

The Intellectual Given

JOHN BENGSON

University of Wisconsin, Madison

bengson@wisc.edu

Intuition is sometimes derided as an abstruse or esoteric phenomenon akin to crystal-ball gazing. Such derision appears to be fuelled primarily by the suggestion, evidently endorsed by traditional rationalists such as Plato and Descartes, that intuition is a kind of direct, immediate apprehension akin to perception. This paper suggests that although the perceptual analogy has often been dismissed as encouraging a theoretically useless metaphor, a quasi-perceptualist view of intuition may enable rationalists to begin to meet the challenge of supplying a theoretically satisfying treatment of their favoured epistemic source. It is argued, first, that intuitions and perceptual experiences are at a certain level of abstraction the same type of mental state, presentations, which are distinct from beliefs, hunches, inclinations, attractions, and seemings. The notion of a presentation is given a positive explication, which identifies its characteristic features, accounts for several of its substantive psychological roles, and systematically locates it in a threefold division among types of contentful states. Subsequently, it is argued that presentations, intuitive no less than sensory, are by their nature poised to play a distinctive epistemic role. Specifically, in the case of intuition, we encounter an intellectual state that is so structured as to provide justification without requiring justification in turn—something which may, thus, be thought of as ‘given’.

The Mind perceives, that White is not Black, That a Circle is not a Triangle, That Three are more than Two, and equal to One and Two ... by bare Intuition ...

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

1. Introduction

It is common to find rationalists and empiricists distinguished at least in part by their views about the sources of justification and knowledge. The former but not the latter, it is said, maintain that there is a non-empirical epistemic source, namely *intuition*—for instance, the intuition that identity is transitive, that three are more than two, that Gettier’s Smith does not know that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pockets, that wanton torture is impermissible, and so on. While both rationalism and empiricism may allow that

we have justification for or knowledge of such propositions, what is distinctive of the relevant variety of rationalism is its claim that in certain cases the source of such epistemic status is neither sensory experience nor the (allegedly ‘analytic’) form or character of the relevant propositions, as Humeans contend, but rather intuition.

Opposition to this rationalist thesis is often motivated by the perceived obscurity of intuition, which is sometimes derided as an abstruse or esoteric phenomenon akin to crystal-ball gazing. Such derision appears to be fuelled primarily by the suggestion, evidently endorsed by traditional rationalists such as Plato and Descartes, and even philosophers like Locke (see the quotation above) who are otherwise of a strongly empiricist bent, that intuition is a kind of direct, immediate apprehension akin to perception. As Paul Boghossian writes,

[T]he idea that we possess a quasi-perceptual faculty — going by the name of ‘rational intuition’ — ... has been historically influential. It would be fair to say, however, that no one has succeeded in saying what this faculty really is nor how it manages to yield the relevant knowledge. ‘Intuition’ seems like a name for the mystery we are addressing, rather than a solution to it.¹ (2000, p. 231)

In what follows I seek to develop the quasi-perceptualist view of intuition and defend it against this style of criticism.

The defence will proceed in two steps. First, I offer reasons to think that, when suitably disciplined, the perceptual analogy affords a plausible, non-metaphorical explication of the nature of intuition — what intuition ‘really is’ (Sects 2–4). Intuition is neither a doxastic attitude, such as a belief or judgement, nor a mere tendency to form such an attitude, but rather a *presentation*: a conscious state or event that, like perceptual experience, directly and immediately presents the world as being a certain way. Second, I argue that these broadly ontological reflections serve an epistemological end, in that they enable a sober perspective on how intuition, given what it is, ‘manages to yield the relevant knowledge’ (Sects 5–7). Intuition’s ontological profile is not an idle wheel, epistemically speaking, for intuition is similar to perceptual experience *in epistemically significant respects*. Stated baldly, the central idea is that intuition and perceptual experience, though

¹ See also, for example, Wittgenstein 1976, pp. 417–19; Ayer 1946, p. 73; Salmon 1967, pp. 39–40; Hintikka 1999, pp. 130–3; Kitcher 2000, pp. 75 ff.; Casullo 2003, Sect. 6.3; and Devitt 2005, p. 112. Cf. Wright’s (2004a, p. 157) complaint that appeal to intuition is ‘empty self-congratulation’. Worries regarding the perceived obscurity of intuition, as articulated by Boghossian in the quotation in the main text, for example, are not identical to Benacerraf-style worries about non-causal connections to Platonic entities; see Sect. 6 for discussion.

different, are at a certain level of abstraction the same kind of mental state or event, and that states or events of this kind are, by their very nature, poised to play a distinctive epistemic role. In effect, the epistemology of intuition can be seen as a natural extension of the epistemology of perception: the non-epistemic feature of perceptual experience which makes it the case that perceptual experience serves as a legitimate epistemic source also makes it the case that intuition serves as a legitimate epistemic source. In fact, I will argue that in both cases we encounter a kind of state or event that is so structured as to provide a type of epistemic status without requiring it in turn — something which may, thus, be thought of as *given*.

2. Intuition and ‘nearby’ phenomena

The target of the present inquiry is the conscious mental state or event of *having the intuition that* p , where p is the content that, for example, identity is transitive or Gettier’s Smith does not know.² Such contentful intuition must be distinguished from a variety of *prima facie* related but distinct phenomena, such as objectual intuition — intuition of objects (properties, relations, or individuals), such as numbers or sets³ — or a special ‘faculty’ of intuition.⁴ A distinction must also be drawn between our target, conscious intuition, and its non-conscious counterpart. There is a sense in which an instance of the schema

x has the intuition that p

² I will understand content as that which is or specifies truth (accuracy, satisfaction, correctness) conditions. Properties, relations, and individuals are not contents; conditions, states of affairs, and propositions are. For ease of exposition, I will often make certain simplifying assumptions about the contents of various intuitions, remaining neutral on their structure, logical form, or possible subject matter. For discussion of the Gettier intuition, see especially Malmgren 2011.

³ See Gödel 1964 (p. 271) on intuition of ‘the objects of set theory’; cf. Parsons 1995 (pp. 59 ff.) and 2008 (pp. 154 ff.) and Chudnoff 2013, Ch. 7. We can also set to one side Kantian ‘intuition’ or *Anschauung* (not *Einsicht* nor *Intuition*), which apparently is a technical notion invoking all and only singular, immediate representations, both sensory and non-sensory (see Kant’s *Logic*, Sect. 1; cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. A320/B366–7). Bolzano, Husserl, and others in the Kantian tradition employ similarly technical notions.

⁴ Focusing on states or events, rather than faculties, need not prejudice any substantive questions. Boghossian’s criticism in the quote above, for example, can be preserved by replacing every occurrence of ‘faculty’ with ‘state or event’. I will hereafter leave the second disjunct implicit, employing the broad use of ‘state’ familiar in contemporary philosophy of mind; on this use, *prima facie* dynamic mental phenomena (e.g. events) may qualify as states even though they are not standing conditions.

can be true even if x is not, at that moment, actually having the intuition that p —perhaps because x is currently asleep, inebriated, or otherwise distracted. For instance, one may truly say of one's colleague that she has the intuition that Gettier's Smith does not know even when one's colleague is, at that moment, across the room laughing uncontrollably at a clever joke. In such a case, one's colleague might be disposed to actually have this intuition, but she is not right then and there having the intuition that Gettier's Smith does not know; as we say, it does not at that moment *strike* her that Gettier's Smith does not know. In such a case, our target, the conscious mental state of having the intuition that p , is not present.

We may also distinguish our target from the phenomenon of *being intuitive* (a property of propositions, theories, and even programmes, locations, and methods). The English words 'intuition' and 'intuitive' are often employed more or less interchangeably, but there are also important differences that they can be used to mark: for instance, conscious intuitions alone require subjects and dates at which they first come into their subject's minds. Thus there are many propositions which, though intuitive, have never in fact been contemplated, much less intuited. Also, while we sometimes may be willing to affirm that, say, so-called 'Moorean propositions' (e.g. the proposition that one was born, or that one has hands) are *intuitive*, we may be disinclined to say that we *have the intuition* that they are true (Moore certainly did not say this). For similar reasons we may distinguish our target from the phenomenon of *finding intuitive*: one might, for example, *find it intuitive* that the switch for the overhead lights is on the wall next to the entrance without ever *having an intuition* that that is where the switch is located. For my part, I find it intuitive that there is no largest prime, but I am not currently having the intuition that this is so; nor have I previously had the intuition that it is so (rather, I learned it via Euclid's proof). In a similar vein, others have reported to me that they find the proposition that there are no mountains *counterintuitive*, even though they do not *have the intuition* that it is true that there are mountains (nor that it is false that there are no mountains). In this way, a proposition p may be said to be, or 'found' to be, 'counter-intuitive' without being counter-intuition, that is, counter to our target, the conscious mental state of having the intuition that p (hereafter, simply 'intuition').

