

# The Rational Roles of Intuition

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Abstract: Intuitions are often thought of as inputs to theoretical reasoning. For example, you might form a belief by taking an intuition at face value, or you might take your intuitions as starting points in the method of reflective equilibrium. The aim of this paper is to argue that in addition to these roles intuitions also play action-guiding roles. The argument proceeds by reflection on the transmission of justification through inference. According to inferential internalists, in order to gain justification for believing the conclusion of an argument by inferring it from the premises in that argument one must “see” that the premises support the conclusion. I motivate this view and endorse the idea that one’s “seeing” such a support relation consists of one’s having an intuition. In a number of recent papers, Paul Boghossian has pressed a regress argument against inferential internalism inspired by Lewis Carroll’s dialogue “What the Tortoise Said to Achilles.” I develop a response to Boghossian’s argument according to which intuitions work like mental imperatives and inferences are mental actions performed by obeying them. After developing this response to Boghossian’s argument, I take up the question of what it is in virtue of which intuitions play a guidance role, when they do so.

We have attitudes—beliefs, desires, hopes, fears, intentions—and we perform actions—mental ones such as counting sheep before falling asleep and bodily ones such as making the bed after waking up. Some of these attitudes and actions are more reasonable than others. We have experiences, such as perceptions, bodily sensations, recollections, imaginings, and—I would add—intuitions. Some of these play roles in making some of our attitudes and actions more reasonable than others. By the rational roles of a type of experience I mean the roles experiences of that type play in making some of our attitudes and actions more reasonable than others.

In this paper I will explore the rational roles intuitions play. Two have been discussed widely recently:

Justifier: Intuitions justify beliefs.

Evidence: Intuitions are evidence for beliefs.

I don't assume these are the same rational role. I discuss both of them briefly below. My main aim in this paper, however, is to defend the view that intuitions play an additional rational role. To a first approximation:

Guidance: Intuitions guide actions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper I focus on mental actions, though I think intuitions play a role in guiding some bodily actions as well.

Here is the plan.

In section 1, I set out some assumptions I will make about the nature of intuition. In section 2, I discuss the justifier and evidence roles. In sections 3 to 5, I make a case for thinking that intuitions play the guidance role. The argument proceeds by reflection on the transmission of justification through inference. According to inferential internalists, in order to gain justification for believing the conclusion of an argument by inferring it from the premises in that argument one must “see” that the premises support the conclusion. In section 3, I motivate this view and endorse the idea that one’s “seeing” such a support relation consists of one’s having an intuition. In a number of recent papers, Paul Boghossian has pressed a regress argument against inferential internalism inspired by Lewis Carroll’s “What the Tortoise Said to Achilles.”<sup>2</sup> In section 4, I review Boghossian’s argument, isolating what I take to be its main premise. In section 5, I develop a response to Boghossian’s argument that requires intuitions to play the guidance role. In section 6, I elaborate on the view that intuitions play the guidance role in response to two objections. And in section 7, I take up the question of what it is in virtue of which intuitions play a guidance role, when they do so.

## 1. What Are Intuitions?

Consider three theses about perception:

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<sup>2</sup> (Carroll 1905), (Boghossian 2008).

(1) Perceptual experiences are *sui generis* experiences; they should not be identified with doxastic attitudes or dispositions—such as beliefs, or inclinations to believe.<sup>3</sup>

(2) Perceptual experiences possess presentational phenomenology; whenever you have a perceptual experience representing that p, there is some q (maybe = p) such that—in the same experience—it perceptually seems to you that q, and you seem to be sensorily aware of the chunk of reality that makes q true.<sup>4</sup>

(3) Perceptual experiences fit into your stream of consciousness like experiential atoms; they are not constituted by your other experiences, such as your imaginings and conscious thoughts.<sup>5</sup>

In my view intuition is similar to perception with respect to the first two points, and dissimilar with respect to the third. That is, I endorse the following theses about intuition:

(4) Intuition experiences are *sui generis* experiences; they should not be identified with doxastic attitudes or dispositions—such as beliefs, or inclinations to believe.<sup>6</sup>

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3 Cf. (Jackson 1977), (Evans 1981), (Peacocke 1983), (Searle 1983), (Foster 2001), (Huemer 2001). (Armstrong 1968) is a well-known defense of the opposing view; see also (Glüer 2009).

4 Cf. (McDowell 1994), (Robinson 1994), (Sturgeon 2000), (Foster 2001), (O’Shaughnessy 2002), (Crane 2005), and (Johnston 2006). All agree that perception possesses presentational phenomenology, though not all adopt the same gloss on what this amounts to. I explore the nature of presentational phenomenology further in (Chudnoff 2012a).

5 Contrast the views of some earlier writers according to which perceptual experiences—as opposed to mere sensations—are supplemented by imagination. For discussion see Strawson’s “Imagination and Perception” in (Strawson 2007).

(5) Intuition experiences possess presentational phenomenology; whenever you have an intuition experience representing that  $p$ , there is some  $q$  (maybe  $= p$ ) such that—in the same experience—it intuitively seems to you that  $q$ , and you seem to be intuitively aware of the chunk of reality that makes  $q$  true.<sup>7</sup>

(6) Intuition experiences fit into your stream of consciousness like experiential molecules; they are constituted by your other experiences, such as your imaginings and conscious thoughts.<sup>8</sup>

I have argued for theses (4) through (6) at length elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> Here I will briefly indicate some motivation for accepting them.

Consider the following two claims:

(A) If  $a < 1$ , then  $2 - 2a > 0$

(B)  $\sqrt{7} + \sqrt{10} > \sqrt{3} + \sqrt{17}$

Both (A) and (B) are truths we can come to know. But there is a difference. For most of us (B) is only knowable by calculation or testimony. (A), on the other hand, is

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6 Cf. (Bealer 1998, 2000, and 2002) and (Huemer 2001, 2008). For arguments in favor of the opposing view see: (Williamson 2004, 2005, and 2007) and (Earlenbaugh and Molyneux 2009).

7 This view—though not my way of putting it—was more common among earlier writers on intuition. In (Chudnoff 2011b), I give reasons for attributing it to Descartes, Husserl, Russell, and Gödel. I would add certain moral intuitionists such as John Balguy and Richard Price to the list of historical proponents; see their works excerpted in (Raphael 1969). Among more recent writers, Butchvarov and Bonjour seem to me to defend similar views; see (Butchvarov 1970) and (Bonjour 2005).

8 Cf. (Husserl 1975, 2001), (Parsons 1980, 2007), and (Tieszen 1989, 2005). I believe Husserl was the first to defend this view. It was common ground among those in the phenomenological tradition; see, for example, (Reinach 1911), (Gurwitsch 1964), and (Lévinas 1995).

9 See (Chudnoff 2011a, b, and c, 2012a and b, and forthcoming).

something that it is possible to just “see,” i.e. intuit to be true, perhaps after a moment or two of reflection.

