the bottom line as longer than the top line. The phenomenon is common: many visual illusions persist even when you know that they are illusions. This is an instance of what Evans calls “the belief-independence of the states of the informational system”—which states include perceptual experiences.<sup>8</sup>

While perceptual experiences are belief-independent, doxastic attitudes and inclinations are not. Since you know—and, let us suppose, are quite sure—that the two Müller-Lyer lines are the same in length, likely you will not judge, or form any inclination to judge, that the bottom line is longer than the top line, even though this is what

---

<sup>6</sup> Most doxasticists about perception defend more sophisticated claims, and in particular wouldn’t commit themselves to anything as strong as (DoxP2). The comments I made in the introduction about (DoxI1) and (DoxI2) apply here.

<sup>7</sup> Kathrin Glüer has recently defended a novel doxastic theory of perception; see (Glüer 2009). The novelty is to shift from the “naïve semantic” view that experiences have contents of the form  $x$  is  $F$  to the “phenomenal semantic” view that experiences have contents of the form  $x$  looks  $F$ . I am not convinced that this shift is warranted, or that it provides enough resources to defend the doxastic theory of perception. For just a bit more on this see footnote 11 below. I cannot discuss Glüer’s interesting paper in any detail here, however.

<sup>8</sup> See (Evans 1981), page 124.

your visual experience represents. Reflection on this case suggests the following as a general possibility: you might have a perceptual experience representing that *p*, while not judging, or forming any inclination to judge, that *p*. That is:

Not-(DoxP1) Possibly: *x* has a perceptual experience representing that *p* and *x* does not judge, or have any inclination to judge, that *p*.

Many philosophers accept Not-(DoxP1), and take it to be a good reason to reject any doxastic theory of perception.<sup>9, 10, 11</sup>

*Against (DoxP2).* Contrast the following two cases: (A) JF is blindfolded and someone tells him that the wall in front of him is red. (B) JF isn't blindfolded and he sees that the wall in front of him is red. In both cases JF gains a bit of information about the wall in front of him—that it is red—but there is a palpable difference between them. In fact, there are many palpable differences between them. I am interested in one in particular. In order to help isolate it, John Foster asks us to imagine a variant on case (A). (A\*) JF is blindfolded but clairvoyant:

Thus suppose that, even when I am blindfolded, I only have to focus my investigative attention in a certain direction to acquire, in a cognitively direct way, the same putative information, with the same conceptual content, as I would acquire if the blindfold were removed and the relevant portion of the environment became visible.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> In addition to (Evans 1981) see, for example, (Jackson 1977), (Peacocke 1983), (Searle 1983), (Foster 2001), and (Heumer 2001).

<sup>10</sup> In defending doxasticism about perception, Armstrong proposed identifying perceptual experiences with doxastic dispositions distinct from inclinations to make judgments. See (Armstrong 1968), page 222. See (Jackson 1977) pages 40 – 42 and (Foster 2001) pages 106 – 108 for criticism of Armstrong's proposal. I find the criticisms Jackson and Foster make compelling. I cannot, however, explore the prospects of doxasticism about perception any further here.

<sup>11</sup> Glüer suggests that in the Müller-Lyer case your perceptual experience is a belief that the bottom line *looks* longer than the top, and that this is compatible with not judging, or having any inclination to judge, that the bottom line *is* longer than the top; (Glüer 2009). This move does not get the doxasticist off the hook, since there are possible cases in which something *x* looks *F* to you, but in which you do not believe (or judge, or have any inclination to judge) that *x* looks *F*. Suppose *x* is an inscription in your own terrible handwriting of the word "cat." You perceptually represent it as an inscription of the word "cat," but you recognize that it certainly does not look like an inscription of the word "cat."

<sup>12</sup> (Foster 2001), page 112.

Cases (A\*) and (B) are similar in many ways: in both, JF consciously gains information about the wall in front of him in a way that does not involve testimony, inference, memory, etc. But there is still a palpable difference:

[The difference is that] in the clairvoyant cases, as envisaged, there is no provision for the *presentational feel* of phenomenal [i.e. perceptual] experience—for the subjective impression that an instance of the relevant type of environmental situation is directly presented.<sup>13</sup>

According to Foster, perceptual experiences have a presentational feel. Sturgeon calls what I take to be the same property “scene-immediacy”: “what it’s like to enjoy visual experience is for it to be as if objects and their features are directly before the mind.”<sup>14</sup> I will call the property Foster and Sturgeon are talking about presentational phenomenology.<sup>15, 16</sup>

What is the nature of this presentational phenomenology? I believe it is possible to make some limited headway on this question, but I want to postpone taking it up till section 3 below. For now I will suppose that we have a grip on the notion through acquaintance with presentational phenomenology in our own perceptual experiences.

The possession of presentational phenomenology is another point of difference between perceptual experiences and doxastic attitudes and

---

<sup>13</sup> (Foster 2001), page 112.

<sup>14</sup> (Sturgeon 2000), page 24. (Crane 2005) cites Sturgeon with approval.

<sup>15</sup> The view that perceptual experiences have presentational phenomenology is widespread. Characterizations of it, however, vary. Compare, for example, McDowell’s “the presentness to one of the seen environment.” (McDowell 1994). Or Robinson’s “perception is presentational in a way that pure thought is not...It is because perception presents features of the world that it is possible to go away and think about them...” (Robinson 1994). Some characterizations carry implications of object-dependence that I reject. Some philosophers take perception’s possession of presentational phenomenology to have consequences that I reject—for example that perceptual experience must have an act-object rather than an attitude-content structure; cf. (Pautz 2007).

<sup>16</sup> John Bengson has pointed out to me that some philosophers call perception presentational in order to mark out a different property of it. Contrast a conscious belief that *p* with a perception that *p*. The belief and the perception represent *p* as being true. But only the perception, let us say, *presents* *p* as being true. So, perceptual experiences *both* present propositions as being true to us, *and* present objects and features to us. In this paper I am using “presentational phenomenology” to pick out the second property of perceptual experience. I think that the two properties are distinct, that perceptual experiences have both of them, and that they have the first *because* they have the second. These are substantive claims. I cannot defend them here, but nor will I rely on them here.

inclinations. Doxastic attitudes and inclinations do not possess presentational phenomenology: it is quite possible for you judge or be inclined to judge that the scene in front of you—or a scene quite distant from you—is a certain way without it being for you as if the scene’s “objects and their features are directly before the mind.” Thus:

Not-(DoxP2) Possibly: x judges, or has an inclination to judge, that p, and x does not have a perceptual experience representing that p.

It is worth pointing out that the considerations reviewed here do not gain their importance merely because they refute (DoxP2). (DoxP2) is easy to refute: you might judge, or form an inclination to judge, that p because of testimony, inference, or memory. This simple refutation of (DoxP2), however, does nothing to diminish the plausibility that there is a nearby revision of (DoxP2) that is immune to it. A natural idea, for example, is to focus on the etiology of judgments and inclinations to make judgments: they must not derive from testimony, inference, or memory. But set whatever etiological conditions you please, so long as it is the etiology of a judgment or an inclination to make a judgment that you are talking about, you will not have picked out a state that has the presentational phenomenology characteristic of perceptual experiences.