There is no ordinary language locution that serves as a failsafe guide to our target. English expressions of the forms ' x has the intuition that p ', ' x finds it intuitive that p ', ' x sees that p ', 'It is clear to x that p ', 'It

seems to x that p' , and so forth may have readings on which they report our target, but they also have readings on which they do not. Accordingly, let us instead locate our target by distinguishing concrete examples in which a subject has a particular intuition from some in which a subject does not. Consider:

The Gettier Intuition:

When reading Gettier's paper 'Is Knowledge Justified True Belief?', Professor Typical considers whether Smith knows that the man who will get the raise has ten coins in his pockets. It strikes her that, even though Smith is justified in believing that this is so, Smith does not know it.

Ramanujan's Intuition:

The mathematical prodigy Ramanujan is on his way to visit his mentor, Professor Hardy, in London. He hails a cab and, as it stops, he notices that its number is 1729. This causes him to smile, for he immediately sees that this number has a very interesting property, namely the property of being the smallest number expressible as the sum of two positive cubes in two different ways.⁵

The Imaginer:

When searching for material that will help his students understand the notion of an irrational number, Teach comes across a story in which π , sad about being such an irrational number, works hard to achieve his life's dream of being represented as a simple fraction. His mother is so proud: π is now a rational number! Teach imagines this scenario and chuckles. He finds this little fable amusing to contemplate; but, of course, it does not strike him as possible, let alone true.

These examples enable us to distinguish intuition from a few 'nearby' phenomena. In *The Gettier Intuition*, Professor Typical has the intuition that Smith does not know, though he is justified in believing, that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pockets. This intuition — the so-called 'Gettier intuition' — is not a *guess*, *hunch*, or *hypothesis* (conjecture, speculation).⁶ Intuitions can also be distinguished from items of *common sense*: in *Ramanujan's Intuition*, Ramanujan has a sophisticated mathematical intuition (i.e. that 1729 is the smallest number expressible as the sum of two positive cubes in

⁵ This example, like most of the cases described here, is based on a true story; see Hardy 1940, p. 12.

⁶ See Cohen 1973–1974 for a detailed treatment of guessing and its kin.

two different ways) that is not even remotely commonsensical.⁷ Similarly for intuition versus states of *understanding*, *imagining*, and *conceiving*. In *The Imaginer*, Teach does not have the intuition that it is true (or possible) that π is a rational number, though he understands this proposition and subsequently imagines or conceives that it is so.

Another example will help further to locate our target:

The Ardent Physicalist:

Professor Smith endorses a version of Physicalism that implies that zombies (i.e. non-conscious microphysical duplicates of conscious beings) are not possible. But she must admit that when she considers it, it still does strike her, as it evidently does many others, that there could be such beings. Nevertheless, because she is thoroughly convinced that Physicalism is true and regards her modal intuitions as prone to error, she chalks this up as a case in which things are not as they seem. In fact, she does not even feel inclined to believe that things are as they seem. She is so confident in Physicalism and so distrustful of her anti-Physicalist intuitions that, although the intuition remains, the temptation to accept it has vanished.

Professor Smith has the familiar intuition that zombies are possible, but she does not believe (judge, accept, opine) that they are. This recommends a distinction between our target and *doxastic attitudes*, namely propositional attitudes like belief (*doxa*) that involve implicit or explicit endorsement or assent. What about *dispositions* or *inclinations* (temptations, attractions) to form such attitudes, that is, the ‘tendencies that ... “move” us in the direction of accepting certain propositions without taking us all the way to acceptance’ (van Inwagen 1997, p. 309)? Such tendencies seem to accompany a wide variety of mental states, as illustrated by ordinary perceptions (which dispose or incline perceptual beliefs) and examples such as the following:

The Impassioned Scientist:

Dr Jones has just read an article detailing evidence against his theory of the disappearance of the Rocky Mountain Locust. He recognizes that the evidence presented in the article is decisive. Even so, being less than perfectly rational, Dr Jones continues to feel inclined to believe his own theory, which has unwittingly become extremely

⁷ Consider also that it is common sense that a goldfish left out of water will die, or that dark clouds signal rain; yet few would claim to know such things by intuition. Perhaps they will be said to be intuitive, in the sense of natural, habitual, or commonplace. This underscores the distinction, drawn above, between our target and the notion of intuitiveness.

precious to him. It is not that his theory still strikes him as true, despite what he has just read. Rather, he feels attracted to assent to it simply because, unbeknownst to him ('subconsciously', as his therapist would say), he has a strong, persisting desire for his own theory to be correct.

Dr Jones feels inclined to believe his own theory, but he lacks our target: he does not have the intuition — as the case is described, it no longer strikes him — that it is true.

To be sure, the observation that our target is distinct from *mere* dispositions or inclinations does not rule out the possibility that intuitions are *dispositions or inclinations that meet some further condition(s)*: 'sophisticated' tendencies, as it were. No doubt it would be difficult to prise intuitions and all such dispositions or inclinations apart extensionally: plausibly, whenever one has an intuition, one is in some way, and to some extent, disposed or inclined to endorse its content, even if one ultimately does not do so. Yet, it does not follow that the intuition and the tendency must be one and the same. The thought that there is space for a distinction here might be motivated through reflection on cases like *The Ardent Physicalist*, whose coherence is difficult to deny. Although it strikes Professor Smith that zombies are possible, she does not feel moved to accept that they are (her 'temptation to accept it has vanished'). She is stubborn, and her theoretical convictions are strong; so although she still has the intuition, she does not still *feel* inclined to believe accordingly ('she does not feel inclined to believe that things are as they seem'). Granted, Professor Smith may still possess a *non-conscious* disposition or inclination to believe that zombies are possible, a disposition or inclination that is 'stymied' by a countervailing disposition or inclination to accept Physicalism. However, since our target is a *conscious* state, it can be distinguished from such a non-conscious disposition or inclination. But if (i) our target may be present while (ii) a *conscious* disposition or inclination is absent, as *The Ardent Physicalist* suggests, and (iii) our target cannot be a *non-conscious* disposition or inclination, then (iv) our target can be distinguished from both conscious and non-conscious dispositions and inclinations — even if, as is plausible, intuitions are necessarily *accompanied* by, or *give rise* to, the latter.⁸ (We will return to this issue below.)

⁸ An explanation of how our target — and, equally, perceptual experience — might be present in the absence of a corresponding conscious inclination will emerge below (in Sect. 4), and thus of how a statement such as 'I do not feel any inclination to believe that zombies are

The foregoing distinctions — and the examples that inspire them — can be regarded as offering a preliminary characterization of what, *prima facie*, our target is not. These distinctions are not sacrosanct. But they do constitute a *prima facie* challenge to some currently popular theories of intuition, which attempt to achieve a kind of ‘minimalism’ by identifying our target with the comparatively familiar mental states mentioned above.⁹ Of course, we cannot dismiss out of hand the attempt to understand intuition in such terms; here as elsewhere, there is room for investigating theories which initially appear to be focused on incongruent phenomena. Such theories, however, need not occupy the ‘default’ position. Indeed, there is also room for investigating a non-minimalist approach that aims to preserve the foregoing distinctions by characterizing a type of conscious state distinct from mere guesses, hunches, hypotheses, common sense, imaginings, beliefs, and dispositions or inclinations. Such a non-minimalist approach need not regard this state as wholly *sui generis*, or unanalysable; nevertheless, to the extent that it does view this state as somehow distinctive, the approach should specify what exactly the would-be identifications miss by collapsing the foregoing distinctions.

This is what I propose to do. Although it might seem ambitious to seek a unitary (as opposed to ‘family resemblance’) view of intuition that succeeds in this aim, there may be, as I will eventually argue, significant theoretical advantages to such a view. In particular, as we shall see, that which distinguishes intuition from nearby phenomena — the very thing that the aforementioned minimalisms miss — is precisely that which enables a principled explanation of how intuition can serve as a legitimate epistemic source. However, this explanation can come only in the wake of a positive, non-epistemic

possible even though it strikes me that they are’ could be true. While this statement sounds fine to my ears, especially given a sensible context or backstory (as provided in *The Ardent Physicalist*), some report that it sounds awkward or unassertable. A Gricean pragmatic account of any such infelicity is available. Schapiro’s (2009) discussion of the nature of inclination may lend additional support to the distinctions I am drawing. Wilson et al.’s (2000) research might suggest empirical evidence that one may fully ‘override’ one’s conscious disposition or inclination to believe that *p* by reasoning to the contrary position, though the intuition that *p* itself remains.

⁹ e.g. guesses, hunches, or hypotheses (Gopnik and Schwitzgebel 1998, p. 78); items of common sense (Parsons 1995, p. 59); conceivings or imaginings (Chalmers 2002, pp. 155–6); and doxastic attitudes or tendencies to such (Lewis 1983, p. x; E. Sosa 1996, 2007; Williamson 2007, pp. 3 and 215 ff.; Earlenbaugh and Molyneux 2009; among others). See also Sosa 1998 and Chalmers 2014. Minimalism is opposed by Bealer (1992 and 1998, Sect. 1), Conee (1998), Pust (2000, Ch. 2), Huemer (2007, Sect. 1), and Chudnoff (2001). Several of these positions will be discussed further below.

characterization of our target, one that articulates what the above examples merely illustrate. Such a characterization is the aim of the next section, which explores the possibility of a fully general, unitary view of intuition inspired by reflection on the perceptual analogy. The sections that follow (Sects 4–7) detail some of the virtues of this view, including its epistemological interest and potential to answer several recent objections (e.g. introspective and linguistic) to the perceptual analogy.