Contrast the experience you have when you intuit (A) with the experience you have when you consciously judge (B), say because you calculate it or receive testimony that it is true. A natural way to characterize what distinguishes the intuitive way of becoming convinced that (A) is true is this. In this case, you are not compelled by authority or argument to believe that if  $a < 1$ , then  $2 - 2a > 0$ ; nor do you just find yourself mysteriously tempted to believe this proposition. Rather, the proposition is made to seem true to you by your apparent insight into the bit of mathematical reality that makes it true, namely the dependence of  $2 - 2a$  on  $a$ . This is why I say that intuitions have presentational phenomenology. If intuitions have presentational phenomenology, however, then they shouldn't be identified with doxastic attitudes or dispositions. One might have a doxastic attitude or disposition in light of having an intuition experience with presentational phenomenology, but the doxastic attitude or disposition itself is something else, since it is possible to have such an attitude or disposition, even a conscious one, without having any presentational phenomenology.

Reflection on example intuitions seems to me to provide some motivation for accepting (4) and (5). What about (6)? Here the considerations are a bit more involved. At least three observations are relevant.

First, in having an intuition a proposition appears to you to be true.

Second, the same proposition can appear to you to be true in different ways, and these different ways are significant enough so that we should count them as

part of the identity of the intuitions with which they are associated. For example, maybe you think that one intuition might justify believing a proposition more than another and that this is due to the fact that it makes the proposition appear to be true in a clearer manner than the other. Here is an example from Descartes: if you try to intuit that a chiliagon has more sides than a 999 sided figure by imagining it, your intuition will be less clear than if you relied solely on your intellectual grasp of the difference between 1000 sides and 999 sides.

Third, the differences in ways propositions appear true in intuitions are correlated with differences in associated reflections. In the example from Descartes the differences in the intuitions are associated with differences in accompanying thoughts and imaginings. A straightforward approach to individuating intuitions so that their identities include ways propositions appear to be true in in them and not just the propositions that do appear to be true in them is to take such thoughts and imaginings to be parts of the intuitions. This suggests that (6) is true, i.e. that intuitions are constituted by other experiences such as thoughts and imaginings.

## 2. Intuitions as Justifiers and as Evidence

Take your intuition that if  $a < 1$ , then  $2 - 2a > 0$ . You have no reason to reject this claim or distrust your intuition. So, plausibly, your intuition makes it the case that you have justification for believing that if  $a < 1$ , then  $2 - 2a > 0$ . Suppose, further, that you take your intuition at face value. You thereby form a justified belief

that if  $a < 1$ , then  $2 - 2a > 0$ . Your belief is justified because it is based on your intuition.

The foregoing suggests that at least some intuitions are justifiers. But it also suggests that we should distinguish between two ways in which such intuitions are justifiers. Following standard terminology, some intuitions are *propositional* justifiers and some intuitions are *doxastic* justifiers. If an intuition is a propositional justifier, then it makes it the case that you have justification for a belief. If an intuition is a doxastic justifier, then it plus the fact that you base a belief on it make it the case that your belief is justified.

If intuitions are justifiers, then it is natural to ask: In virtue of what does an intuition play the justifier role, when it does so? There are a number of options one might pursue. Two initial ideas are:

Reliabilism: if an intuition plays the justifier role, it does so in virtue of being a reliable indicator of the truth of its content.<sup>10</sup>

Phenomenalism: if an intuition plays the justifier role, it does so in virtue of having a certain phenomenology with respect to its content.<sup>11</sup>

I call these initial ideas, since they require and have received further elaboration. My own view is that Phenomenalism is the preferable starting point, and that it requires one simple elaboration: the relevant phenomenology is presentational

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10 Cf. (Bealer 1998a, 1998b, 1999), (Goldman 2007), (Peacocke 2004), and (Sosa 2007, 2009).

11 Cf. (Huemer 2006).



phenomenology, as characterized in section 1. Whether this is the correct view will not make a difference to the rest of my discussion, so I will not take up its defense here.<sup>12</sup>

So far I have framed my discussion in terms of justification. Much recent work on intuition, however, is framed in terms of evidence. The question I want to consider now is: How might intuitions being evidence relate to them being justifiers?

On one way of thinking about evidence, there isn't much to say in response to this question since "evidence" is just a terminological variant of "justifier." That is:

Your evidence consists of whatever is a propositional justifier for you, i.e. whatever makes it the case that you have justification for believing something.

If this is how we think of evidence, then insofar as we agree that intuitions play the justifier role, we should understand the idea that intuitions are evidence just as we understand the idea that intuitions are justifiers.

But there is another way of thinking about evidence, on which the relationship between intuitions as justifiers and as evidence is less clear. We might put it like this:

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<sup>12</sup> For a defense, see (Chudnoff 2011a, and forthcoming).

Your evidence consists of considerations that epistemically count in favor of or against your having certain beliefs.

This formulation leaves open two issues. One issue is about the ontology of evidence: are the considerations that constitute evidence facts or propositions? Another issue is about the conditions on possessing evidence: must the considerations that constitute your evidence be known or believed or believed with justification or propositionally justified for you or etc? These are important questions. But the issues I am concerned with do not hinge on answers to them.

If we think of evidence as epistemically favorable considerations, then insofar as we use “intuition” to pick out a kind of experience, we should agree that intuitions are not evidence, since experiences are not considerations.

Suppose we adopt this second way of thinking about evidence and we use “intuition” to pick out a kind of experience. Given that your intuitions are not themselves your evidence, how do the intuitions that you have stand with respect to your evidence? Say you intuit that p. What follows about your evidence? Here are some possibilities:

- Your evidence now includes the consideration that p
- Your evidence now includes the consideration that you have had the intuition that p

Suppose that this is all that follows about your evidence. Then it appears that there is a problem. What evidence do you have for believing that p? The consideration that p seems question-begging.<sup>13</sup> The consideration that you have had the intuition that p is about your own psychology, and, one might worry, even if it lends some support to believing p, the support it lends is very slight.<sup>14</sup>

I don't think this is much of a problem. Suppose you don't have very good evidence for believing that p—the considerations available to you are either question-begging or psychological. Still you might be justified in believing that p to a very high degree. The reason why is that even if your intuition is not itself evidence, and its occurrence does not ensure that you have good evidence for believing that p, still, it is a justifier, and it might justify you in believing that p to a very high degree. The moral is that epistemic rationality cannot be understood wholly in terms of evidence, if evidence is understood in the second way we have distinguished, as consisting of epistemically favorable considerations. More precisely, the following claim fails to hold: if your intuition experience representing that p justifies you in believing that p, then the justification you thereby have for believing that p consists of having evidence for believing that p. If it strikes you as incongruous to say that you might have a high degree of justification for believing that p, though only slight evidence for believing that p, then that just militates in favor of understanding evidence along the lines of the first way distinguished above, as consisting of justifiers. Then the claim—that if your intuition experience representing that p

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13 Cf. (Glüer 2009) on this issue as it comes up in thinking about the relationship between perceptual experiences and reasons for belief.

14 Cf. (Goldman 2007), (Earlenbaugh and Molyneux 2009), (Williamson 2007), (Ichikawa forthcoming), (Cath ms).

justifies you in believing that p, then the justification you thereby have for believing that p consists of having evidence for believing that p—will hold trivially, since the evidence you have will just be the justifier, i.e. the intuition experience.

### 3. Inferential Internalism

The aim of the next four sections to make a case for thinking that intuitions guide action and that this is a distinct rational role from the justifier and evidence roles. The argument will focus on a puzzle about inference.

Consider the following argument:

- (1) Every even number is divisible by 2.
- (2) The number of pigs in the pen is even.
- (3) So, the number of pigs in the pen is divisible by 2.