## 2. Intuition: Against (DoxI1)

The doxastic theories of intuition that I am focusing on entail two conditionals. The first is (DoxI1). Here it is for reference:

(DoxI1) Necessarily: If x has an intuition that p, then x judges, or has an inclination to judge, that p.

In this section I will do two things. First, I will briefly review an argument against (DoxI1) that parallels the argument against (DoxP1) discussed above. Second, I will defend this argument against a few recent criticisms.

Here is the argument.<sup>17</sup> Consider the Naïve Comprehension Axiom:

(Naïve Comp) For all conditions ...x... there is a set {x: ...x...} containing all and only the things meeting the condition.

---

<sup>17</sup> The sort of argument I will describe appears in (Bealer 1998).

Bealer knows that (Naïve Comp) is false. Because he knows that it is false, when he considers it, he does not judge that it is true, and he does not have any inclination to judge that it is true. Still, he claims, when he considers it, he has an intuition that it is true.

Consider another claim about sets:

(All Ordinals) There is a set  $\{x: x \text{ is an ordinal}\}$  containing all the ordinals.

I know that (All Ordinals) is false. Because I know that it is false, when I consider it, I do not judge that it is true, and I do not have any inclination to judge that it is true. Still, I claim, when I consider it, I have an intuition that it is true.

These examples suggest that it is possible for you to have an intuition representing that  $p$ , though you do not judge, or have any inclination to judge, that  $p$ . That is:

Not-(DoxI1) Possibly:  $x$  has an intuition that  $p$  and  $x$  does not judge, or have any inclination to judge, that  $p$ .

There are obvious parallels between this argument against (DoxI1) and the argument against (DoxP1) discussed above. The argument against (DoxP1) commands widespread acceptance. The argument against (DoxI1), however, has been found less compelling.

According to Williamson, when he considers (Naïve Comp) he does have an inclination to believe that it is true, but he resists this inclination because he knows better.<sup>18</sup> This in itself is not enough to refute the argument against (DoxI1). Both Bealer and Williamson know that (Naïve Comp) is false. But it might be that while Bealer's knowledge stops him from having any inclination to believe that it is true, Williamson's knowledge does not, though it does make him resist the inclination to believe that it is true. You might strengthen Williamson's claim, however, to this. When Bealer claims not to have any inclination to believe that (Naïve Comp) is true, he is mistaken. Really he—like Williamson—does have such an inclination, but—again like Williamson—he resists it. Bealer is confusing the resistance of an inclination with the absence of an inclination.

The inclination (strengthened) Williamson takes Bealer to have is either conscious or unconscious.<sup>19</sup> Suppose it is unconscious. Then

---

<sup>18</sup> See Williamson (2007), page 217. I quote the relevant passage below, in section 4.

<sup>19</sup> The following dilemma defense of the argument against (DoxI1) also appears in (Bengson 2010).



perhaps Bealer really does have it, but just does not know that he does. Suppose this is so. This does nothing to show that Bealer's intuition that (Naïve Comp) is true is just his inclination to judge that (Naïve Comp) is true. The reason why is that his intuition is conscious, but his inclination—by our current hypothesis—is not.<sup>20</sup> Suppose, then, that Bealer's inclination is conscious. Then it is unclear why he should miss it. Let me switch to my own case. Sometimes I am inclined to judge that the senate will pass a decent health care bill, and sometimes I am inclined to judge that it will not. I know what it is like to have these inclinations. When I consider (All Ordinals) I do not experience anything like one of these inclinations. Only a convincing error theory would tempt me to revise this claim. But Williamson has not provided one.

Earlenbaugh and Molyneux suggest a different response to the argument against (DoxI1). They distinguish between component and resultant inclinations—where component and resultant inclinations work like component and resultant vectors.<sup>21</sup> Given this distinction, they distinguish between two claims Bealer might make:

- (1) I have an intuition that (Naïve Comp) is true, but I do not have a resultant inclination to judge that it is true.
- (2) I have an intuition that (Naïve Comp) is true, but I do not have any component inclination to judge that it is true.

Even if (1) is true, (2) might be false. That is: it is possible to have a component inclination to judge that (Naïve Comp) is true, but no resultant inclination to judge that (Naïve Comp) is true.

So far so good. But it is not clear what force this is supposed to have against the argument against (DoxI1). Bealer should grant the distinction and claim that he has *neither* any resultant *nor* any component inclination to judge that (Naïve Comp) is true. If this is what he claims about himself, why think he is mistaken? Earlenbaugh and Molyneux wind up in a position similar to (strengthened) Williamson's. Either the component inclination they think Bealer has is conscious or it is unconscious. If unconscious, then it is not

---

<sup>20</sup> Let me make this explicit: if Williamson were to succeed in arguing that whenever one has an intuition that *p*, one has an unconscious inclination to judge that *p*, then he would succeed in defending (DoxI1), but he would not succeed in defending doxasticism about intuition. Doxasticism about intuition entails (DoxI1), but (DoxI1) does not entail doxasticism about intuition.

<sup>21</sup> See (Earlenbaugh and Molyneux 2009). Sosa makes a similar distinction; see (Sosa 2007).

Bealer's intuition. If conscious, then if Bealer really has it, he should be able to tell that he does by introspection—unless there is some good error theory explaining why not. Again, let me switch to my own case. Sometimes I find myself *both* inclined to judge that the senate will pass a decent health care bill *and* inclined to judge that it will not. These are component inclinations. I know what they are like. When I consider (All Ordinals) I do not experience anything like one of them. Again, only a convincing error theory would tempt me to revise this claim. But Earlenbaugh and Molyneux do not provide one.

### 3. Intuition: Against (DoxI2)

(DoxI2), recall, is the following claim:

(DoxI2) Necessarily: if *x* judges, or has an inclination to judge, that *p*, then *x* has an intuition that *p*.

In this section I want to develop an argument against (DoxI2) that is similar to the argument against (DoxP2) discussed above. The importance of the argument is not *that* it refutes (DoxP2), but *how* it does so. There are other, quicker ways to refute (DoxI2). The argument I will develop, however, is not easily circumvented by modifying (DoxI2) with, say, etiological conditions on judgments or inclinations to make judgments: that they not derive from perception, testimony, inference, or memory, that they derive solely from understanding or conceptual competence, etc.<sup>22</sup> But even more importantly, the argument refutes (DoxP2) by drawing our attention to an often ignored *phenomenological* feature of intuition.