3. The perceptual analogy

As I shall understand it, the perceptual analogy or comparison focuses on similarities between our target and perceptual experience, rather than successful perception (e.g. perception of properties, relations, or individuals). Contrary to the suggestion of infallibilists, intuition is not success-entailing (i.e. not factive). One might have the intuition that p yet be wrong: for instance, one might have the intuition that for any predicate ϕ there is a set whose members satisfy ϕ , though this is not so (because this naïve comprehension axiom leads to contradiction). Compare perceptual experience: one might have a visual experience in which it looks as if there is a red apple on the table, though this is not so (because the table is apple-less).

Of course, perceptual experience and intuition differ in many respects. For instance, it is plausible that perceptual experience alone has the property of being perceptual experience, the property of being a mental state-type of which visual experience is a species, the property of having ‘nonconceptual’ content or multiple ‘layers’ of content, and so on. In addition, intuition tends to lack the rich sensory phenomenology of most perceptual experience. And, on the face of it, there seems to be a sense in which perceptual experience deals only in particular cases (e.g. a red apple is on the table) while intuition presents both the particular (e.g. this apple is self-identical) and the general (e.g. everything is self-identical).

These differences notwithstanding, there are also a number of similarities. A natural starting point is the simple observation, already implied by the foregoing remarks, though worth stating explicitly, that perceptual experience and intuition are both conscious, contentful, and non-factive. Consider again an ordinary visual experience in which it looks as if there is a red apple on the table. In that moment when one has this experience, one is in a conscious state with the

content that there is a red apple on the table — a content which is false or inaccurate if the experience is nonveridical.¹⁰ Compare the intuition, familiar from trolley cases, that it is morally permissible for a bystander to pull a switch and thereby save five innocent lives by killing one innocent person. In that moment when one has this intuition (when it strikes one that this action is morally permissible), one is in a conscious state with the content that it is morally permissible for a bystander to pull a switch and thereby save five innocent lives by killing one innocent person — a content which is false or inaccurate if, as Judith Jarvis Thomson (2008) has recently argued, the intuition is mistaken. In this way, like perceptual experience, intuition is a non-factive, conscious, contentful state.

There are many types of contentful state. On one hand, some such states (e.g. perceptual experiences, memories, introspections, beliefs, acceptances, and intuitions) are *representational*: they represent the world as being a certain way, namely the way the world would be if their content were true. For instance, the belief that *p* represents the world as being such that *p* is true. On the other hand, some contentful states (e.g. hopes, desires, wishes, imaginings, and denials) are *merely contentful*: they do not represent the world as being the way it would be if their content were true. The hope that *p*, for instance, does not represent the world as being such that *p* is true.¹¹

Among those contentful states that are representational, some are also *presentational*: they do not simply represent the world as being a certain way; in addition, they *present* the world as being that way. For instance, in having a visual experience in which it looks as if there is a red apple on the table, the world is not merely represented to one as being such that it is true that there is a red apple on the table. In addition, in having this experience, it is thereby *presented* to one that there is a red apple on the table. One *has the impression* that this is so

¹⁰ The basic idea is that in having an experience things appear (look, etc.) a certain way, and things in fact may or may not be that way. See Siegel 2011 for an overview of recent work on perceptual content.

¹¹ The term of art ‘representational’ is sometimes used differently, e.g. in a way that includes merely contentful states. Peacocke’s (2004, p. 99) use of ‘representational’ is similar to mine; he uses ‘merely intentional’ to designate what is merely contentful. Heck (2000, pp. 508–9) and Huemer (2001, pp. 53–4) both use the term ‘assertive’ to designate representationality. Martin (2002, pp. 386 ff.) marks the distinction between mere contentfulness and representationality with the labels ‘semantic’ and ‘stative’ — a terminology which might suggest, wrongly, that the difference in question simply amounts to a difference in content. A belief and a hope may have one and the same content, though the former state is representational (‘stative’, ‘assertive’) while the latter is not.

(even if, as it turns out, this is not so). Of course, the presentation need not be visual. It could be auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, or even proprioceptive, as when it is presented to one that one's thumb is above one's forefinger, when one's hand is behind one's back (and thus not visible). Perceptual experiences as well as states of proprioceptive awareness are presentational.¹²

To appreciate what is distinctive of presentational states, it may help to contrast them with states, such as beliefs and acceptances, that are merely representational (i.e. representational but not presentational). Beliefs and acceptances are, at bottom, cognitive endorsements; they do not themselves present their contents as being the case, but *endorse* contents which might previously have been presented as being the case. Here it is useful to think of the difference between *having* the impression that *p* and being *under* the impression that *p*: in believing that *p*, one does not thereby *have* the impression that *p* is so, though one may be *under* the impression that it is, at least to some extent. Consider also a few examples:

- (a) One may be led to believe — perhaps because one has memorized — that the square root of 2209 is 47; but it may not be *presented* to one as being the case that this is so when one considers it.
- (b) One might, like me, believe that 1729 is the smallest number expressible as the sum of two positive cubes in two different ways, though it is not actually *presented* (as it was to Ramanujan) that this is so.
- (c) A non-mathematical example: one might have learned, and thus now believe, that it is common in India to eat solely with the fingers of the right hand, though it is not now *presented* to one that this is so; one simply believes it.
- (d) Consider an expert on relativity theory who testifies that parallel lines actually intersect! One who hears this testimony might subsequently believe this remarkable claim — and thus

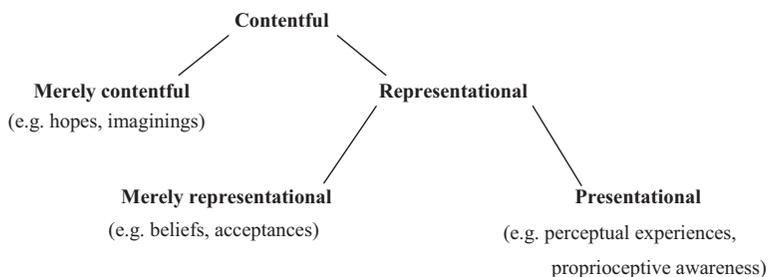
¹² Cf. Pryor 2000 (p. 547, n. 37) and 2004 (p. 357); Tolhurst 1998 (p. 298). The presentationality of proprioceptive awareness may align with Anscombe's (1957, Sect. 8) insight that we are consciously aware of the position of our limbs, when we are, neither through observation nor through bodily sensation. Rather, in such cases it is *presented* to us that our limbs are positioned thus (even if they are not in fact positioned thus, as in cases of proprioceptive illusion, e.g. so-called phantom limb).

be *under the impression* that it is so—even though one does not *have the impression* that it is so when one considers it.

Although beliefs, like other non-presentational states, may sometimes be accompanied by presentational states, belief is not itself a presentational state. The contents of beliefs are not thereby—that is, *qua* contents of belief—presented to the believer as being so. Similarly for acceptances. To believe or accept *p* is to take a certain cognitive stance towards *p*: it is not to be *presented* with *p* as so (to *have* the impression that *p* is so), but rather to *take* or *hold* *p* to be so (and hence to be, at least to some extent, *under* the impression that *p* is so).

The non-presentationality of beliefs and acceptances calls attention to the distinction between merely representational states and presentational states. The lesson is not that these two types of contentful state are wholly unrelated; on the contrary, as we shall see, they are related in several ways. Nor is the lesson that sensation (sensory phenomenology) is the mark of presentationality: states of proprioceptive awareness, in which it may be presented without proprietary sensation (nor an especially rich phenomenology) that one's limbs are positioned a certain way, and merely contentful sensory imagings or imaginings, in which one enjoys sensation without presentationality, are counterexamples to attempts to understand presentationality in such terms. Our concern is not sensation, but presentation: its being *presented* to one as being the case that *p*.

We have considered examples of states that are merely contentful, states that are merely representational, and states that are presentational:



Now consider intuition. There is reason to think of our target as a presentational state, that is, as a state which presents its content as being so. Consider the intuition that it cannot be the case that both *p* and not *p*. When one has this intuition, it is not simply that one is in a state that represents the world as being such that this principle of

non-contradiction is true. One *has the impression* that it is. In having this intuition, that it cannot be the case that both p and not p is thereby *presented* to one as being so (even if, as dialethists contend, it is not so).

Although the presentationality of intuition is arguably clearest in the case of basic logical and mathematical theorems, which, as Kurt Gödel famously observed, sometimes ‘force themselves upon us as being true’ (1964, p. 271), it need not be restricted to such cases. In having the Gettier intuition, for instance, it is *presented* to one as being the case that Smith does not know. One *has* the impression that Smith does not know, even if one is not *under* the impression that Smith does not know (i.e. even if one does not *hold* that Smith does not know) — perhaps because one is convinced for various theoretical reasons that knowledge is justified true belief, and thus that Smith does know (à la Weatherson 2003).