Say you know (1) from school and (2) from counting. You “see” that (1) and (2) support (3). So you infer (3) from (1) and (2) and thereby come to know that the number of pigs in the pen is divisible by 2.

In what does your “seeing” that (1) and (2) support (3) consist? Plausibly, it consists of your having an intuition experience that represents that (1) and (2) support (3). This is a historically popular idea—at least among rationalists.<sup>15</sup> Here are two considerations in favor of it. First, the subject matter of the claim that (1)

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Descartes’ *Rules* in (Descartes 1985), Ewing’s “Reason and Intuition” in (Ewing 1968), (Pollock 1974), and (Bonjour 1998).

and (2) support (3) is similar to the subject matter of typical claims that intuition justifies—e.g. the claim that if  $a < 1$ , then  $2 - 2a > 0$ . Both are claims about non-empirical matters. It could be that there are two or more distinct sources of justification for claims about non-empirical matters, but this view is *prima facie* unattractive and should be avoided if possible. Second, experiences of the sort that make the claim that (1) and (2) support (3) evident are similar to typical intuition experiences. Specifically, they possess the characteristics of intuition listed in section 1: they are *sui generis*, presentational, and constituted by thoughts and imaginings.

The puzzle about inference concerns the sort of transition that occurs from your intuition that (1) and (2) support (3) to your inferring (3) from (1) and (2). The puzzle is that there are *both* reasons to think that the transition from intuition is required for knowing by inference *and* reasons to think that the transition from intuition is *not* required for knowing by inference. The solution I will propose is that the reasons for thinking that the transition from intuition is *not* required for knowing by inference depend on an assumption about intuition that should be rejected. The assumption is that intuition has solely mind-to-world direction of fit, like a belief or an assertion. I will suggest that intuition sometimes has both that and world-to-mind direction of fit, like a desire or a command. In these cases intuition is what Ruth Millikan has called a pushmi-pullyu representation: it both describes a state of affairs and directs an action.<sup>16</sup>

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16 (Millikan 1995).

Inferential internalists think that the transition from intuition or some analogous mental state is required for knowing by inference. The balance of this section is dedicated to explaining in more detail what this view is and what motivation there is for adopting it.

Here are a few recent formulations of inferential internalism:

[a] The inferential internalist is committed to the view that for S to be justified in believing P on the basis of E, S must not only be justified in believing E but must be justified in believing that E makes probable P (where E's entailing P can be viewed as the upper limit of E's making probable P).<sup>17</sup>

[b] (Simple Inferential Internalism): A deductive inference performed by S is warrant-transferring just in case (a) S is justified in believing its premises, (b) S's justification for believing its premises is suitably independent of his justification for believing the conclusion, and (c) S is able to know by reflection alone that his premises provide him with a good reason for believing the conclusion.<sup>18</sup>

[c] In order for one to have positive epistemic status  $\phi$  in virtue of believing P on the basis of R, one must believe that R evidentially supports P, and one must have positive epistemic status  $\phi$  in relation to that later belief as well.<sup>19</sup>

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17 (Fumerton 2006), page 101.

18 (Boghossian 2003), page 268 in the reprint in (Boghossian 2008).

19 (Leite 2008), page 422.

There are important differences among these formulations of inferential internalism. I'll mention four. First, [a] and [c] are more general than [b]: whereas [b] is restricted to deductive inference, [a] and [c] range over at least all sorts of inference, and [c] maybe even further over cases of epistemic basing that do not involve inference. Second, whereas [a] and [c] aim to give necessary conditions on the acquisition of inferential justification, [b] aims to give necessary and sufficient conditions on the acquisition of inferential justification. Third, [a] and [b] do not require you to have a belief about the relation between premise and conclusion in your inference, but [c] does. Formulation [a], for example, requires that you have justification for a belief about the relation between premise and conclusion, but it is possible to have justification for believing something, even if you do not believe it. Formulation [b], likewise, requires that you be able to know by reflection alone about the relation between premise and conclusion, but it does not require that you actually do know, or even have any belief about the matter. Formulation [c], on the other hand, requires that you have such a belief. Fourth, [a] uses one epistemic notion—justification; [b] uses three—justification, being in a position to know, and warrant transmission; and [c] uses a schematic letter covering a range of positive epistemic notions.

These differences aside, there is an obvious family resemblance holding among [a], [b], and [c]. From them I distill the following view:

(II-) S knows that p by inferring p from  $q_1 \dots q_N$  only if S intuits that  $q_1 \dots q_N$  support p.

This view is more general than [b] since it is about all inferences, but potentially less general than [c] since it is about inferential justification only, and not epistemic basing more generally. It is similar to [a] and [c] in that it aims to give a necessary condition, not a sufficient condition, but it is less committal than them, as it is silent on all conditions on inference save the one that distinguishes inferential internalism from other views. It commits to the view that the mental state representing the support relation is an intuition. Given this commitment, (II-) does not require that S must believe that  $q_1 \dots q_N$  support p, since it is possible to intuit something and not believe it. Finally, it uses the notion of knowledge, since analogous principles that use epistemic notions weaker than knowledge imply (II-).

(II-) does not seem to me to be a proper formulation of inferential internalism, at least insofar as it is committed to a principle about knowledge.<sup>20</sup> For that, I think we need to add something:

(II) S knows that p by inferring p from  $q_1 \dots q_N$  only if S infers p from  $q_1 \dots q_N$  in part *because* S intuits that  $q_1 \dots q_N$  support p.

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<sup>20</sup> It might be sufficient if reformulated as a principle about propositional justification. But, as indicated above, if one is an inferential internalist about propositional justification, then one should be an inferential internalist about doxastic justification and states, such as knowledge, requiring doxastic justification.



Though none of [a], [b], or [c] suggests the additional condition—what we might call the becausal condition<sup>21</sup>—there are reasons to include it.<sup>22</sup> I will mention three.

First, there is a strategic reason: (II) is stronger than (II<sup>-</sup>), so if it can be defended, so can (II<sup>-</sup>). Adding the becausal condition doesn't hurt strategically.

Second, there is a dialectical reason: even though Boghossian does not formulate the becausal condition in [b], in arguing against inferential internalism he takes it to be committed to more than just (II<sup>-</sup>), and (II) is a plausible articulation of just what more.<sup>23</sup> Of course, an inferential internalist might then just reply to Boghossian by distinguishing (II<sup>-</sup>) from (II) and claiming to endorse the former, not the latter.<sup>24</sup> But this is unsatisfying—and the reason why is the third, and most important, reason for adopting formulation (II).

The third reason is that the most compelling motivation for inferential internalism motivates (II) as much as it motivates (II<sup>-</sup>). The most compelling motivation for inferential internalism derives from reflection on certain examples. Consider the following two arguments.

### Argument A

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21 How exactly to understand the becausal condition is an issue I will discuss below.

22 Brewer seems to endorse such a becausal condition in (Brewer 1995).

23 There might be a principle stronger than (II<sup>-</sup>) but weaker than (II) that best fits the conception of inferential internalism Boghossian has in mind when he is arguing against the view. See footnote 27 below. Since I am defending the stronger principle, (II), whether this is so does not matter for my purposes.

24 I am partly inclined to think that Leite's response to Boghossian's Carrollian argument consists in doing precisely this: endorsing (II<sup>-</sup>), rejecting (II). See (Leite 2008), pages 429 – 432. But I am not confident that this is a correct interpretation. Leite says that one's appreciation of the relation between premise and conclusion must “play a role” without “doing something” in one's inference. See page 432.