The main premise of the argument is that intuitions are similar to perceptual experiences in possessing presentational phenomenology. This claim has not played much of a role in recent discussions of intuition. But a longer view of the subject reveals that many philosophers have held it:

Whenever my preconceived belief in the supreme power of God comes to mind, I cannot but admit that it would be very easy for him, if he so desired, to bring it about that I go wrong even in those matters which I think I see utterly clearly with my mind's eye. Yet when I turn to the things themselves which I think I perceive very clearly, I am so convinced by them that I spontaneously declare: let whosoever

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf. (Ludwig 2007), (Sosa 2007).

can do so deceive me, he will never bring it about that...two and three added together are more or less than five...<sup>23</sup>

In an act of abstraction, which need not necessarily involve the use of an abstract name, the universal itself is given to us; we do not think of it merely in signitive fashion as when we merely understand general names, but we apprehend it, *behold* it. Talk of an *intuition* and, more precisely, of a perception of the universal is in this case, therefore, well-justified.<sup>24</sup>

We are thus forced to the conclusion that the knowledge which we indubitably possess concerning relations involves acquaintance, either with the bare relations themselves, or at least with something equally abstract...<sup>25</sup>

Despite their remoteness from sense experience, we do have something like a perception also of the objects of set theory, as is seen from the fact that the axioms force themselves upon us as being true.<sup>26</sup>

I take “turn[ing] to the things themselves,” having “the universal itself given to us,” being “acquainted, either with the bare relations themselves, or at least with something equally abstract,” and having “something like a perception also of the objects of set theory” to be phrases intended to pick out experiences that seem to—and, since these four philosophers were neither nominalists nor skeptics about intuition, genuinely do—present us with abstract objects and their features.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> (Descartes 1985), 3<sup>rd</sup> *Meditation*. Underlining added.

<sup>24</sup> (Husserl 2001b), *Logical Investigation* 6. Italics in original; underlining added.

<sup>25</sup> (Russell 1992), *Theory of Knowledge*, Chapter VII. Underlining added.

<sup>26</sup> (Gödel 1947), “What Is Cantor’s Continuum Problem?” Underlining added.

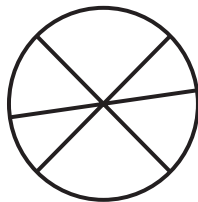
<sup>27</sup> I cannot fully defend this interpretive claim here. I do want to mention two obvious worries, and suggest replies. First worry: Descartes is using “the things themselves” to pick out the propositions he seems to see clearly, not the objects and features those propositions are about. The phrase “the things themselves” occurs in the *Rules* as well; see Rule 8, page 32 in (Descartes 1985b). There it is used to pick out “natures”—Descartes’ earlier term for the objects of intuition. Descartes includes propositions among the natures, but he also includes properties and individuals. Cf. (Grice 1991), page 187 ff. Second worry: Maybe Gödel is using “objects of set theory” to mean propositions of set theory. Reply: Note that the objects of set theory are contrasted with the axioms of set theory, and that it is our perception of the objects that explains why the axioms force themselves upon us as being true. “Perception of x” contrasts with “having p forced upon you as being true”: the former takes item-denoting complements; the latter takes proposition-denoting complements.

Descartes, Russell, Husserl, and Gödel had different views about intuition. But all seem to me to agree that Sturgeon's claim about visual perception—"what it's like to enjoy visual experience is for it to be as if objects and their features are directly before the mind"—has a true analogue for intuition: what it's like to enjoy intuition experience is for it to be as if objects and their features are directly before the mind. So there is some historical pedigree to the claim that intuitions have presentational phenomenology.

Historical pedigree is one thing. Truth, however, is another. Why think that intuitions have presentational phenomenology? The philosophers I have quoted adduced epistemic, semantic, and phenomenological considerations in favor of thinking that intuitions have presentational phenomenology.<sup>28</sup> Here I will provide some phenomenological evidence for the view.

Let us imagine someone, Albert, intuiting a simple geometrical truth: every diameter of a circle determines a line of symmetry for it. Here is how Albert's intuition might appear in his stream of consciousness:

Albert considers the proposition: every diameter of a circle determines a line of symmetry for it. At first he does not know what to think about it. To tell whether the proposition is true, Albert sets out to make himself better aware of what it is about. It is about circles, diameters, and lines of symmetry. Albert exercises his visual imagination. He imagines an arbitrary circle and some of its diameters.



---

<sup>28</sup> I must leave exploration of these various considerations to another occasion. Here are a few remarks intended to clarify what I have in mind by the different sorts of consideration. Russell tended to emphasize semantic considerations: he argued that our ability to directly think about and refer to abstract objects is explained by experiences that present, or acquaint us with, them. Why do these experiences also *seem to*, or *feel as if they*, present, or acquaint us with, abstract objects? My interpretive hypothesis is that this explains how we immediately *know that* we can directly think about and refer to them. Husserl tended to emphasize epistemological and phenomenological considerations. He argued, for example, that intuitions are presentational because felt presence to mind of the items that a proposition is about in general explains how we can acquire immediate justification for believing the proposition. Gödel's remarks are scanty, but he seems to me to have had phenomenological considerations in mind. The reason he gave for thinking intuitions are presentational is that this explains the distinctive phenomenal character of the way that certain mathematical propositions appear to us to be true.

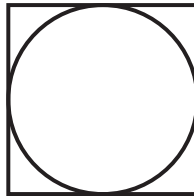
Circles are shapes of *this* kind, and diameters are line segments like *these* that span the circle and pass through its midpoint, Albert thinks while imagining a circle and its diameters. Albert thinks of the circle's lines of symmetry as *those* lines that cut it into halves so that folding the circle over them makes the halves coincide. As Albert thinks and imagines his way toward a better awareness of what circles are, what diameters are, and what lines of symmetry are, all of a sudden things fall into place: his thoughts and imaginings click together in a way that makes it intuitively appear to him that every diameter of a circle does indeed determine a line of symmetry for it. As a result Albert judges that this is so.

Imagine yourself in Albert's shoes. Contrast the two experiences: entertaining the proposition that diameters determine lines of symmetry, and intuiting that diameters determine lines of symmetry. There is a felt difference between them. The intuition represents the proposition as being true. But that isn't all. When the proposition that diameters determine lines of symmetry intuitively appears to you to be true, it does so in a way that seems grounded in your awareness of what circles, diameter, and lines of symmetry *are*—that is, in a felt presence to mind of the properties of being a circle, being a diameter, and being a line of symmetry.

This felt presence to mind of the properties can be elusive. Here is a second example that might help to make it more readily isolable in introspection. Consider the following clams:

- (A) Every line of symmetry for a square is a line of symmetry for a circle.
- (B) Some lines of symmetry for a circle are not lines of symmetry for a square.

You might convince yourself of (A) and (B) by imagining a circle and a square, both centered on the origin, and imagining folding each over various lines that pass the origin:



While imagining the circle, the square, and the folding operation it might intuitively appear to you that (A) is true, or that (B) is true, or that both (A) and (B) are true. These are *different* intuitions: they have different propositional contents. But I expect, and I do find for myself, that in each case there is some common phenomenology. Further, this is not just visual imagery, though there is that. Rather, there is—in addition—a common sense of having a grip on what circles, squares, and lines of symmetry are. That is, there is a common feeling of presence to mind of the properties of being a circle, being a square, and being a line of symmetry.