The presentationality of both intuition and perceptual experience can be further illustrated by cases of illusion. For instance, in a *visual illusion*, such as the Müller-Lyer illusion, one is *presented* with it as being the case that the lines are of different lengths. Similarly, in an *intellectual illusion*, such as the apparent truth of the naïve comprehension axiom, one is *presented* with it as being the case that for any predicate ϕ there is a set whose members satisfy ϕ . When the Müller-Lyer lines are scrutinized alone (e.g. without the aid of a ruler), one *has* the impression that the lines are of different lengths. Likewise, when the naïve comprehension axiom is considered alone (e.g. without the aid of further reasoning), one *has* the impression that for any predicate ϕ there is a set whose members satisfy ϕ . In neither case, however, is a suitably informed subject *under* the impression that things are the way they are presented as being.

Here it is also worth considering the role of presentationality in understanding the phenomenon of blindsight. First, *perceptual blindsight*: in a forced-choice scenario, a subject may give reliably correct answers to various questions, such as whether there is an apple on the table; although the subject lacks the relevant presentation (i.e. it is not sensorily presented to her as being the case that there is an apple on the table), she is disposed to respond appropriately nevertheless. Compare *intuitive blindsight*: in a forced-choice scenario, a subject may give the correct answer to various questions, such as whether identity is transitive, though it does not strike the subject either way; although the subject lacks the relevant presentation (i.e. it is not intellectually presented to her as being the case that identity is

transitive), she is disposed to respond appropriately nevertheless. Just as perceptual blindsighters lack the relevant perceptual experiences (sensory presentations), intuitive blindsighters lack the relevant intuitions (intellectual presentations).

Up to this point our discussion of presentational states has been guided primarily by illustrations and examples. As with other interesting notions in the philosophy of mind (e.g. consciousness or intentionality), we should not expect there to be an uncontroversial armchair analysis of presentationality. Fortunately, though, as stressed by opponents of analysis and, in recent years, by proponents of ‘*x*-first’ views (e.g. Williamson 2000, p. v), the absence of a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for a given philosophically interesting concept, property, or relation need not threaten its theoretical utility. Moreover, we can be reassured that when it comes to the underlying metaphysics of presentation, familiar positions are available: for instance, identity theorists will identify the property of being in a presentational state with the property of being in a certain type of neural state; functionalists will propose a functional definition of presentationality;¹³ naturalists will attempt to naturalize presentational states in one of the familiar ways (e.g. indicating, tracking, etc.); and so on. Such disagreements need not detain us here. For our purposes, it suffices to note a few general features of presentational states, several of which will play important roles in what follows. We will concentrate on five (a sixth will emerge in the next section).

(1) Presentational states are *baseless*, in the sense that they are not consciously formed, by a subject, on the basis of any other mental state(s). In fact, presentational states are not states that *one forms* at all, whether consciously or non-consciously; rather, one simply has — or fails to have — them. (This provides a useful contrast with a merely representational state, such as belief, which is a type of state that can be formed.) When one enjoys a visual experience in which it looks as if there is a red apple on the table, one does not consciously form this experience on the basis of some other mental state: one scans the scene before one’s eyes, and it simply looks to one that this is so. Similarly, when Professor Typical reflects on the question whether Smith knows that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pockets, it simply strikes her that Smith does not know. Although there may be other contentful states — for example, computational states at the

¹³ Ramsified functionalists may interpret the ensuing discussion as an attempt to specify certain core features of the relevant Ramsey sentence.

‘subpersonal’ level—which precede (and even play a causal role in generating) her Gettier intuition, she does not consciously form this intuition on the basis of any such state.¹⁴

(2) Presentational states are *gradable*: their overall quality may vary in different situations, depending upon the manner in which they present in those situations (e.g. more or less clearly, vividly, etc.). All else being equal, the overall quality of a presentational state such as perceptual experience or intuition is in some sense better when, say, one is not distracted and has time to scrutinize the scene or proposition in question than when one is distracted and rushed. In the former case, one’s perceptual experience or intuition is likely to be *clear* or *vivid* (e.g. it is clearly or vividly presented that there is a red apple on the table, or that Smith does not know); in the latter case, it is likely to be *hazy* or *fuzzy*.¹⁵

(3) Presentational states are *fundamentally non-voluntary* (i.e. passive or receptive). Unlike choices, decisions, and even such states as imaginings, guesses, hypotheses, beliefs, and judgements, which are in some sense active, a presentation is something that happens to us. Again, one simply *has* (enjoys, suffers, hosts) such a state: it comes upon us unbidden, as if from without. Having a presentational state such as a perceptual experience or intuition can thus be understood as a *happening*—something that *happens to one*.

One mark of the fundamentally non-voluntary (happening) character of presentational states such as perceptual experiences and intuitions is that one is not free to manage or get rid of them in the way that one is, or at least sometimes is, free to manage or get rid of one’s beliefs (e.g. by revisiting or resorting old evidence or by seeking new evidence). Similarly, one is not free to pick whether, what, and how to

¹⁴ The present approach is thus neutral with respect to various theories about the origins (or causes) of intuitions, which often posit antecedent tacit information processing. At the same time, the baselessness of intuitions may begin to motivate the thought that they, like perceptual experiences, are still somehow non-inferential, despite having such origins. The issue of non-inferentiality is discussed in Sect. 7 below. See Osbeck 1999 (esp. pp. 241–2) for discussion of difficulties facing various attempts to straightforwardly connect empirical work on tacit cognition, automaticity, and other so-called ‘System 1 processes’ to philosophical issues regarding the nature and epistemic status of intuition.

¹⁵ One might wonder whether the clarity or vividness of presentational states can be accounted for in terms of credence or confidence. But visual and logical illusions, for example, indicate that this is not so: it might be clearly or vividly presented to one that the lines are of different lengths, or that every predicate defines a set, even though one has little or no credence or confidence that this is so (because one knows better). As this suggests, clarity and vividness look to be qualitative features or modes of the presentational state itself.

experience or intuit in the way that one is, or at least sometimes is, free to pick whether, what, and how to imagine, guess, hypothesize, or judge. When looking around at one's immediate environment, whether one has a visual experience, what the content of the experience that one has is, or whether the experience is clear and vivid, is not within one's conscious control. Likewise, when reflecting on a putative counterexample, thought experiment, or elementary logical or mathematical proposition, whether one has an intuition, what the content of the intuition that one has is, or whether the intuition is clear and vivid, is not within one's conscious control.

Let me be clear. The intention is not to suggest that other mental states (non-happenings) are wholly voluntary while only presentational states are non-voluntary. Nor is the intention to deny that one can somehow influence one's perceptual experiences and intuitions (happenings) in various indirect ways, as when one carefully attends to chosen features of a visual scene or a hypothetical case, or voluntarily engages in practices that cultivate and refine one's recognitional capacities or classificatory skills. Rather, the point is that there are varieties of non-voluntariness, and presentational states such as experiences and intuitions are non-voluntary in a way that imaginings, guesses, hypotheses, beliefs, or judgements are not. The resulting partition between happenings and non-happenings is not simply intuitive but is also theoretically useful: for example, it may explain why we are not responsible for our experiences and intuitions in the same way that we are responsible for our imaginings, guesses, hypotheses, and judgements, as well as why there is no norm of experience and intuition in the way that there may be norms of belief or assent.

(4) Presentational states are *compelling*, in the sense that they tend to dispose or incline assent to their contents (in subjects capable of the relevant doxastic attitudes, in the absence of putative reason to withhold assent). To say that presentational states are compelling is not to identify the property of being presentational with the property of being compelling. After all, desirous or wishful thinking is compelling but not presentational (recall *The Impassioned Scientist*). Moreover, while presentational states are conscious, their compellingness need not be: one may be disposed or inclined to endorse p but not *feel* disposed or inclined to do so. For instance, the sensory presentation of an informed Müller-Lyer subject may dispose or incline her to believe that the lines are of different lengths, though she does not feel disposed or inclined to believe this. Likewise, the intellectual presentation of an informed naïve comprehension subject may dispose or incline

her to believe that every predicate defines a set, though she does not feel disposed or inclined to believe this (similarly for Professor Smith in *The Ardent Physicalist*). That said, it is no accident that presentational states are compelling: such states dispose or incline assent *because* they present the world as being a certain way. Thus one is disposed or inclined to believe that there is a red apple on the table because it is presented to one as being the case that this is how things are (when one looks at the table). Likewise, one is disposed or inclined to believe that Gettier's Smith does not know because it is presented to one as being the case that this is how things are (when one considers Gettier's case).