(A1) Connie and Cyndi are a cone and a cylinder with the same base and height.

(A2) Therefore, Cyndi encloses a greater volume than Connie.

#### Argument B

(B1) Connie and Cyndi are a cone and a cylinder with the same base and height.

(B2) Therefore, Cyndi encloses three times the volume of Connie.

Imagine Smith. Smith doesn't have any particular mathematical expertise. But suppose he has justification for believing (A1)—someone tells him it is so, or he measures it himself, or whatever. From (A1) he infers (A2). Plausibly, he now also has justification for believing (A2). Suppose, on the other hand, he has justification for believing (B1)—we're just relabeling (A1). From (B1) he infers (B2). Is it plausible in this case to say that he has justification for believing (B2)? I think not. Why?

On the face of it, it is because he can intuit that (A2) follows from (A1), but he cannot intuit that (B2) follows from (B1). It might take him a moment to intuit that (A2) follows from (A1), but it is certainly within his capabilities. It is difficult to imagine him intuiting in a similar way that (B2) follows from (B1), however. To do this, he would have to intuit the exact ratio of the volume of a cone to the volume of a cylinder with the same base and height. And that is beyond his limited capabilities.

Now suppose that while Smith does intuit that (A1) supports (A2), this intuition plays no role in accounting for why he makes the inference he does. Suppose he just ignores his intuition and makes the inference anyway. Does he, in this re-imagined case, gain justification for believing (A2)? No. The reason why not is that even though Smith intuits that the premise supports the conclusion, he does not infer the conclusion from the premise in light of this intuition, but independently of it. This observation suggests that Smith must not only intuit that (A1) supports (A2) in order for his inference to give him justification for believing (A2), but, also, must make his inference in part because he has this intuition. To summarize: reflection on examples motivates (II) as much as it motivates (II').<sup>25</sup>

#### 4. Boghossian's Carrollian Argument

Consider an inference that accords with *modus ponens* (MPP):

- (1) If today is the 20<sup>th</sup>, then Martha Argerich is playing today in Carnegie Hall.
- (2) Today is the 20<sup>th</sup>.
- (3) Martha Argerich is playing today in Carnegie Hall.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The point I am making here parallels a more familiar point about justified belief. In order to have a justified belief that p it does not suffice to have a belief that p and justification for believing that p: one must base one's belief that p on one's justification for believing that p. For further discussion, see (Feldman and Conee 1985).

<sup>26</sup> The example is Boghossian's; (Boghossian 2003), page 267 in the reprint in (Boghossian 2008).

Suppose (II) is true. So: in order know (3) by inferring it from (1) and (2), one must intuit that (1) and (2) support (3), and one must infer (3) from (1) and (2) at least in part because of this intuition. This raises questions of two sorts.

First, there are questions about one's intuition that (1) and (2) support (3). What is its precise content? For example, is it about MPP inferences in general, or about this particular MPP inference? I will set these questions aside for now. I return to them in section 6.

Second, there are questions about the becausal condition. What exactly is it for one's inference to be made in part because of one's intuition? Boghossian poses a similar question: "We can ask how my knowledge of the validity of the inference from (1) and (2) to (3) is supposed to bear on my warrant to infer (3)?"<sup>27</sup> His main reason for rejecting inferential internalism is that he does not think that this question has a satisfying answer:

But it is very hard to see, once again, how my putatively justified judgment that my premises entail my conclusion could bear on my entitlement to draw the conclusion in anything other than inferential form, thus:

(iv) This particular inference from (1) and (2) to (3) is valid.

(v) If an inference is valid, then anyone who is justified in believing

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<sup>27</sup> (Boghossian 2003), page 274 in the reprint in (Boghossian 2008). It is because Boghossian takes this to be a question that inferential internalists must face that I believe he thinks inferential internalism is committed to more than (II). But it is because there is a difference between an intuition bearing on one's warrant for inferring and an intuition bearing on one's inferring that I believe (II) might be too strong to capture his conception of inferential internalism. As pointed out above, this doesn't matter for my purposes. See footnote 30 for a reason to think a principle stronger than (II) but weaker than (II) is still too weak.

its premises and knows of its validity is justified in inferring its conclusion.

Therefore,

(vi) Anyone who is justified in believing the premises of this inference is justified in believing its conclusion.

(vii) I am justified in believing the premises (1) and (2).

Therefore,

(viii) I am justified in inferring (3).

Even if we conceded, then, that we have rational insight into the validity of specific inferences, we do not escape the threat of circularity that afflicts the internalist account. Once again, an ability to infer justifiably according to MPP is presupposed.<sup>28</sup>

In Boghossian's argument (iv) is the content of my intuition that (1) and (2) support (3). How does the content of this intuition bear on my inference from (1) and (2) to (3)? Boghossian claims that it can only do so by figuring in another inference, namely the inference from (iv) and supplementary premises to (viii), the conclusion

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28 (Boghossian 2003), pages 274 – 275 in the reprint in (Boghossian 2008).

that I am justified in inferring (3). If all this is so, then the inferential internalist is in trouble. One problem, which Boghossian points out, is that the inference from (iv) and supplementary premises to (viii) invokes MPP, thus launching us on the sort of regress Carroll illustrates in his dialogue between the Tortoise and Achilles.<sup>29</sup>

Another problem, which Boghossian does not point out, is that there is an additional question about how possession of the information in (viii) itself bears on my inference. Possessing the information that I am justified in inferring (3) is one thing; inferring (3) is another. By the conclusion of Boghossian's argument, I still haven't inferred (3), only that I am justified in inferring (3).<sup>30</sup>

The main premise in Boghossian's case against inferential internalism is this:

Main Premise: In order to make an inference from some premises to a conclusion because of one's intuition that those premises support that conclusion, one must take the claim that those premises support that conclusion as a premise in an inference.

Might the inferential internalist simply deny the Main Premise, and thereby deflect Boghossian's criticism? While I do think that the inferential internalist ought to deny the Main Premise, I do not think that doing so itself constitutes an adequate

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29 (Carroll 1905).

30 Boghossian describes himself as exploring how (iv) might bear on my entitlement to infer (3), not on my inferring (3). Perhaps, then, this additional problem is off his radar. But it shouldn't be. Suppose the inferential internalist has a good story about how (iv) bears on my entitlement to infer (3). There is still the question: how does my entitlement to infer (3) bear on my inferring (3)? Just as one might possess evidence for a belief, but believe independently of it, say on the basis of wishful thinking, so one might possess entitlement for an inference, but infer independently of it, and so without transmitting justification from premises to conclusion. Again, see (Feldman and Conee 1985) for discussion of justified belief.

response to Boghossian's criticism. The Main Premise is plausible. I think it is unavoidable given a certain assumption about the nature of the intuition one is, according to inferential internalists, supposed to have of the relation between premises and conclusion in an inference. In the next section, I will explore this assumption and how it is bound up with the Main Premise.

## 5. Intuition in Action

What must intuition be like so that Boghossian's Main Premise is false of it? This is the question that I want to address in this section.