Suppose you are convinced: intuitions have presentational phenomenology. Then the rest of the argument against (DoxI2) is the same as the argument against (DoxP2). From the claims that intuitions have presentational phenomenology and judgments, and inclinations to make judgments do not, we conclude:

Not-(DoxI2) Possibly: x judges, or has an inclination to judge, that p, and x does not have an intuition representing that p.

As I pointed out above it isn't clear what alternative to (DoxI2) doxasticists might propose. No matter the etiology of a judgment, or an inclination to make a judgment, so long as it is a judgment, or an inclination to make a judgment, it will not have presentational phenomenology, and so will not be an intuition.<sup>29</sup>

There are three objections to the argument of this section that I will consider. I will address the first two here, and the third in the next section.

*First objection.* I grasp what presentational phenomenology is in the case of perception. And I can see that you've pointed toward *some* kind of phenomenology in the case of intuition. But why think it is presentational phenomenology?

The objection calls for a characterization of presentational phenomenology that is abstract enough so that it is clear how both perceptual experiences and intuition experiences can possess it. Here I will sketch an approach to this project.

---

<sup>29</sup> In (Chudnoff 2010) I considered, but did not endorse, the view that intuitions are experiences in which you judge, or are inclined to judge, something and that possess presentational phenomenology; this view accepts (DoxI1) and rejects (DoxI2). Call it semi-doxasticism. I believe semi-doxasticism is false because I accept the arguments given above against (DoxI1). Setting those aside, however, it is a nice question whether semi-doxasticism is ultimately coherent. I am doubtful, but cannot take up the matter here.

Philosophers of perception often distinguish between perception-of and perception-that.<sup>30</sup> Contrast the following two perceptual reports:

- (1) Albert sees the rocket.
- (2) Albert sees that the rocket has launched.

(1) and (2) report on different states: Albert might see the rocket without seeing that it has launched; and Albert might see that the rocket has launched without seeing the rocket, because, say, it is hidden by its exhaust cloud.

I will introduce another distinction. This is a distinction between *seeming* perception-of and *seeming* perception-that. Contrast the following two perceptual reports:

- (3) Albert seems to see a rocket.
- (4) Albert seems to see that a rocket has launched.

(3) and (4) report on different states: Albert might seem to see a rocket without seeming to see that a rocket has launched; and Albert might seem to see that a rocket has launched without seeming to see a rocket, because, say, he only seems to see a rocket's exhaust cloud. According to some philosophers, seeming perception-of is just perception-of special items such as sense-data, universals, or non-existent objects.<sup>31</sup> According to other philosophers, seeming perception-of is a species of seeming perception-that.<sup>32</sup> I am not assuming any view on the matter. Prior to theorizing about the natures of seeming perception-of and seeming perception-that, we should at least recognize the intuitive distinction between them.

Suppose you look at your car and you seem to see that it is red. Further, suppose you seem to see its color—its redness. In this case you seem to see that *p*—that your car is red—and you seem to see an item—your car's redness—that makes it true that *p*. I take this to be an example of presentational phenomenology. More generally: if your perceptual experience is one in which it both seems to you that *p* and in which you seem to be sensorily aware of an item that makes it true that *p*, then I will say that your experience has

---

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, (Chisholm 1957), (Warnock 1965), (Dretske 1969, 1995), (Armstrong 1969), (Jackson 1977), and (Johnston 2006).

<sup>31</sup> See, respectively, Price (1950), Smith (2002), Johnston (2004).

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, (Spelke 1995), Siegel (2006), or (Pautz 2008).

presentational phenomenology with respect to p.<sup>33</sup> Now suppose you look at your car's speedometer and you seem to see that your car is moving at 60 m.p.h. You also seem to see an item, namely the speedometer's display. In this case you seem to see that p—that your car is moving at 60 m.p.h.—and you seem to see an item—your car's speedometer's display—that does not *make* it true that p (though you do seem to see an item that *indicates* that p). Your visual experience represents that p, but it does not present an item that makes it the case that p. If your perceptual experience is one in which it seems to you that p, but in which you do not seem to be sensorily aware of an item that makes it the case that p, then I will say that your experience lacks presentational phenomenology with respect to p.

Here is the sense in which I think perception in general is presentational: *every perceptual experience has presentational phenomenology with respect to some of its propositional content*. In the second case just discussed, for example, though your visual experience lacks presentational phenomenology with respect to the proposition that your car is moving at 60 m.p.h., it has presentational phenomenology with respect to another proposition that seems true in it, namely the proposition that your car's speedometer reads 60 m.p.h.

Here is a more regimented formulation of the thesis that perception is presentational:

(Presentationality of Perception) Whenever you seem to perceive that p, there is some q (maybe = p) such that—in the

---

<sup>33</sup> A few clarifications are in order. A) "Seem to be sensorily aware of an item that makes it true that p" should be read as a block. Do not read it as "there is an item x such that you seem to be sensorily aware of x and x makes it true that p." This is mistaken in two ways. First, "seem to be sensorily aware" is opaque. Second, this reading would entail that p is true. I take the phrase "seem to be sensorily aware of an item that makes it true that p" to have the same form as "seem to see a rocket." B) I also take it as a primitive here. I will not try to analyze it further. I think it helps to articulate what some philosophers are getting at in talking about presentational phenomenology, but it does not provide a basis for a reductive explanation, or an explanation in independently understandable terms. C) I am using "seeming to be sensorily aware of an item that makes it true that p" to pick out a determinable state. In particular perceptual experiences it is determined in various ways: 1. The modality of the sensory awareness will be fixed, 2. The proposition will be fixed, and 3. The truth-maker for the proposition will be fixed. D) I do not think that seeming to be sensorily aware of an item that makes it true that p requires that you have the concept of a truth-maker. I am using that concept to pick out a kind of perceptual state, but I am not attributing possession of it to those in perceptual states of that kind. I am open to there being a better way to pick out the kind of state, one that better captures just how things appear to those that are in states of the kind.



same experience—you seem to perceive that *q*, and you seem to be sensorily aware of an item that makes *q* true.<sup>34</sup>

There is a natural modification of this thesis that says that intuition is presentational:

(Presentationality of Intuition) Whenever you seem to intuit that *p*, there is some *q* (maybe = *p*) such that—in the same experience—you seem to intuit that *q*, and you seem to be intellectually aware of an item that makes *q* true.

Setting the two theses side by side should make clear the parallels I intend to draw between perception and intuition in calling both presentational. Both are presentational because for both: whenever it seems to you that *p*, there is some *q* (maybe = *p*) such that—in the same experience—it seems to you that *q*, and you seem to be aware of an item that makes *q* true. For perception, the seeming is perceptual and the awareness sensory. For intuition, the seeming is intuitive and the awareness intellectual.<sup>35</sup>

This characterization of presentational phenomenology is intended to provide enough of a theoretical grip on the notion to meet the current objection. It does not provide a full account of what presentational phenomenology consists in. And it does not provide a basis for proving that intuitions have presentational phenomenology. To show that they do requires phenomenological reflections of the sort pursued above.<sup>36</sup> What I claim for the foregoing is that it helps to illuminate how what such reflections turn up is analogous to what similar reflections turn up when directed at perceptual experiences.