(5) Presentational states do not merely dispose or incline assent; they also seem to *rationalize* such assent, in the (psychological) sense that they tend to make formation of corresponding beliefs seem rational or fitting from the first-person perspective (again, in subjects capable of the relevant doxastic attitudes, in the absence of putative reason to withhold assent).¹⁶ To illustrate, consider again a perceptual experience in which it appears that there is a red apple on the table. Having this experience makes the belief that there is a red apple on the table seem rational or fitting to the experiencer, all else being equal. Similarly in the case of intuition: having the intuition that Gettier's Smith does not know makes the belief that Gettier's Smith does not know seem rational or fitting to the intuiter, all else being equal. In general, in having a perceptual experience as if p (i.e. an experience in which it looks as if, or appears that, p) or the intuition that p , absent putative reason to withhold endorsement, it will seem rational from the first-person perspective to form the belief that p —from the 'inside', p will seem *worthy* of belief (i.e. to-be-believed).

Left unsupplemented, these five characteristics may not yet yield a complete analysis of what it is for a mental state to be presentational. Nevertheless, they do help to mark the distinction, introduced earlier by way of example (recall the table above) and illustrated through the phenomena of illusion and blindsight, between those contentful states that are merely representational and those contentful states that are presentational. They thus go some distance toward explicating what is distinctive of presentational states such as perceptual experience and intuition.

¹⁶ Of course, their contents need not occurrently seem this way to their subjects prior to reflection on the question (in suitable cognitive conditions, etc.). Cf. Tolhurst 1999 (pp. 297 ff.).

Now, while this explication has focused on what we might call ‘contentful’ presentationality—its being presented to x that p (as being the case that p , as being true that p , etc.), where p is a content—we should acknowledge that this may not be the only case in which one might find it appropriate to speak of ‘presentationality’. Recall that in section 2 we set aside perception of objects (properties, relations, or individuals), since this is success-entailing. It might be that a comprehensive theory of such ‘objectual’ perception requires a corresponding notion of ‘objectual’ presentationality: x being presented with o , where o is an object (property, relation, or individual). It bears emphasizing that the two types of presentationality are not identical and may come apart. Some conscious states (e.g. a state in which one forms a mental image of the colour red) seem to possess the latter while lacking the former (see Bengson 2013a). Conversely, it may be possible for a given mental state to possess the former while lacking the latter—for example, in recent philosophy of perception, this is the position of some intentionalists about perceptual experience (Pautz 2007). Quasi-perceptualists about intuition may opt for a similar position, thus holding that although perceptual experience and intuition both display contentful presentationality, neither displays objectual presentationality. A second option is to hold that both states display both types of presentationality (although, presumably, this would require vindication of objectual intuition, which we set aside in Sect. 2 in order to focus on contentful intuition). A third option is to hold that only perceptual experience displays objectual presentationality—this property might be added to the above list of the several, innocent ways in which the two states differ. I will not try to adjudicate this matter here, since contentful presentationality is the central notion here and, as we shall see, nothing of consequence turns on which of these three further assessments of the objectual case is preferred.¹⁷

This section began with the observation that perceptual experience and intuition differ in many respects. The foregoing discussion gives

¹⁷ The account of intuitive justification defended in Sect. 5 proceeds wholly independently of objectual presentationality, which will in this regard turn out to be epistemically irrelevant (cf. Bengson et al. 2011). Contrast the objectual-centered approaches to perceptual experience of Broad (1923), Lewis (1929, pp. 38 ff.), and Price (1932, pp. 3 ff.). Objectual-centered approaches to intuition are endorsed by, for example, Gödel 1964 (pp. 271–2) and Parsons 2008. An intensional notion of objectual presentation (Chudnoff 2011, 2012, and 2013) similarly differs from contentful presentation.

substance to the thought that, at the same time, they bear a number of non-trivial similarities: both are conscious, contentful, non-factive, gradable, baseless, fundamentally non-voluntary, compelling, rationalizing presentational states, or presentations—conscious states that present, rather than merely represent, things as being a certain way.

4. The core quasi-perceptualist thesis

It was suggested in the last section that intuition and perceptual experience, though different, are at a certain level of abstraction the same kind of state or event, namely *presentations*. Let us call this *the core quasi-perceptualist thesis*:

The Core Quasi-perceptualist Thesis:

Intuitions are like perceptual experiences in being presentations

Eventually I will suggest that this necessary condition for intuition can be amended so as to achieve sufficiency as well. But first let us take a moment to examine the core quasi-perceptualist thesis. This section outlines some of its theoretical virtues; the next section explores its epistemic credentials.

The first virtue is minor, though genuine. In short, the core quasi-perceptualist thesis seems to be in a good position to explain the common use of perceptual verbs to describe what happens when one has an intuition. In many cases, rationalists and empiricists alike have found it natural to describe the state we are in when we have an intuition thus: we can just *see* (or *perceive*) things to be thus-and-so—for instance, we can just *see* that either p is true or p is not true, that a person might survive body-swapping, that the ratio between 3 and 6 holds also between 1 and 2, and so on.¹⁸ To be sure, further inquiry may reveal that an intuition which initially seemed successful was in fact mistaken. In such a case, it may be natural to

¹⁸ These examples are drawn from the canon. Ayer writes in his moderate empiricist manifesto *Language, Truth, and Logic*: ‘If one knows what is the function of the words “either”, “or”, and “not”, then one can see that any proposition of the form “Either p is true or p is not true” is valid, independently of experience’ (1946, p. 79). Locke writes in the *Essay*: ‘For should the soul of a prince, carrying with it the consciousness of the prince’s past life, enter and inform the body of a cobbler, as soon as deserted by his own soul, every one sees he would be the same person with the prince’ (II.27.15). Spinoza writes in the *Ethics*: ‘Given the numbers 1, 2, and 3... we arrive at the fourth number [6] from the ratio which, in one intuition [uno intuito], we see [videmus] the first number to have to the second’ (2p40s2).

say that one did not see, but rather *seemed to see*, what one initially thought one saw — just as in the case of a perceptual experience which initially seemed successful but was in fact mistaken (as in the case of the Müller-Lyer illusion). We must be careful not to place too much weight on ordinary talk. But the idea that intuitions are like perceptual experiences in being presentations does make straightforward sense of why intuition reports sometimes take these forms: in having an intuition, no less than in seeing or seeming to see, it is presented to one as being the case that things are a certain way.

A second virtue is more significant: the thesis correctly classifies the examples in section 2. In *The Gettier Intuition*, *Ramanujan's Intuition*, and *The Ardent Physicalist*, it is presented to the subject either that Smith does not know, that 1729 has a certain mathematical property, or that zombies are possible. These cases may be contrasted with *The Impassioned Scientist* and *The Imaginer*: it is not presented to Dr Jones that his theory is correct, nor to Teach that it is true (or possible) that π is a rational number. The thesis also delivers the correct verdicts about (a)–(d) (from Sect. 3), wherein it is not presented that the square root of 2209 is 47, that Ramanujan's number has its special mathematical property, that it is common in India to eat solely with the fingers of the right hand, or that parallel lines actually intersect. Although these things are believed, they are not in those cases intuited.

Third, the thesis captures the *prima facie* distinctions suggested by these examples. That intuitions are presentations serves to distinguish them from states of understanding, imagining, or conceiving, which are *merely contentful*, and guesses, hunches, hypotheses (conjectures, speculations), or beliefs (judgements, acceptances, opinions), which are *merely representational* (in the senses explained in Sect. 3 above). It also captures the *prima facie* difference between intuitions and mere dispositions or inclinations (attractions, temptations): the former are presentations, but the latter are not — as illustrated by the possibility of feeling inclined to believe that p even when p is not presented to one as true, as in wishful thinking. Once again, recall *The Impassioned Scientist*, in which the less-than-perfectly-rational Dr Jones feels tempted to believe his own theory, but it is not presented to him as true when he considers it. Similarly, a susceptible listener responding to a charismatic speaker who says that p might feel attracted to assenting to p even if the listener does not then have the intuition that p is true. As discussed in section 2, the converse holds in *The Ardent Physicalist*, where intuition is present while conscious attraction to

assenting is absent.¹⁹ The core quasi-perceptualist thesis thus enables a principled explanation of the distinctions between intuitions and various nearby phenomena in terms of the presentationality of the former versus the non-presentationality of the latter.