There are two assumptions that I will make. First, inferring is a mental action.<sup>31</sup> And second, the because relation between inference and intuition is not merely causal; it is a rational transition.<sup>32</sup> What is a rational transition? I do not have a definition to give. Suppose you believe that  $p$  because it perceptually seems to you that  $p$ . This transition from perception to belief is not merely causal since it can make the belief rational. Suppose you  $\Phi$  because you intend to  $\Phi$ . This transition from intention to action is not merely causal since, provided the intention is rational, it can make the action rational. My second assumption is that inferring a

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31 Compare: "In making inferences, a being is *ipso facto* an agent" (Burge 1998). (Peacocke 2008) and (Gibbon 2009) agree. (Strawson 2003) disagrees, and though (Mele 2009) does not discuss inference in particular, he develops a position toward mental action in general that is similar to Strawson's. Strawson and Mele do agree with Burge, Peacocke, Gibbon, and myself on this much: when we make an inference we are doing something for which we are immediately responsible. We are responsible and this distinguishes inferences from sneezes and hiccups. And this responsibility is immediate in the sense that we are responsible and not just because we are responsible for some upstream cause of our inference. The assumption that inferences are mental events for which we are immediately responsible is likely strong enough for my purposes here. I cannot explore the issue in any further detail, however.

32 In this I am in agreement with (Brewer 1995). It is worth emphasizing that being not *merely* causal is compatible with being causal.

conclusion from some premises because you intuit that the premises support the conclusion is also, like these two transitions, not merely causal since it can make the inference have the property of being justification-transmitting. That is, inferences made in light of intuitions that their premises support their conclusions succeed in transmitting justification you have for believing their premises to their conclusions.

Let us say that a rational transition from a mental state is *direct* just in case it does not consist in taking the content of that mental state as a premise in an inference. With the above assumptions and this stipulation in place, our question can be rephrased this way: what must intuition be like so that it is possible for there to occur a direct rational transition from it to a mental action, specifically an inference?

Boghossian considers two paradigms: belief and perception.

But neither seems to provide us with a good model.<sup>33</sup> Take belief first. One way to make a rational transition from a belief is to take it as a premise in an inference. The inference might be theoretical leading to another belief. Or it might be practical leading to an action—and perhaps even a mental action. But in neither case is the rational transition direct, for it consists in taking the belief as a premise in an inference.

Take perception then. One way to make a rational transition from perception is to take it at face value—i.e. to form the belief that *p* just because it perceptually seems to you that *p*. This leads to a belief, however, not an action, and so not a mental action. Perhaps there is another way to think of this sort of transition.

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<sup>33</sup> This claim seems to me to hold only assuming, as I am in the present discussion, orthodox conceptions of belief and perception on which both only have a mind-to-world direction of fit. More on this below.



Suppose taking a perception at face value is making a judgment, and that making a judgment is a mental action. Inference, then, might stand to intuition as taking at face value stands to perception: an inference is the mental act that occurs when you take your intuition that some premises support some conclusion at face value. While I think that something *like* this is correct, the analogy with perception does not help us to see how it can be. When you take a perception at face value you form a belief that shares some of its content. So, if inferring were just taking an intuition at face value, then it would result in a belief that shares some of the intuition's content, i.e., presumably, a belief that some premises support some conclusion. But this is not what results from an inference. What results is a change in the epistemic dependencies among your beliefs: after inferring, you believe the conclusion inferred, and your belief in it is epistemically dependent on your beliefs in the premises from which it is inferred.

Let us consider one other rational role perception might play. While walking you might take into account what you perceive in negotiating obstacles, but without, let us suppose, first forming beliefs about your environment and then taking these beliefs as premises in practical inferences about how to move. Suppose you step to the side because you perceive an obstacle. Is this a direct rational transition from perception to action? Perhaps it is, but, again, it does not provide us with a good model for intuition. The reason why not is that it is a transition that occurs in the context of a background activity: you step to the side because you perceive an obstacle *while walking*. This is not a case in which a perception alone—without help

from other mental states, or a background activity—gets you walking in the first place.<sup>34</sup>

Reflections like these motivate Boghossian's Main Premise. There is, moreover, reason to think that if the only available paradigms on which to model appreciation were belief and perception, then Boghossian's Main Premise would be compelling. Let us see why.

Perception and belief have mind-to-world—as opposed to world-to-mind—direction of fit. The difference is illustrated by a famous example from Anscombe.<sup>35</sup> A man is shopping around town getting the items on a list that his wife gave him. A detective is following him making a list of all the items that he purchases. Let us suppose that both man and detective have done their jobs well, so that their lists read the same. The man's list has items-to-list direction of fit: the items on the list are given and the list *directs* the man to purchase those items. It has a directive function. The detective's list has list-to-items direction of fit: the items purchased are given and the list *describes* which items have been purchased. It has a descriptive function. Similarly, some mental states, such as beliefs and perceptions, have mind-to-world direction of fit. The world is given and they function to describe it. Other mental states, such as desires and intentions, have world-to-mind direction of fit. Their contents are given and they function to direct their subjects to satisfy those contents.

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34 One might defend the view that intuition works like perception does in the context of a background activity by arguing that when we make inferences because of what we intuit we do so in the context of a background activity of thinking, or reasoning, or working our way toward an inference, or something else. This view seems implausible to me. Sometimes we just make an inference, and this isn't part of any larger endeavor.

35 (Anscombe 1957), page 56.

I have picked out the two different directions of fit by their association with two different functional roles. One might wonder whether (i) a state has its direction of fit in virtue of its functional role, (ii) a state has its functional role in virtue of its direction of fit, (iii) a state's functional role is identical to, or includes as a part, its direction of fit, or (iv) a state has its direction of fit and its functional role in virtue of other facts about it, which facts ensure that the direction of fit and functional role line up in the way I have indicated. My approach here will be to remain neutral on this issue. For my purposes what matters is that directions of fit and functional roles line up as I have indicated: world-to mind states direct and mind-to-world states describe. What ultimately explains this is an issue I will leave unresolved.<sup>36</sup>

Above we ran through some considerations that suggested, roughly, that one cannot directly rationally respond to a belief or a perception with an action. You can take a belief into account by taking it as a premise in an inference, which inference might result in action. You can take a perception into account by endorsing it with a belief, or maybe by relying on it to guide an antecedent activity. But you cannot, it seems, take such states into account by just acting on them. Why? A natural idea is that it is precisely because of their direction of fit. Consider, then, the following general principle:

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<sup>36</sup> For further discussion see: (Humberstone 1992), (Velleman 1992), (Smith 1994), (Millikan 1995), (Platts 1997), (Sobel and Copp 2001), (Jacobson-Horowitz 2006), (Tenenbaum 2006),

(Inertia) It is impossible to make a direct rational transition from a mental state with solely mind-to-world direction of fit to an action.<sup>37</sup>

The qualifications “direct” and “rational” are essential. On one natural view of causation, it is metaphysically possible for anything to cause anything. So it is metaphysically possible for a belief or a perception to cause an action. But this is compatible with (Inertia) because (Inertia) is about rational transition not mere causation. Surely beliefs and perceptions can play some role in rationally guiding action. But again this is compatible with (Inertia) because (Inertia) is about direct rational transition not rational transition in general.