---

<sup>34</sup> Compare: “whenever a person perceives-that *p*, he both believes that *p* and perceives something which is relevant to *p*’s truth-value. For example, one believes that the traffic lights are green, and sees the greenness of the traffic lights.” (O’Shaughnessy 2002). I do not agree with everything O’Shaughnessy says about perception, nor with everything that the quoted statement implies about perception, but the parallels between O’Shaughnessy’s statement and my own encourage me in thinking that I am on to *something*. See, also, Johnston on the function of sensory awareness; (Johnston 2006).

<sup>35</sup> I am using “seeming intellectual awareness” to pick out a kind of phenomenology. I illustrated this phenomenology above with Albert’s intuitions: Albert seemed to be intellectually aware of the properties of being a circle, being a diameter, and being a line of symmetry. There are difficult metaphysical issues associated with the questions “Well was Albert genuinely intellectually aware of an abstract item such as circularity? What could this awareness consist in?” I take these questions up elsewhere; (Chudnoff ms).

<sup>36</sup> I’m setting aside semantic and epistemological arguments for now.

*Second objection.* Perhaps *some* intuitions have presentational phenomenology. But why think that *all* intuitions have it? On the face of it, some do not, such as my intuition that  $1 + 1 = 2$  or my intuition that *prima facie* you ought not lie.

I must explain away—or at least show the prospects of explaining away—the appearance that some intuitions lack presentational phenomenology. I believe that this appearance derives from a few common sources.

First, some states that we *call* intuitions do lack presentational phenomenology. Suppose you perceive that the sky is blue, take your perception at face value, and so form a perceptual belief that the sky is blue. Later, you might recall the perceptual belief that the sky is blue, though you do not re-perceive that the sky is blue. It would be wrong to call the perceptual belief a perception, note that it lacks presentational phenomenology, and conclude that some perceptions lack presentational phenomenology. A slightly different, but related error can create the appearance that some intuitions lack presentational phenomenology. Suppose you intuit that  $1 + 1 = 2$ , take your intuition at face value, and so form an intuitive belief that  $1 + 1 = 2$ . Later, you might recall the intuitive belief that  $1 + 1 = 2$ . According to standard usage—at least as it strikes me—it would *not be wrong* to call this intuitive belief an intuition. You might very well say, “I have an intuition that  $1 + 1 = 2$ .” Still, I think, it would be wrong to argue that some intuitions lack presentational phenomenology because this intuitive belief lacks presentational phenomenology. It would be wrong because it would be committing the fallacy of equivocation. “Intuition” is sometimes used to pick out experiences (intuition experiences) that lead us to beliefs, and sometimes used to pick out beliefs (intuitive beliefs) to which we are lead.

Second, presentational phenomenology can be elusive. By that I mean it can be difficult to focus introspective attention on it. This is not a problem for the presentational phenomenology of perception, but it is a problem for the presentational phenomenology of intuition. Why? The reason, I think, is that the presentational phenomenology of intuition often occurs in conjunction with more impressive phenomenology, such as the phenomenology of visualizing, or imagining a situation in a thought experiment, or carefully thinking about the order of the quantifiers in a proposition. These other experiences can be literally attention-grabbing: they grab your attention and keep it to themselves and away from the presentational phenomenology of intuition.

Third, presentational phenomenology can be difficult to describe. Consider a situation like this. You are in a club looking for your friend: your eyes are watery, the room is smoky, the lights are dim,

and the crowd is dense. You seem to see your friend in the corner. But your seeming awareness of the location of your friend is obscure. Something similar can happen in intuition. You might intuit that *prima facie* you ought not lie. And you might seem to be aware of a truth-maker for this claim. But your seeming awareness might be obscure.<sup>37</sup> We describe presentational phenomenology by describing what is presented to us. So obscurity can affect our ability to describe our presentational phenomenology. Why should having difficulty describing it lead to the appearance that it doesn't exist? The reason why is that the limited description we can give might not provide us with a basis for distinguishing the phenomenology described from other non-presentational phenomenology. Sometimes we really do have to turn to the things themselves.<sup>38</sup>

Fourth, some intuitions lack presentational phenomenology with respect to some of their content. Suppose you intuit that nothing is self-diverse—i.e. nothing fails to be identical to itself.<sup>39</sup> And suppose you do not seem to be aware of a truth-maker for this proposition. It doesn't follow that your intuition lacks presentational phenomenology. Your intuition that nothing is self-diverse might be like your perception that your car is moving at 60 m.p.h. That is, in this case, perhaps you also intuitively represent that everything is self-identical, and you seem to be aware of a truth-maker for *this* proposition. In the perceptual case the propositional content about the speedometer might not be the object of your attention, but it still might exist. Similarly, in the intuition case, the propositional content about self-identity might not be the object of your attention, but it still might exist.

So, the presentational phenomenology of intuition can be elusive, difficult to describe, and partial. I believe that these three properties can be exploited in explaining away apparent examples of intuitions lacking presentational phenomenology. Explanations in particular cases will likely not generalize, so I will not pursue any here.

#### 4. The Absent Intuition Challenge

The two objections I considered in the last section question claims I made about intuitions, but do not question the very existence of

---

<sup>37</sup> Here I follow the rationalist tradition in taking intuitions to exhibit variations in clarity and distinctness.

<sup>38</sup> “To the things themselves!” is an imperative associated with Husserl. The things are our experiences. And the injunction, as I understand it, is intended to underscore the need for first-person phenomenological reflection in achieving a clear view of the natures of, similarities and differences between, structures exhibited in, and constitutive connections among our experiences.

<sup>39</sup> Ernie Sosa helped me to see the need to account for this example.

intuitions as experiences distinct from conscious doxastic attitudes and dispositions. The third does:

*Third objection.* When I introspect I do not find any intuitions distinct from my conscious judgments and conscious inclinations to make judgments. Williamson presses this worry:

Although mathematical intuition can have a rich phenomenology, even a quasi-perceptual one, for instance in geometry, the intellectual appearance of the Gettier proposition is not like that. Any accompanying imagery is irrelevant. For myself, I am aware of no intellectual seeming beyond my conscious inclination to believe the Gettier proposition. Similarly, I am aware of no intellectual seeming beyond my conscious inclination to believe Naïve Comprehension, which I resist because I know better.<sup>40</sup>

There are a number of different challenges in this passage. First, there is the challenge I discussed in section 2: this is a challenge to Bealer's argument that intuitions can occur in the absence of inclinations to believe. Second, there is the worry that I discussed in section 3: though *some* intuitions have "a rich phenomenology, even a quasi-perceptual one," not *all* intuitions do. Third, and finally, there is what I will call the *absent intuition challenge*: Williamson—and other doxasticists—claim not to find any intuition experiences when they peek into their streams of consciousness.<sup>41</sup>

The least satisfying response to the absent intuition challenge is to settle for a stalemate: Williamson and other doxasticists don't find that they have any intuition experiences; we perceptualists find that we do; call it a draw. The most satisfying response is to insist that Williamson and other doxasticists do sometimes have intuition experiences, and to diagnose and repair their inability to find them. This is the response that I will try to develop. It is an option because what you find in your stream of consciousness does not just depend on what is there; it also depends on what you are equipped to find. In order to *find*—not just have—an intuition experience, your understanding of what intuition experiences are shouldn't be wildly mistaken. If your understanding of what intuition experiences are is wildly mistaken, then you might very well have many intuition experiences, but fail to recognize them as such.