A fourth virtue concerns the thesis's ability to account for several psychological roles of intuition. It appears to be part of our standard conception of intuition that it is among the ways we have of *coming to believe* (i.e. of forming beliefs). For instance, in *The Gettier Intuition*, Professor Typical may come to believe that Smith does not know as a result of having the intuition that Smith does not know. She could then be said to form her 'Gettier belief' on the basis of her 'Gettier intuition'. In this sense, intuition is *formative*. Relatedly, intuition is also *explanatory of belief*: in many cases, we may be said to believe that *p* because we have the intuition that *p*. Why does Professor Typical believe that Smith does not know? Because she has the intuition that Smith does not know (i.e. because it strikes her that Smith does not know, as we might say). That one has the intuition may thus explain why one has the corresponding intuitive belief.²⁰

Of course, perceptual experience is also formative (among the ways we have of coming to believe) and explanatory of belief (we may believe that *p* because we have an experience as if *p*). We should expect intuition and perceptual experience to be alike in these ways if they are both presentations. In general, if a mental state σ compels

¹⁹ Such examples illustrate a point operative in Sosa's (2007, pp. 47 ff.; 2009, Sect. 1) recent discussion of attraction to assent, which he makes clear is a type of 'pull', akin to desire; such a state, like other doxastic tendencies, is a kind of *rousing, stirring, or wanting*, rather than *presenting*. Prima facie, there is also a structural difference between presentations and doxastic tendencies. Whereas a presentation relates one (via the *being-presented-as-if* relation) to a *content*, an attraction to assent, for example, relates one (via the *being-attracted-to* relation) to an *action*, namely, *assenting*. A doxastic tendency thus looks to be a complex conative state with a very different, act-directed structure. Our explication of presentationality in Sect. 3 also allows us to identify additional, non-structural features marking the distinction. First, doxastic tendencies are not rationalizing: while they 'pull' one towards believing, they do not by themselves make believing seem *rational* or *fitting* (cf. Quinn 1993, pp. 248 ff.). Nor are they fundamentally non-voluntary, being instead things that are subject to norms: as Sosa observes, an attraction may 'attract too strongly or too weakly' (2007, p. 51) and 'manifests the subject's rational agency' (2009, p. 138). Third, whereas presentational states *give rise* to a tendency to believe (e.g. they attract assent), doxastic tendencies do not; as Sosa (2007, p. 54) points out, 'They are rather the attractions themselves', i.e. the tendencies risen. Indeed, the striking *precedes* the attraction: one is struck, *then* 'pulled' (disposed, inclined, tempted, attracted).

²⁰ Cf. Conee 1998 (p. 850) and Huemer 2007 (p. 31). The data are not so easily accommodated by minimalism. For example, minimalists who maintain that our target is a mere belief must deny that it is explanatory of belief, since the fact that one has the belief that *p* cannot explain why one has the belief that *p*.

and rationalizes assent, one may come to believe that p by having σ . In turn, the fact that one has σ may explain the presence of the corresponding belief. I argued above that we need not think that it is a brute or inexplicable fact that intuition and perceptual experience compel and rationalize assent: they do so *because* they present the world as being a certain way. That intuitions and perceptual experiences are presentations thus helps to explain why both are formative and explanatory of belief.

Intuition often plays a further psychological role. It is not uncommon to have intuitions about matters one has not previously considered (whether explicitly or implicitly) or about answers to questions on which one has yet to take a stand. Further, the practice of counterexamplifying illustrates that we can have intuitions that run directly contrary to our own background theory or considered view; our intuitions may turn out to conflict radically with those propositions we accept or endorse, or are disposed or inclined to accept or endorse, whether implicitly or explicitly.²¹ The core quasi-perceptualist thesis implies that intuition is a fundamentally non-voluntary, non-doxastic state akin to perceptual experience, which is well known to sometimes present the world as being quite different than the way we believe or are disposed or inclined to believe it is. As a result, this thesis seems to be in a good position to explain the potentially subversive or novel character of intuition. For in so far as intuitions are like perceptual experiences in being presentations, they possess the type of passivity, non-neutrality, and belief-independence required to underwrite their capacity to inspire doxastic change or even revolution.

The flip-side of this power or influence is that in so far as they are presentations, intuitions and perceptual experiences also possess the type of passivity, non-neutrality, and belief-independence required to underwrite their capacity to *mislead* as well. Thus the core quasi-perceptualist thesis can explain the potentially misleading character of our target. Presentations are exactly the kinds of things that can influence beliefs, dispositions, or inclinations, and other such states — for better or for worse — *without being among them*.²²

²¹ Cf. Bealer 1998 (p. 209), Huemer 2005 (p. 103), Peacocke 2000 (p. 275), and Grundmann 2007 (pp. 74–5). Williamson (2007, p. 243) also highlights this role of intuition, though it does not fit easily with his own minimalist view (see also the next note).

²² Cf. Earlenbaugh and Molyneux (2009, Sect. 4.1), who discuss the potential misleadingness of *finding p intuitive*, which they describe as a ‘broad’ notion (2009, p. 90) designating a type of state that is not ‘always (or even usually) occurrent’ (2009, p. 103, n. 16). This entails

To help bring out what is distinctive about the core-quasi-perceptualist thesis, it can be usefully compared to the view, initially advanced by George Bealer, and introduced by means of example, that intuitions are ‘seemings’:

When you have an intuition that A, it *seems* to you that A. Here ‘seems’ is understood, not in its use as a cautionary or ‘hedging’ term, but in its use as a term for a genuine kind of conscious episode. For example, when you first consider one of de Morgan’s laws, often you draw a blank; after a moment’s reflection, however, something happens: it now really *seems* obvious. (Bealer 1992, 101–2; cf. Pust 2000, Ch. 2 and Huemer 2007, Sect. 1)

One respect in which the core quasi-perceptualist thesis differs from the seemings view is that the latter often treats the relevant notion of seeming as an unexplicated primitive,²³ whereas, by contrast, section 3 offered a substantive explication of the notion of presentation that positively identified its characteristic features and systematically located it in a threefold distinction among types of contentful state. It is a significant virtue of the present approach that it allows such positive explication. While an unexplicated notion may offer a neutral starting point for subsequent investigation, it does not by itself yield the requisite theoretical understanding: by treating intuition as an unexplicated primitive, it fails to illuminate what intuition ‘really is’.²⁴ Of course, one might propose, as Ernest Sosa (2007, Ch. 3)

that their topic is not the same as the target of the present discussion, which is a conscious, hence occurrent, state (recall Sect. 2). Notice that if we were to embrace minimalism, then we would be unable to explain the range of intuitions’ prima facie influence. For example, if the intuition that *p* is identical to the (tendency to form the) belief that *p*, then the intuition cannot influence—whether by contravening or misleading—the (tendency to form the) belief, contra the potentially novel and misleading character of intuition.

²³ See, for example, Bealer 1998 (Sect. 1); hereafter I will often leave the unexplicated modifier ‘relevant’ implicit. Huemer’s (2001, Chs 4–5) discussion implicitly suggests an explication of the relevant notion of seeming in terms of ‘apprehension’ and ‘force’. We are told that ‘apprehensions represent their contents *as actualized*’—in this sense, they are ‘assertive’—and that even ‘[b]eliefs are a kind of apprehension’ (2001, pp. 54–5). Huemer’s notion of force is likewise introduced as applying to mental states in so far as they ‘represent their contents as actualized’ (2001, p. 77); but this means that this notion, too, will apply to beliefs. So Huemer’s discussion cannot yield an adequate explication of seemings, as it does not tell us how they are meant to be distinct from mere beliefs. By contrast, the notion of presentation (explicated in Sect. 3), which is the cornerstone of the core quasi-perceptualist thesis, does not apply to mere beliefs and so underwrites the requisite distinction between intuition and perceptual experience versus mere belief.

²⁴ Reliance on an unexplicated notion of seeming is also vulnerable in so far as it is widely acknowledged that ‘seems’, like ‘appears’ and ‘looks’, has myriad distinct uses (see, for example, Chisholm 1957, pp. 43–53). That does not mean the relevant use cannot be somehow

and Boghossian (2009, p. 116, n. 5) recently have done, that a seeming be understood as a kind of conscious tendency, namely an attraction or temptation to assent; but such a proposal effectively reduces the seemings view to a version of minimalism, criticized above. The core quasi-perceptualist thesis stands out in its effort to walk a middle path between the two extremes of minimalism and primitivism.

Now, it may turn out that some proponents of the seemings view will deem the discussion in section 3 as pointing the way towards a positive, non-minimalist treatment of the relevant notion of seeming. While I am not opposed to them considering the core quasi-perceptualist thesis a friendly improvement, it is worth noting that there appear to be specific differences between presentations and seemings. A brief examination of one such difference will bring to light a sixth virtue of the core quasi-perceptualist thesis.²⁵

It seems fair to say that whatever a seeming is, it is *explicit* in the sense that its content is available, at the moment in which the content seems true, as the content of a conscious thought fully articulable by its subject. In other words, if one enjoys a genuine conscious episode in which it truly seems to one that *p*, then one is able at the time to formulate explicitly—out loud or in one’s head—the way things seem: that *p*.²⁶ By contrast, presentations are sometimes *inexplicit*: one need not be able at the time to formulate explicitly—out loud or in one’s head—the way things are presented as being. Thus one might experience or intuit something, though one is not in that situation able to articulate fully what exactly one saw or intuited. The implication is that what is presented may not be one and the same as what seems true. To illustrate, suppose that the very specific shade of blue, call it ‘kleinblue’, patented by the painter Yves Klein, is encountered unexpectedly (outside of a gallery or studio, in an everyday

regimented; but even if regimentation does not mandate an analysis, it does require a suitable explication, which is lacking in the present case (recall the previous note).