Many, and likely most, philosophers will find (Inertia) or a nearby principle attractive.<sup>38</sup> The so-called Humean Theory of Motivation entails it. Here is Michael Smith's formulation of that theory's central tenet:

(P1) R at t constitutes a motivating reason of agent A to  $\Phi$  iff there is some  $\Psi$  such that R at t consists of an appropriately related desire of A to  $\Psi$  and a belief that were she to  $\Phi$  she would  $\Psi$ .<sup>39</sup>

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37 If taking a perception at face value is a mental action, then (Inertia) requires qualification. Perhaps something close to following would do: (Inertia\*) Aside from taking a perception at face value, it is impossible to make a direct rational transition from a mental state with solely mind-to-world direction of fit to an action. I will set this complication aside. For first, it isn't clear that taking an experience at face value is a mental action. And second, even if it is, this doesn't affect my discussion since, as pointed out above, the transition from appreciation to inference can not be modeled on taking a perception at face value.

38 I will generally suppress the qualification “or a nearby principle,” taking (Inertia) to stand for itself and nearby principles.

39 (Smith 1994), page 92.

Given the plausible assumption that a motivating reason is just a mental state to which one can directly rationally respond with an action, the only if direction of (P1) entails (Inertia).<sup>40</sup> The Humean Theory of Motivation is stronger than (Inertia): that is, the Humean Theory entails (Inertia), but (Inertia) does not entail the Humean Theory. So anti-Humeans can accept (Inertia). And, in fact, many do. Many anti-Humeans defend their view precisely by trying to show how acceptance of (Inertia) is compatible with rejection of the Humean Theory of Motivation. Some argue that some beliefs have world-to-mind direction of fit.<sup>41</sup> Others argue that some beliefs, or perceptions, are inseparable from desires.<sup>42</sup> Finally, others argue that a motivating state with a world-to-mind direction of fit can arise out of, or consist in, the presence of other states that just have mind-to-world direction of fit.<sup>43</sup> What all this suggests is that (Inertia) and nearby principles are philosophically well-entrenched.

Now we are in a position to demonstrate Boghossian's Main Premise.

- (1) Inference is a mental action; and the because relation between inference and intuition is rational, not merely causal. [Assumptions]
- (2) It is impossible to make a direct rational transition from a mental state with solely mind-to-world direction of fit to an action. [Inertia]
- (3) A rational transition from a mental state is direct just in case it does not consist in taking the content of that mental state as a premise in an

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40 One might argue that a motivating reason need not be a mental state. See (Dancy 2003). Even if this proves correct, it would require only superficial modifications to my discussion here.

41 For discussion, both pro and con, see: (Altham 1986), (McNaughton 1991), (Smith 1994), (Little 1997), (Jacobson-Horowitz 2006), and (Tenenbaum 2006).

42 For discussion see (Nagel 1970), (McDowell 1978, 1979), and (Dancy 1993, 2003).

43 See (Dancy 1993, 2003).

inference. [Definition]

(4) Intuition has solely mind-to-world direction of fit. [Premise]

(5) Boghossian's Main Premise: In order to make an inference from some premises to a conclusion because of one's intuition that those premises support that conclusion, one must take the claim that those premises support that conclusion as a premise in an inference. [From (1), (2), (3), and (4)]

The demonstration is valid. The only question is: are all of its premises true? (1) sets out plausible background assumptions about inference and the because relation between inference and intuition that I will not call into question. (3) is just a definition. So the only candidates for rejection are (2) and (4). As pointed out above, (2) is philosophically well-entrenched, and, it seems to me, for good reason: it is very plausible.

I believe we should give up (4). Intuition does not have solely mind-to-world direction of fit.

One argument in favor of this view is a *modus tollens* argument that appeals to inferential internalism. The idea is that if (4) is true, then so is Boghossian's Main Premise, and if that is true, then inferential internalism is false, but inferential internalism is true, so we should reject (4). I find the considerations in favor of inferential internalism persuasive, so I find this argument persuasive. One might worry that it is dialectically problematic since it might appear illegitimate to assume inferential internalism. This worry seems misplaced to me, however. Boghossian

recognizes the force of the considerations in favor of inferential internalism and argues that this force is overridden by a stronger Carrollian argument against inferential internalism. The strength of that argument, however, depends on the assumption that intuition has solely mind-to-world direction of fit. Once we recognize that this assumption is not mandatory, we have the option of rejecting it. One way to remove this option is to give positive considerations in favor of thinking that intuition does have solely mind-to-world direction of fit, so that this is no longer an assumption, but an independently supported premise. In the absence of such considerations, however, the *modus tollens* argument is dialectically legitimate. Still, one might want a reason to reject (4) that is independent of commitment to inferential internalism.

Another argument in favor of thinking intuition has world-to-mind direction of fit appeals to the same sorts of considerations one might appeal to in arguing that desire has world-to-mind direction of fit. Since desire is the paradigm example of a mental state with world-to-mind direction of fit, it is rare to find arguments in favor of thinking that it does have world-to-mind direction of fit. But if one aimed to give such an argument, here is how it might go. Reflection on the roles desires play in our lives suggests that we can directly rationally respond to them with actions, so by (Inertia), they do not have solely mind-to-world direction of fit. Similarly, one might argue as follows. Reflection on the roles intuitions play in our lives suggests that we can directly rationally respond to them with actions—e.g. inferences—so by (Inertia), they do not have solely mind-to-world direction of fit. One might challenge (Inertia). One might challenge the claim about what reflection on the roles intuitions

play suggests. One might challenge the reliability of this reflection; that is, perhaps it does suggest the role I have described, but it is mistaken. None of these options seems plausible to me. I have already reviewed (Inertia). Reflection on the roles instances of a kind of mental state play in our lives might be limited and fallible in what it tells us about that mental state, but it does seem like a reliable source of information about very basic features of those roles. Finally, reflection does suggest that there doesn't need to be any intermediate inference between intuition that the premises in an argument support its conclusion and inferring that conclusion from those premises.

The forgoing supports the following:

World-to-Mind: in some cases, to intuit that some premises support some conclusion is, at least in part, to be in a mental state that has world-to-mind direction of fit.

If the World-to-Mind thesis is correct, and intuition isn't like perception or belief—on orthodox conceptions of these states—then what is it like? To compare intuitions with desires seems silly.<sup>44</sup> A comparison with intentions seems more plausible, but still forced. A better comparison is with states such as felt commands, demands, and obligations that can be thought of as mental imperatives.<sup>45</sup> This fits with the

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44 Some philosophers use “desire” to pick out the general category of mental states with world-to-mind direction of fit. I am not following this technical usage here.

45 Commands, demands, and obligations are not mental. The mental imperative is the impression a command, demand, or obligation makes when felt. Maurice Mandelbaum appeals to mental imperatives in exploring the phenomenology of moral experience; see (Mandelbaum 1955). Another area where philosophers have found it useful to appeal to mental imperatives is in work on the nature of pain. Some



metaphors expressed in phrases such as “being moved by the force of reason” or “being compelled by reason.” Most likely, however, any comparison with other states will be more or less misleading, since intuitions are *sui generis* mental states.

In specifying the content with respect to which an intuition has world-to-mind direction of fit I will use the general notion of direction. To intuit that some premises support some conclusion, then, is, at least in part, to be directed to do something, namely to believe that conclusion on the basis of those premises. It is important to read this claim properly: the direction is to [believe that conclusion on the basis of those premises], not just to [believe that conclusion]. One of the things we can do is form beliefs. Another of the things we can do is base some beliefs on others, that is, modify the epistemic dependencies that hold among our beliefs.<sup>46</sup> What I am suggesting, then, is that in some cases intuitions direct one to do this.