---

<sup>40</sup> (Williamson 2007, pg 217).

<sup>41</sup> They might go on to conclude something further: there are no intuition experiences, or I—the doxasticist—have no reason to believe that there are, etc. I will set these further claims aside. I am interested in responding to the mere first person report.

Contrast two different ways of looking for an intuition experience in your stream of consciousness. The first way is to look for an experience that occupies a location of its own, distinct from those occupied by your thoughts, imaginings, intentions, beliefs, etc. The second way is to look for an experience that is co-located with some of your thoughts, imaginings, etc—that is, to look for some difference *in* your thoughts, imaginings, etc. Doxasticists—I conjecture—pursue the first strategy. Here is an apparent rationale for it: intuition experiences are supposed to be *sui generis*, so they should occupy their own places in our streams of consciousness.<sup>42</sup> But this inference is invalid: intuition experiences can be both *sui generis*—i.e. not identical to and not analyzable in terms of thoughts, imaginings, etc—and co-located in our streams of consciousness with our thoughts, imaginings, etc. How? They can be *constituted* by our thoughts, imaginings, etc. When material objects—such as a lump of clay and a statue—are distinct and co-located, that is a sign that one of them—in this case the lump of clay—constitutes the other—in this case the statue.<sup>43</sup> Consider, as a hypothesis, the claim that intuitions are constituted by and so co-located with thoughts, imaginings, etc. If this is the correct understanding of intuition experiences, then the correct way to look for them in your stream of consciousness is precisely not to look for an experience that occupies a location of its own, distinct from those occupied by your thoughts, imaginings, etc. You should examine your thoughts, imaginings, etc and search for some difference in them: do they organize together in some way and thereby constitute a new experience, say an intuition experience representing that circles are symmetrical about their diameters, or, for a non-geometrical example, that every natural number is bigger than at most a finite number of other natural numbers? I conjecture that if doxasticists were to do this, then they would find that they do have intuition experiences.

The reply to the absent intuition challenge that I prefer, then, is this. The challenge rests on a mistaken understanding of intuition experiences. This understanding should be corrected by conceiving of intuition experiences as constituted by thoughts, imaginings, intentions, beliefs, etc. With such a corrected understanding in place, the method of looking for intuition experiences in your stream of consciousness should become clearer, and the absent intuition challenge should no longer retain its grip.

What I want to do now is fill out idea that intuition experiences are constituted by other experiences, such as conscious thoughts,

---

<sup>42</sup> Bealer, for example, defends the claim that that intuitions are *sui generis* propositional attitudes; see (Bealer 1998).

<sup>43</sup> It is a defeasible sign—but a sign nonetheless.

imaginings, etc. I find this view of intuition experiences attractive because it seems to me to provide the best theoretical setting within which to explain various phenomenological, epistemological, and metaphysical aspects of intuition. I cannot elaborate on the full motivation for the view in this paper.<sup>44</sup> What will try to do here is make it clearer and more plausible by making a few explanatory points.

The first is about the constitution relation. I take the constitution relation that holds between intuition experiences and collections of other experiences to be the very same one that holds between statues and lumps of clay, and between dollar bills and pieces of paper. But, it is natural to ask, what relation is *that*?

I do not know how to give non-circular, necessary and sufficient conditions for *x* to constitute *y* at *t*. What I will do, instead, is set out a handful of theses about constitution, which—in conjunction with the examples given—should help to clarify what I take constitution to be. All of the theses are controversial.<sup>45</sup> My aim here is not to defend them, but simply to use them to explain how I understand the constitution relation.

There are six theses: (I) Constitution is not composition: constitution is a relationship between two items, not, like composition, a relation between a plurality (some parts) and an item (a whole).<sup>46</sup> (II) Constitution is not identity: I accept modal arguments for distinctness. (III) A structured whole—such as a bicycle—is an item that is constituted by a mereological sum—a sum of bicycle parts—when that sum meets a further structuring condition—a principle of unity, such as being arranged so as to enable locomotion on two wheels by peddling.<sup>47</sup> (IV) One mereological sum can constitute two different structured wholes, at least at different times: I reject uniqueness of composition.<sup>48</sup> (V) One structured whole can be constituted by two different mereological sums,

---

<sup>44</sup> I explore some of its explanatory potential in work on the nature of intuitive knowledge; (Chudnoff ms).

<sup>45</sup> (Rea 1997) contains papers representing a variety of views on the nature of material constitution.

<sup>46</sup> You might say, speaking loosely, that some tinker-toys constitute a model of the Eiffel Tower. What this means, speaking strictly, is that some tinker-toys compose a mereological sum of tinker-toys, which sum constitutes a model of the Eiffel Tower.

<sup>47</sup> I am borrowing the term “principle of unity” from Johnston; see (Johnston 2004 and 2006).

<sup>48</sup> This is possible—I think—because a mereological sum might satisfy different principles of unity, at least at different times. If you think that principles of unity are themselves parts of structured wholes then you might want to give (IV) up; cf. (Koslicki 2008).

at least at different times: I reject mereological essentialism.<sup>49</sup> (VI) Constitution at a time entails coincidence in location at that time.<sup>50</sup>

Since the paradigm relata of the constitution relation are material objects, you might wonder what motivation there is to think it ever holds between experiences. The reason I will give is that there are many examples in which it is natural to think of the relationship between two experiences—or between a sum of experiences and an experience—as constitution.

Consider, for one example, the following:

(E1) A sum of auditory impressions of various notes A, B, C...

(E2) The experience of hearing a melody ABC...

(E1) is not identical to (E2): it is possible for (E1) to exist without (E2)—though it might not be possible for (E2)—that very experience—to exist without (E1).<sup>51</sup> Further, (E1) does not cause (E2). Rather, (E1) “amounts to” (E2) provided some structuring condition is met, such as that earlier auditory impressions raise expectations that later auditory impressions fulfill. These observations suggest to me that it is natural to think (E1) constitutes (E2). For another example, consider the following:

(E3) A sum of conscious thoughts about various properties of biking/driving to work.

(E4) The experience of consciously considering whether to bike or drive to work.

(E3) is not identical to (E4): it is possible for (E3) to exist without (E4), and, perhaps, it is even possible for (E4) to exist without

---

<sup>49</sup> This is compatible with thinking that for *some* structured wholes it is essential that they be constituted by a certain mereological sum—perhaps just at a certain distinguished point in their careers, such as their origin. If this is so for some structured wholes, then, on my view, it is so because of *their* natures, not because of the nature of constitution.