²⁵ A second difference is suggested by considerations advanced in Markie 2006 (Sect. 1) and Sosa 2007 (pp. 51 ff.) and 2009 (Sect. 1), which forcefully argue that seemings are, at least potentially, open to rational assessment, being in at least some cases based on reasons, good or bad. This implies that seemings are not fundamentally non-voluntary, by contrast with presentations.

²⁶ As should be clear, explicitness is a feature of a mental state, not its content. Whether a content, *p*, is demonstrative or non-demonstrative, concerns or involves universals, or is of some other type, a state with that content is explicit in that its subject is in a position at the time to articulate fully the content of that state: that *p*. The claim in the main text is that all seemings are explicit in this sense.

setting) by both Klein and an acquaintance in good viewing conditions. They might have indistinguishable perceptual experiences whose content is that there is something *kleinblue*, yet what seems true to Klein, namely the selfsame content *there is something kleinblue*, does not likewise seem true to the acquaintance, who lacks Klein's general facility with the colour.²⁷ Although the acquaintance may be aware of *kleinblue*, having previously examined Klein's *IKB 79* at Tate Modern, in this situation it simply seems to her that, say, there is something *deep blue*. Similarly, it is possible that an ordinary thinker and a logician (perhaps De Morgan) have indistinguishable logical insights whose content is that there is an equivalence between the negation of a disjunction and the conjunction of the negations, although what seems true to the logician, namely, the selfsame content *the negation of a disjunction is equivalent to the conjunction of the negations*, does not likewise seem true to the ordinary thinker, who may not be in a position to articulate fully the logical law whose truth she grasped. Instead, what seems true to her at the time is simply that, say, there is a *tight* connection between a disjunction being false and its disjuncts being false. Of course, the ordinary thinker might later, when confronted with the relevant law in discussion with the logician, exclaim 'That's it — *that's* what I saw!', confirming that the content she initially intuited was the selfsame content the logician intuited.²⁸ The basic point should be familiar: it is one thing to experience or intuit something, and another thing entirely to be able to formulate it explicitly. It is a virtue of the core quasi-perceptualist thesis, which understands intuitions as presentations (which are sometimes

²⁷ This example is inspired by Sosa's (2009, Sect. 1) case of a chessboard viewed by a novice and expert. One might object to Sosa's case that it is implausible that a novice's perceptual experience has the numerically precise content that there are 64 alternating black-and-white squares, a content to which a novice could not even be disposed to assent in suitable reflective conditions. The example in the text is not open to this type of objection.

²⁸ Such defeasible confirmation might also be found in subsequent actions (rather than exclamations). Andrew Wiles is reported to have had a 'flash of insight' that his 1993 failed proof of the Taniyama–Shimura conjecture for semistable elliptic curves — the second half of Frey's strategy for proving Fermat's Last Theorem — could be salvaged by reverting to the Horizontal Iwasawa theory approach he had earlier employed unsuccessfully. Wiles subsequently saved the proof in this way. It is possible that Wiles's insight consisted of an intuition with the content *the way to solve the proof is by ...*, where ... are the precise steps required to solve the proof, although he was not at the time in a position to explicitly formulate — out loud or in his head — those steps, which he only later fully articulated (when eventually finalizing the proof). This possibility would be confirmed if the steps that Wiles subsequently took unfolded in the specific way recorded by that content, and there was no reason to view the match as wholly lucky or coincidental.

inexplicit) rather than seemings (which are explicit), that it clarifies and explains this observation.

Let us summarize. I have argued that the core quasi-perceptualist thesis that intuitions are like perceptual experiences in being presentations allows us to

- (i) make sense of common descriptions of what happens when one has an intuition
- (ii) correctly classify examples of intuition, or the absence thereof
- (iii) explain *prima facie* distinctions between intuition and nearby phenomena
- (iv) account for several (heretofore unexplained) psychological roles of intuition
- (v) provide a positive explication that identifies intuition's characteristic features
- (vi) illuminate the difference between thinkers with shared intuitions but differing capacities for formulation

The core quasi-perceptualist thesis thus displays a significant — and, I submit, unique — explanatory power and theoretical unity.

It might be objected that, despite this, the thesis belies the introspective data: when one introspects one's own Gettier intuition, for example, one fails to find a mental state that is like perceptual experience in being a presentation, as characterized in section 3.²⁹ A proponent of the core quasi-perceptualist thesis might question whether it is really true that, when the objector considers Gettier's example, it is not presented to her — *as it is to the proponent* — as being the case that Gettier's Smith lacks knowledge. But this response ends in stalemate: an unsatisfying, even if a dialectically tolerable (for the proponent), outcome. In an effort to progress beyond stalemate, the

²⁹ Williamson (2007, p. 217): 'For myself, I am aware of no intellectual [conscious state] beyond my conscious inclination to believe the Gettier proposition. Similarly, I am aware of no intellectual [conscious state] beyond my conscious inclination to believe Naïve Comprehension, which I resist because I know better.' Sosa (2007, p. 55): 'What [is] lack[ing when one has an intuition] is any correlate of the visual sensory experience beyond one's conscious entertaining of the propositional content ... No such state of awareness, beyond the conscious entertaining itself, can be found in *intuitive* attraction.' Although Williamson and Sosa disagree about whether there is a conscious state of entertaining in addition to a conscious inclination or attraction, they seem to agree that there is no mental state that is like perceptual experience in being a presentation, as characterized in Sect. 3.

proponent might observe that the objection is meant to challenge a certain (non-minimalist) view or characterization of intuition, and in particular the discriminating quasi-perceptualist view that this characterization underwrites. This characterization was, however, offered as part of a *theory* of our target, a theory centered on a threefold distinction between, and subsequent explication of, types of contentful state (in Sect. 3); the target itself was identified in a theory-neutral way, using a series of more or less familiar examples (in Sect. 2). Perhaps the objector wishes to object to some aspect of that theory: for instance, when she introspects her Gettier intuition, she fails to find a mental state that has all of the relevant features (i.e. baselessness, gradability, fundamental non-voluntariness, compellingness, rationalizingness, and potential inexplicitness).³⁰ But it is important to bear in mind that those features and their theoretical explication may not be always or fully accessible through a simple act of introspection.³¹ Consequently, introspection alone is unable to decide the matter: it cannot by itself refute the core quasi-perceptualist thesis. On the contrary, to the extent that one finds that it really does *strike* one that Gettier's Smith lacks knowledge (or that identity is transitive, etc.), introspection may turn out to be a friend to that thesis.

A second objection is that the thesis does not match the way that philosophers and laymen tend to use the English word 'intuition', for they regularly employ the term in a far less discriminate—and, perhaps, primarily rhetorical and sometimes 'inapposite'—manner.³² But

³⁰ Alternatively, it may be that the objector fails to find a mental state with proprietary sensation or a robust phenomenology (e.g. a sensory presentation) and hastily infers that she therefore lacks any presentational state whatsoever. Let us assume that the objector is not making this mistake.

³¹ Additional, non-introspective reflection may be required. In fact, to *find* a given state or feature via introspection, an introspector typically must know what to look for, and in particular how to single it out or recognize it under the description in question (cf. Chudnoff 2011, p. 644). Such tasks are not simple. As is well known, we sometimes have immense difficulty noticing a certain quality (or a quality under a relevant description) of what we are inspecting, even when we are informed that such a quality is there, awaiting notice.

³² See especially Williamson 2007 (pp. 214 ff.); the epithet 'inapposite' is his. Cf. Cappelen (2012, Pt. 1). I examine 'intuition'-language in Bengson 2014. Other theorists have urged more, rather than less, discriminateness. Consider the suggestion that intuition must contain its own reason or explanation (Ewing 1951, p. 26), have modal content (Bonjour 1998, pp. 15–16, 101, 114, and 127; Sosa 2007, Ch. 3), or be based on understanding (Ludwig 2007, p. 135). These requirements can be criticized as over-intellectualizing intuition (cf. Boghossian 2001, pp. 636–7). Another worry is that while members of an important class of intuitions may have explanatory or modal contents, or be based on understanding, it is not clear that all intuitions must be like this. As Bealer (1998, p. 207) observes, one might have the non-explanatory, non-

in the present context, such sociological and linguistic concerns are largely beside the point. From our current perspective (i.e. the perspective of philosophical theorizing), what ultimately matters is not so much the contingent social role or ordinary use of a particular English term, but, first, whether there is a mental state of the sort described above and, second, whether such a mental state might serve as a legitimate epistemic source. We first located our target, not through sociological speculation or reflection on particular ordinary language locutions, but with examples. We have seen that the core quasi-perceptualist thesis accurately characterizes this target. Hence, in my view, the suggestion that a mental state that satisfies this characterization only imperfectly deserves the label ‘intuition’ is merely terminological. Whether we choose to call it ‘intuition’ or something else, such as ‘intellection’, ‘insight’, or ‘quasi-perception’, it seems that once we have accurately characterized our target the philosophically interesting question is what work such a state might do.