Here, then, is a way to think about the transition from intuition to inference. Take the *modus ponens* argument from (1) if today is the 20<sup>th</sup>, then Martha Argerich is playing today in Carnegie Hall, and (2) today is the 20<sup>th</sup>, to (3) Martha Argerich is playing today in Carnegie Hall. Suppose you infer (3) from (1) and (2) because you intuit that (1) and (2) support (3). Your intuition is a mental state that directs you to believe (3) on the basis of your beliefs (1) and (2). Your inference is the mental action you perform when you do what you are directed to do. That is, your inference is the mental action of believing (3) on the basis of (1) and (2). Earlier I considered the idea that inference stands to intuition as taking at face value stands to

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writers defend an imperatival theory of pain; for discussion, see (Klein 2007, forthcoming) and (Hall 2008).

<sup>46</sup> Of course, in some cases in order to do this we also have to form a belief. This is what happens when we reason our way to a new belief.

perception. This analogy gave the wrong results. Now we have an improved analogy. Inference stands to intuition as action stands to direction. This analogy gives the correct results, since following a direction to believe one thing on the basis of other things does precisely result in believing one thing on the basis of other things.

The World-to-Mind thesis defuses Boghossian's Carrollian Argument. It doesn't defuse the argument by simply removing one way of demonstrating its Main Premise, for perhaps there are other ways of demonstrating the Main Premise. Rather, the World-to-Mind thesis defuses Boghossian's Carrollian Argument by providing a conception of intuition that allows us to see why that argument's Main Premise is false. If intuition sometimes has a world-to-mind direction of fit, then it is the sort of state to which one can directly rationally respond with a mental action. The comparison of intuition with felt commands, demands, and obligations helps to make this clear. Your intuition directs you to believe some conclusion on the basis of some premises, and your inference is the mental action in which you do what you are directed to do.

## 6. Objections and Elaborations

The defense of the World-to-Mind thesis developed in the previous section is incomplete. In this section I introduce two elaborations in response to two objections.

The first objection derives from Gilbert Harman's discussion of the difference between truths about good reasoning and truths about logical consequence.<sup>47</sup>

Suppose S intuits that P supports Q. So S is in a mental state that directs him to base a belief that Q on his belief that P. This suggests that the only way for S to rationally respond to his intuition is to believe Q on the basis of P. But—it seems—another thing S might do is revise his belief in P. That is, his intuition that P supports Q might just as well lead him to give up P as believe Q on the basis of P.

It will help to set out the worry in the form of an inconsistent triad:

1. If S intuits that P supports Q, then S is in a mental state that directs him to believe Q on the basis of P. [World-to-Mind]
2. If S is in a mental state that directs him to believe Q on the basis of P, then the only way for S to rationally respond to this mental state is to believe Q on the basis of P. [Premise]
3. But it is possible for S to rationally respond to his intuition that P supports Q by revising his belief that P. [Harman's Observation]

There are two natural replies to this worry.

The first is to reject (2). Directions in general can be resisted. They throw their weight in favor of an action, but they do not compel it. This is clear from the possibility of receiving inconsistent directions—i.e. directions that cannot jointly be satisfied. It is possible to be directed to  $\Phi$ , take this direction seriously, be rational,

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<sup>47</sup> See (Harman 1986).

and not  $\Phi$ . The reason why is that all things considered you might have most reason to do something other than  $\Phi$ . For example you might receive a more compelling direction to not- $\Phi$ . So (2) is false, and (1) and (3) are compatible with each other.

Another reply is to argue that expressing Harman's Observation with (3) is making precisely the confusion that Harman aimed to expose. Distinguish (3) from (3\*):

(3\*) It is possible for S to rationally respond to his intuition that Q is a logical consequence of P by revising his belief that P.

(3\*) expresses Harman's Observation, but (3) does not. The difference is that (3\*) is about the logical consequence relation and (3) is about what I have been calling the support relation. So far I have not emphasized this distinction since it did not bear on the discussion. But now it does. There are many different relations in the vicinity. What I have in mind in talking about the support relation is the relationship one's belief that P has to believing that Q when one has a reason to base a belief that Q on one's belief that P. So, when S intuits that P supports Q, what S intuits is that S has a reason to base a belief that Q on S's belief that P. As Harman points out, this is different from S intuiting that Q is a consequence of P, since Q might be a consequence of P without S having a reason to base a belief that Q on S's belief that P.

Note that (3) might still be true. But if it is true, this is because reasons are defeasible. And that is the possibility captured by the first reply I made to the worry.

What does not seem possible is for S to rationally respond to an undefeated intuition that P supports Q—i.e. an undefeated intuition that S has a reason to base a belief that Q on S's belief that P—by revising his belief that P. For if it is rational for S to revise his belief that P, then, all things considered, S no longer has a reason to base a belief that Q on S's belief that P.

Now I turn to the second objection. I have set out considerations in favor of thinking that intuition has world-to-mind direction of fit. But it is obvious that intuition, like perception, has mind-to-world direction of fit. How can the considerations be squared with this obvious fact?

My reply has already been foreshadowed in how I formulated the World-to-Mind thesis: to intuit that some premises support some conclusion is, at least in part, to be in a mental state that has world-to-mind direction of fit. This leaves open the possibility that intuition also has mind-to-world direction of fit. And this is the reply to the present objection that I propose. Intuitions have both mind-to-world and world-to-mind direction of fit. They are what Millikan calls pushmi-pullyu representations.

There are reasons to think intuition is not an isolated case. Millikan mentions animal signals, performative utterances, inner representations that animals use to navigate, intentions, and mental representations of social norms as example pushmi-pullyu representations.<sup>48</sup> Some philosophers defend the view that moral judgments are pushmi-pullyu representations.<sup>49</sup> And Timothy Bayne has recently

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48 See (Millikan 1995).

49 This case has received the most discussion. See, for example, (Altham 1986), (McNaughton 1991), (Smith 1994), (Little 1997), (Jacobson-Horowitz 2006), and (Tenenbaum 2006).

argued that experiences of agency, such as the feeling of performing some action, are pushmi-pullyu representations.<sup>50</sup> Any given case is bound to raise its own controversies. But the category is defensible, and if there are both considerations in favor of assigning a representation a mind-to-world and a world-to-mind direction of fit, then these considerations jointly constitute a reason to assign it both. This seems to me to be the case with at least some intuitions.

## 7. The Ground of Intuitive Guidance

The 18<sup>th</sup> century moral sense theorist, Francis Hutcheson, skeptically asked his rationalist contemporaries “What is this *conformity of actions to reason*?”<sup>51</sup> John Balguy answered:

...[the] question amounts plainly to this: what does a *reasonable* creature propose in *acting reasonably*? Or what is it that induces his *will* to take council of his *understanding*? As if this were not the very essence of a rational action!<sup>52</sup>

The question I will pursue in this section—what is it in virtue of which an intuition can play an action-guiding rational role?—is modeled on Hutcheson’s. The answer I will propose is modeled on Balguy’s.

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50 See (Bayne 2010).

51 (Raphael 1969), pg 361.

52 (Raphael 1969), pg 455.