<sup>50</sup> I understand location broadly. Lumps of clay and statues are spatial beings, so when they coincide in location they coincide in spatial location. Experiences, let us suppose, are not spatial beings, so when they coincide they do not coincide, in any non-trivial sense in spatial location. Rather, they coincide in location in a stream of consciousness. For the purposes of this paper, I must take this notion of a location in a stream of consciousness as primitive.

<sup>51</sup> One might resist the claim that it is possible for (E1) to exist without (E2). A different claim that will do the same work is this: it is not part of the essence of (E1) that it represent a melody.

(E3)—say because you think about different properties of biking/driving to work.<sup>52</sup> Further, (E3) does not cause (E4). Rather, (E3) “amounts to” (E4) provided some structuring condition is met, say that the thoughts in (E3) are appropriately guided by an intention to decide whether to bike or drive to work. These observations suggest to me that it is natural to think (E3) constitutes (E4). While there is plenty of room for debate about the specifics of the two examples that I have presented, they should illustrate how it can be natural to invoke the constitution relation in understanding the relationship between certain experiences.

Given some understanding of the constitution relation and some motivation for thinking it holds between experiences, it is natural to ask: what collection of experiences is supposed to constitute a given intuition experience?

Take, for example, Albert’s intuition experience representing that diameters determine lines of symmetry. What collection of experiences constitutes this intuition experience? It is, I maintain, some subset of the collection of Albert’s reflections on the proposition that diameters determine lines of symmetry, that is, those thoughts and imaginings Albert has in trying to get clearer on what circles, diameters, and lines of symmetry are. This collection might include, for example, Albert’s visualization of a circle, Albert’s visualizations of some diameters of that circle, Albert’s experiences of imagining folding the circle over its diameters, various thoughts Albert has while engaging in these imaginative endeavors, etc. In general, your intuition experience representing that *p* is constituted by (some of) your reflections on the proposition that *p*.<sup>53</sup>

This suggestion is likely to raise a worry. Suppose from time *t*<sub>1</sub> to *t*<sub>N</sub> Albert reflects on circles, diameters, and lines of symmetry, and Albert has an intuition experience representing that diameters determine lines of symmetry. If (some of) Albert’s reflections constitute his intuition experience, then his intuition experience shouldn’t persist beyond *t*<sub>N</sub>. But—it seems—intuition experiences often persist beyond reflections. That is, on the face of it, Albert might very well seem to intuit that diameters determine line of symmetry at *t*<sub>N</sub> + 1. What, according to the view I have been defending, might be happening in such a case? A number of different things might happen. I will briefly consider four.

---

<sup>52</sup> Once again these claims about possibilities can be replaced by claims about essences.

<sup>53</sup> This is a claim about what the constituents of an intuition experience are. I have not advanced a thesis about what structuring conditions such constituents must meet in order to constitute an intuition experience—that is, a thesis about the principles of unity for intuition experiences. This is an important topic, but I do not have the space here to address it.



1. At  $tN + 1$  Albert no longer has an intuition experience; he just retains a conscious inclination to believe that diameters determine lines of symmetry.
2. Albert took his intuition experience at face value, and so formed an intuitive belief that diameters determine lines of symmetry, and this intuitive belief remains conscious at  $tN + 1$ .
3. At  $tN + 1$  Albert continues to have an intuition experience; but his intuition experience is now constituted by his retention in immediate memory of past reflections, not by present reflections.
4. At  $tN + 1$  Albert continues to have an intuition experience; but his intuition experience is now constituted by his mere holding in mind the proposition that circles are symmetrical about their diameters.

(1) and (2) are cases in which Albert's intuition does *not* persist beyond his reflections. In both, something conscious persists beyond Albert's reflections, but it is not an intuition experience. In case (1) what persists is a conscious inclination to believe. In case (2) what persists is a belief—albeit not a just any kind of belief, but, rather, an intuitive judgment.

(3) and (4) depend on the claim that intuition experiences can be variably constituted. There is some phenomenological evidence that cases like (3) and (4) do occur. Suppose you stop reflecting on  $p$ , but persist in having an intuition experience representing that  $p$ , and that this experience is now constituted by a retention in immediate memory of your past reflections, or perhaps your mere holding in mind the proposition that  $p$ . Then it is plausible that the force with which  $p$  strikes you will likely be diminished. It will likely be diminished in a way that is similar to the way that the force of a retained past perception is often diminished.<sup>54</sup> And, indeed, this is something that we do experience. Descartes points out a similar phenomenon when he describes the felt difference between his thought that  $2 + 3 = 5$  when he is reflecting on the matter and when he is not.<sup>55</sup>

Some cases are cases in which intuition experiences do not really persist beyond reflections: what really persists—in (1)-like cases—is an inclination to believe, or—in (2)-like cases—an intuitive belief. The idea

---

<sup>54</sup> I am not committing myself to any particular theory about what this felt difference consists in. Nor am I arguing that memories are always less forceful than perceptions.

<sup>55</sup> (Descartes, 1985), page 25.

that intuition experiences persist in such cases depends on confusing intuition experiences with inclinations to believe or with intuitive beliefs. Other cases are cases in which intuition experiences do really persist beyond reflections. At least some of these cases—(3)-like and (4)-like cases—are unproblematic because what happens is that the intuition experience is constituted by something else, either a retention in immediate memory of past reflections or the mere holding in mind of a proposition. Many of the examples suggesting that intuition experiences can persist beyond reflections fall into these four kinds of case. Perhaps there are others, so the issue is not closed. But I must set further discussion of it aside for now.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, one might worry that what I have argued in the present section is incompatible with the perceptualist agenda I pursued in earlier sections. Doxasticists believe we have conscious thoughts and imaginings directed at abstract matters. And now I have argued that intuition experiences are constituted by collections of such conscious thoughts and imaginings. So, one might wonder, how is the view I am defending any different from doxasticism? It is different because it is one thing to believe that there are collections of conscious thoughts and imaginings directed at abstract matters and it is another thing to believe that these collections of thoughts and imaginings sometimes constitute new experiences that instantiate a new range of intentional, phenomenal, metaphysical, and epistemological properties. Similarly, it is one thing to believe that there are lumps of clay and it is another thing to believe that these lumps of clay sometimes constitute new entities, statues, that instantiate a new range of representational and aesthetic properties. It is a virtue of my version of perceptualism that according to it, intuition experiences are not mysterious, primitive experiences that float freely from other experiences in our streams of consciousness.

### Bibliography

- Armstrong, David M. 1968. *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*. Routledge.
- Baker, Lynne Rudder. 2000. *Persons and Bodies*. Cambridge UP.

---

<sup>56</sup> There is one last point I want to make about (4)-like cases. Sometimes we seem to intuit that *p* without reflecting on *p* at all. Call such intuitions *unreflective intuitions*. I believe there are a couple of things that might be going on with any given unreflective intuition. One sort of unreflective intuition is an intuition constituted in a (4)-like way throughout its career. Adequately dealing with unreflective intuitions requires putting in place a number of new ideas, and doing so will only clutter the current discussion. I discuss unreflective intuitions more fully elsewhere. See (Chudnoff 2010).