The view that I will defend is this: Intuitions play action-guiding rational roles in virtue of playing justifying rational roles. Even though action-guiding roles are distinct from justifying roles, it can be, and I am inclined to think that it is, true that what explains why intuitions can play action-guiding roles is that they play justifying roles. Consider Smith. In virtue of what does his intuition that (A1)—that Connie and Cyndi are a cone and a cylinder with the same base and eight—supports believing that (A2)—that Cyndi encloses a greater volume than Connie—guide his inference? The answer, in my view, is that it is because his intuition justifies him in believing that (A1) supports (A2).

The main reason for this view derives from the observation about rationality that Balguy seems to me to have in mind. In expanding on Balguy's claim, it will be helpful to have a simpler claim to serve as a model. Consider the following:

In a state with the appropriate laws, parking next to a fire hydrant constitutes parking illegally.

The above seems straightforward enough, but there are three observations worth emphasizing. First, "In a state with the appropriate laws," is essential. Without the laws, parking next to a fire hydrant might not be illegal. Second, nothing needs to *happen* in addition to parking next to a fire hydrant in order for you to park illegally: given the laws, parking next to a fire hydrant counts as parking illegally. This is the point of invoking the notion of constitution. Third, if your car is parked next to the

fire hydrant then it is parked illegally, but it is still also parked next to the fire hydrant. It is not as if the one property takes the place of the other.

As I understand Balguy, he is making a similar point about rationality, grasping reasons, and guidance of the will. Here is how I would put it:

In a rational person, a mental state—e.g. an intuition—that justifies believing that one has a reason to  $\Phi$  constitutes a mental state that guides one to  $\Phi$ .

Here are three observations analogous to those made above, though in reverse order. I will make them in relation to Smith and his inference of (A2) from (A1). First, if Smith's intuition that (A1) supports (A2) justifies him in believing that (A2) supports (A1), then it guides his inferring (A2) from (A1), but it still also justifies him in believing that (A1) support (A2). Just as with the car, it is not as if the one property takes the place of the other. So one intuition can play both the justifying and the action-guiding role. Second, nothing needs to *happen* in addition to Smith's intuition justifying him in believing that (A1) supports (A2) for it to guide his inferring (A2) from (A1). In particular, Smith does not need to go through any extra bit of reasoning, so there is no threat of a Carrollian regress reemerging at this point. Third, "In a rational person," plays a role similar to that played by "In a state with the appropriate laws." Part of what it is for a state to have the appropriate laws is for it to be a state in which parking next to a fire hydrant constitutes parking illegally. Similarly, one way to capture a popular idea about rationality is to say that part of what it is for a person to be rational is to be a person for whom mental states



that play justifying roles with respect to reasons constitute mental states that play action-guiding roles.<sup>53</sup> One might worry about pressing the analogy too far. The state has laws and it is in virtue of these that parking next to a fire hydrant constitutes parking illegally. Maybe there are laws of rationality and it is in virtue of these that mental states that play justifying roles with respect to propositions about reasons constitute mental states that play action-guiding roles. But perhaps rationality cannot be articulated by a set of laws. All that matters for my purposes here is that whatever the nature of rationality turns out to be, that nature will make it so that insofar as a person is rational mental states that play justifying roles with respect to propositions about reasons constitute mental states that play action-guiding roles for that person.

This view of the ground of intuitive guidance provides a basis for responding to an objection to the view that intuitions are pushmi-pullyu representations. The objection can be put like this. Suppose S's intuition that P supports Q both directs S to believe Q on the basis of P, and presents it as true that P supports Q. If there are these two parts of the intuition—the directive part and the descriptive part—then there must be some story about how an inference that is made in response to the intuition relates to both parts. If it is just a response to the directive part, then it is just as if the inference is made in ignorance of the information that P supports Q. If it

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53 Compare: “a rational person who judges there to be compelling reason to do A normally forms the intention to do A, and this judgment is sufficient explanation of that intention and of the agent’s acting on it (since this action is part of what such an intention involves). There is no need to invoke an additional form of motivation beyond the judgment and the reasons it recognizes, some further force to, as it were, get the limbs in motion.” (Scanlon 1998), pages 33 – 34. And: “For me to be a theoretically rational person is not merely for me to be capable of performing logical and inductive operations, but for me to be appropriately convinced by them: my conviction in the premises must carry through, so to speak to a conviction in the conclusion.” (Korsgaard 1986), pg 14.

is just a response to the descriptive part, then it is a violation of (Inertia). If it is a response to some inferential integration of the two parts, then it will lead to a Carrollian regress. In brief, introducing the second direction of fit seems to have put us back in square one.

The reply to this objection is that there is a fourth option. The first two options seem clearly mistaken to me. In my view when S infers Q from P because he intuitively feels that P supports Q his inference is a response to the intuition as a whole, not to one or another part of it. This raises the question, however: how are the two parts fused together into a whole to which S might respond? The third option described above suggests it is by inferential integration—i.e. as two parts of an inference. But this is also clearly mistaken since it leads to Carrollian regress. What is needed is an account of how the two parts are fused together into a whole that does not appeal to their inferential integration. The account of intuitive guidance suggests such an account: the descriptive part *constitutes* the directive part.

Another objection to the view that intuitions play action-guiding roles in virtue of playing justifying roles is that it renders intuitions dispensable as guides to action. I've been arguing that intuitions play action-guiding roles that cannot be assimilated to, even if they are explained by, their justifying roles. But, one might wonder now, what was the point? Suppose intuitions *could* play action-guiding roles in virtue of justifying beliefs about reasons for action. Then they *needn't*, since all guidance might derive from the beliefs so justified. All intuitions need to do is justify beliefs, and then these beliefs guide our actions.

Two initial points. First, note it simply does not follow from the claim that intuitions guide action in virtue of justifying beliefs about reasons for action that beliefs about reasons for action can themselves guide action. Humean's could very well be right about the motivational inefficacy of belief. While I think there is something to this idea, I will not take it on as a commitment. Second, one might concede that intuitions are dispensable as guides to action, but still think they do in fact guide action, and so think it is worth shedding light on the matter. It is not as if every worthy object of investigation must be indispensable. That said, let's see if intuitions really are dispensable as guides to action.

It seems to me that between the two—beliefs and intuitions—beliefs are more dispensable than intuitions as guides to action. Contrast the following two claims. The first is my gloss on Balguy: in a rational person, a mental state—e.g. an intuition—that justifies believing that one has a reason to  $\Phi$  constitutes a mental state that guides one to  $\Phi$ . The second is a similar looking alternative: in a rational person, a mental state—e.g. a belief—that represents that one has a reason  $\Phi$  to constitutes a mental state that guides one to  $\Phi$ . I think we should be less confident in this alternative claim. It might be that *consistency* requires acting in accordance with what you believe your reasons for action are. But suppose these beliefs are unjustified. Then insofar as you are rational, you should give them up, not act in accordance with them. So it seems that if beliefs play action-guiding roles, this depends on their being justified by intuitions. On the other hand, if intuitions about reasons for action play action-guiding roles, their ability to do so does not depend on their leading to beliefs. You can act in light of the justification you have for

believing that you have a reason to act without forming the belief that you have that reason to act. In fact, this is likely the norm. Beliefs are mental states with a certain degree of permanency. Most of our actions have little significance beyond the moment of their occurrence. It would be silly to form standing beliefs about what reasons you have for all the actions you perform in life. So it seems that if intuitions play action-guiding roles, their doing so does not depend on their leading to beliefs. There is reason to think, then, that beliefs are more dispensable than intuitions as guides to action.<sup>54</sup>

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