- Bealer, George. 1992. "The Incoherence of Empiricism." *Aristotelian Society: Supplementary Volume* 66: 99–138.
- . 1998. "Intuition and the Autonomy of Philosophy." In *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and Its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*, DePaul and Ramsey (eds).
- . 2000. "A Theory of the A Priori." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 81, no. 1:1.
- . 2002. "Modal Epistemology and the Rationalist Renaissance." In *Conceivability and Possibility*, Gendler and Hawthorne (eds).
- Benacerraf, Paul. 1973. "Mathematical Truth." *The Journal of Philosophy* 70, no. 19, Seventieth Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division: 661–679.
- Bengson, John. 2010. *The Intellectual Given*. PhD Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.
- Brewer, Bill. 1999. *Perception and Reason*. Oxford University Press.
- Chisholm, Roderick M. 1963. *Perceiving: A Philosophical Study*. Cornell University Press.
- Chudnoff, Elijah. 2010. "The Nature of Intuitive Justification." *Philosophical Studies Online*. DOI: 10.1007/s11098-010-9495-2
- . Ms. "Intuitive Knowledge."
- Crane, Tim. 2005. The problem of perception. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N Zalta.
- DePaul, Michael R and William Ramsey. 1998. *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and Its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Descartes, Rene. 1985. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes: Volume 2*. Cambridge University Press
- Dretske, Fred. 1969. *Seeing and Knowing*. University Of Chicago Press.
- . 1995. "Meaningful Perception." In *Invitation to Cognitive Science: Visual Cognition*. Cambridge MA: MIT UP.
- Evans, Gareth. 1982. *The Varieties of Reference*. Oxford University Press.
- Field, Hartry H. 1989. *Realism, Mathematics, and Modality*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Foster, John A. 2000. *The Nature of Perception*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- French, Peter. 2007. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy: Philosophy and the Empirical*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Gendler, Tamar Szabo and John, Hawthorne, eds. 2002. *Conceivability and Possibility*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- . 2006. *Perceptual Experience*. Oxford University Press, USA.

- Gödel, Kurt. 1947. "What Is Cantor's Continuum Problem?" In *Collected Works: Volume II: Publications 1938-1974*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- . 2001. *Collected Works: Volume II: Publications 1938-1974*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Goldman, Alvin and Joel Pust 1998. "Philosophical Theory and Intuitional Evidence." In *Rethinking Intuition*, DePaul and Ramsey (eds.)
- Greenough, Patrick and Michael P. Lynch. ed. 2006. *Truth and Realism*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Grice, Paul. 1991. *Studies in the Way of Words*. Harvard University Press.
- Huemer, Michael. 2001. *Skepticism and the Veil of Perception*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- . 2008. *Ethical Intuitionism*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Husserl, Edmund. 1975. *Experience and Judgment*. Northwestern University Press.
- . 2001a. *Logical Investigations: Volume I*. Routledge.
- . 2001b. *Logical Investigations: Volume II*. Routledge.
- Johnston, Mark. 2004. "The Obscure Object of Hallucination." *Philosophical Studies*, no 120: 113–183.
- . 2006. "Better Than Mere Knowledge? The Function of Sensory Awareness." In *Perceptual Experience*, pgs 260–290. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Koslicki, Kathrin. 2008. *The Structure of Objects*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Kosslyn, Stephen M. and Daniel N., Osherson. 1995. *An Invitation to Cognitive Science - 2nd Edition: Vol. 2: Visual Cognition*. The MIT Press.
- Knobe, Joshua and Shaun Nichols. 2008. *Experimental Philosophy*. Oxford University Press.
- Lynch, Michael P. 2006. "Trusting Intuitions." In *Truth and Realism*, Greenough and Lynch (eds).
- McDowell, John. 1994a. *Mind and World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- . 1994b. The content of perceptual experience. *Philosophical Quarterly* 44, no. 175: 190–205.
- Pautz, Adam. 2007. Intentionalism and Perceptual Presence. In *Philosophical Perspectives 21: Philosophy of Mind*.
- Pitcher, George. 1971. *A Theory Of Perception*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Price, H. H. 1950. *Perception*. 2nd ed. Methuen & co., ltd.
- Pryor, James. 2005. There is immediate justification. In *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, ed. Matthias Steup and Ernest Sosa. Blackwell.

- Rea, Michael, ed. 1997. *Material Constitution: A Reader*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.
- Russell, Bertrand. 1992. *Theory of Knowledge: The 1913 Manuscript*. Routledge.
- Schwitzgebel, Eric, and Alison Gopnik. 1998. "Whose Concepts Are They, Anyway? The Role of Philosophical Intuition in Empirical Psychology." In *Rethinking Intuition*, DePaul and Ramsey (eds).
- Searle, John R. 1983. *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge University Press.
- Siegel, Susanna. 2006. "How Does Visual Phenomenology Constrain Object-seeing?" *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*.
- Smith, A. D. 2002. *The Problem of Perception*. Harvard University Press.
- Smith, David Woodruff and Amie L. Thomasson. 2005. *Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Sosa, Ernest. 1998. "Minimal Intuition." In *Rethinking Intuition*, DePaul and Ramsey (eds).
- . 2002. "Reliability and the A Priori." In *Conceivability and Possibility*, Gendler and Hawthorne (eds).
- . 2006. "Intuitions and Truth." In *Truth and Realism*, Greenough and Lynch (eds).
- . 2007. *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge*. Oxford University Press.
- . 2008. "A Defense of Intuitions" In *Stich and His Critics*, ed. by M. Bishop and D. Murphy (Blackwell, 2008)
- Spelke, Elizabeth, Grant Gutheil and Gretchen Van de Walle. 1995. "The Development of Object Perception." In *An Invitation to Cognitive Science: Visual Cognition*. Cambridge MA: MIT UP.
- Sturgeon, Scott. 2000. *Matters of mind*. Routledge.
- Tieszen, Richard. 1989. *Mathematical Intuition: Phenomenology and Mathematical Knowledge*. Springer.
- . 2005. "Consciousness of Abstract Objects." In *Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind*, Smith, David Woodruff (ed).
- Warnock, G. J. 1954. Seeing. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 55. New Series: 201–218.
- Weinberg, Jonathan M., Shaun Nichols and Stephen Stich, 2001. "Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions," *Philosophical Topics* Vol. 29 (2001)
- Williamson, Timothy. 2002. *Knowledge and Its Limits*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- . 2004. "Philosophical 'Intuitions' and Scepticism about Judgment." *Dialectica: International Journal of Philosophy of Knowledge* 58, no. 1:109–153.

- . 2005. “Armchair Philosophy, Metaphysical Modality and Counterfactual Thinking”. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 105: 1–23.
- . 2007. *The Philosophy of Philosophy*. Wiley-Blackwell.