We briefly addressed the psychological side of this question in our discussion of the psychological roles of this state. The next section turns to the epistemological side of this question—in particular, whether and how the perceptual analogy might help us better to understand the epistemology of intuition. I will argue that what has enabled the core quasi-perceptualist thesis to characterize intuition, ontologically speaking, also plays a central role in helping to explain the epistemic status of intuition.

5. The epistemology of presentation

Let us begin by noting that it is, arguably, standard practice in logic, mathematics, and philosophy to regard at least some intuitions about particular cases and ‘first principles’ or axioms as possessing a positive, if not privileged, epistemic status. For instance, the Gettier intuition is widely regarded as serving a pivotal blow against the traditional analysis of knowledge. Similarly, the intuition that identity is transitive is not—or at least not typically—seen as ‘up for grabs’. In both cases, and many more, the intuition alone has been considered enough to justify (rationally warrant) rejection of the contrary

modal, ‘physical’ intuition that a house undermined will fall. Examples like this suggest that if the aim is to understand intuition in general, not simply some subset of intuitions, then such conditions will be unduly restrictive. I will not attempt to legislate the admissible contents of intuition here; the various examples in the main text serve as illustrations (cf. Siegel 2011 on analogous debate regarding the admissible contents of perceptual experience).

position.³³ By contrast, mere guesses, hunches, tendencies to judge, or beliefs formed via astrological calculations or wishful thinking have not been regarded as enjoying this same status. This suggests the following two epistemological questions regarding the core quasi-perceptualist thesis:

- (Q1) Is the core quasi-perceptualist thesis in a position to preserve, rather than undermine, the thesis that intuition may serve as a source of *prima facie* (i.e. defeasible) justification and, when all goes well, knowledge?³⁴
- (Q2) Can it do so without simultaneously allowing the same epistemic status to be granted to such apparently epistemically indigent states as mere guesses, hunches, tendencies to judge, and beliefs formed via astrological calculations or wishful thinking?

In this section, I suggest that both questions can be given affirmative answers.

The core quasi-perceptualist thesis is consistent with a variety of epistemological positions. This can be illustrated by considering a few positions resembling those which have loomed large in recent debates over the epistemology of perception. It will be useful to formulate these positions as epistemologies of presentation in general, though the crucial point is simply that all of them can be easily modified so as to cover the epistemology of intuition as well as perceptual experience.

According to what I will call an *alethic* view, having a presentation with the content *p* *prima facie* justifies one in believing that *p* if and only if one's presentations are truth-conducive (e.g. reliable). There are also several non-alethic approaches. For example, according to what I will call *conservativism*, it is not required that one's

³³ Kornblith (2002, Sect. 1.2), following Bealer (1992), refers to this practice as the 'standard justificatory procedure'. Cf. Earlenbaugh and Molyneux 2009 and Cappelen 2012, to which I respond in Bengson 2014.

³⁴ Two points of clarification. First, on my usage, *x* can be *prima facie* justified in believing that *p* even if *x* does not in fact believe that *p*. This is sometimes called 'propositional justification', and it will be my primary focus. Second, I use the place-holder 'when all goes well' in order to remain neutral between competing solutions to various Gettier-type problems, which seek to identify what turns a justified true belief into knowledge. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to solve Gettier-type problems, a plausible approach holds that a justified true belief is knowledge whenever there are no undefeated defeaters (Lehrer and Paxson 1969). This defeasibility theory fits naturally with the account of intuition's epistemic status pursued below.

presentations *be* truth-conducive; rather, what matters is that one *rationally believe* that they are. More generally, the conservative can be understood as saying that having a presentation with the content p *prima facie* justifies one in believing that p so long as one has antecedent warrant for believing some other proposition Φ , for example, the proposition that one's presentations are truth-conducive. This conservative view can be contrasted with another non-alethic approach, which I will call *liberalism*, according to which one does not need such antecedent warrant; rather, says the liberal, having a presentation with the content p *prima facie* justifies one in believing that p so long as one simply lacks warrant for *disbelieving* Φ —that is, as I will say, so long as one lacks reason to *question* one's presentation.³⁵

If extant arguments for the truth-conduciveness of intuition (e.g. track-record arguments citing the successes of elementary mathematical and logical intuition, self-support arguments, or epistemic self-defeat arguments; see, for example, Bealer 1992) are successful, an alethicist view would vindicate, from a broadly 'externalist' standpoint, the thesis that intuition serves as a legitimate epistemic source.³⁶ Assuming that other presentations (notably, perceptual experiences) are also truth-conducive, whereas mere guesses, hunches, tendencies to judge, and beliefs formed via astrological calculations or wishful thinking are not, alethicism would imply that presentations are, as a kind, epistemically privileged with respect to these other, epistemically indigent states—thus delivering affirmative answers to both (Q1) and (Q2). That said, recent work in epistemology has been taken to show that a narrow focus on truth-conduciveness may be problematic (as suggested, for example, by cases of envatment and clairvoyance). In addition, the attempt to establish (or refute) the

³⁵ Conservatism about perceptual experience is defended by Wright (2004b). Liberalism is endorsed by Dretske (2000), Pryor (2000, 2004), and Huemer (2007), among others. Different theorists will of course privilege different values for Φ . Some contextualists will hold that Φ varies from context to context (e.g. in the context operative in Descartes's *Meditations* it may be the proposition that one is not being deceived by an evil demon, whereas in a non-meditating context it may be the comparatively innocuous proposition that one is not subject to some class of ordinary cognitive biases). The account to be pursued here can readily accommodate this perspective, if necessary.

³⁶ Those who maintain the bold thesis that 'E = K' (Williamson 2000, p. 185) will hold that intuition is like perceptual experience in having evidential value when and only when it amounts to knowledge. But to the extent that evidence and justification can be pulled apart, it remains open to such externalists to adopt a different view of the justificatory status of perceptual experience and intuition (perhaps one of the views outlined in the main text).

claim that a given mental state — whether it be intuition, perceptual experience, memory, or introspection — is in fact truth-conducive is a notoriously delicate matter: worries about proper modal scope and generality, for instance, signal that the rules of that game are not yet clear.³⁷ For these reasons, although alethicism is entirely compatible with the core quasi-perceptualist thesis, I will not rely on it here. Instead, I would like to investigate the prospects of a non-alethic epistemology of presentation. Specifically, I want to ask whether, from a non-alethic point of view, we can find reason to think that presentations provide justification for belief.

What is needed for a defence of a non-alethic view, whether conservative or liberal, is a plausible philosophical articulation of the overall position, including an account of how presentations provide *prima facie* justification in the way that the position implies. As formulated above, both conservatism and liberalism about a given mental state σ tell us *the conditions under which* σ provides *prima facie* justification: when one has antecedent warrant for believing Φ (in the case of conservatism) or when one lacks warrant for disbelieving Φ (in the case of liberalism). However, it does not yet tell us *in virtue of what* σ so justifies. This is an explanatory gap that must be filled, if only because not all mental states provide such *prima facie* justification; again, mere guesses, hunches, tendencies to judge, and beliefs formed via astrological calculations or wishful thinking presumably do not. The asymmetry requires explanation. What non-epistemic feature could σ possess — but guesses, hunches, and the like lack — that *makes it the case* that σ — but not these other states — provides such justification, and thus deserves a conservative or liberal treatment?

To simplify the discussion, I will henceforth focus on developing a particular brand of liberalism. But the discussion can readily be modified to accommodate a conservative perspective as well: those who accept a conservative epistemology may replace the relevant liberal clause ('one lacks reason to question one's presentation') with the relevant conservative clause ('one has antecedent warrant for believing Φ '), whose satisfaction would, however, require independent explanation.³⁸

³⁷ I will not rehearse these arguments here; see, for example, Cohen 1984 on envatment and Bonjour 1985 (Ch. 3) on clairvoyance. See Bealer (1998, Sect. 2) and Sosa (1996, Sect. B) for debate over the proper modal scope of truth-conduciveness. For epistemologies of intuition that focus on truth-conduciveness, see Bealer 1998 (Sects 2–3), Sosa 1998 (pp. 266 ff.), and Goldman 2007.

³⁸ I say the explanation must be independent because such warrant, being *antecedent*, cannot derive from the mental state σ to which conservatism applies. This is not to say,

Let us begin with perceptual experience. In virtue of which non-epistemic feature might perceptual experience be such as to provide the indicated justification? One candidate answer appeals to its *presentationality*. As we saw in our discussion of presentationality in section 3, in so far as perceptual experiences present the world as being a certain way, from the perspective of an experiencer, matters are not neutral. In having an experience as if p , it is presented, non-voluntarily, to the subject of the experience as being the case that p ; the world is presented p -ly, as it were. Given that this is how things are from the subject's point of view, namely biased toward p in a way that appears, from the 'inside', to make p worthy of belief, it seems unreasonable to criticize such a subject as doing something epistemically improper in subsequently coming to believe that p , absent reason to so believe (e.g. absent special reason to doubt her perceptual experience's reliability). Quite the opposite: it would seem that such a subject has at least some reason to believe that p ; it is *appropriate* for her to so believe. Given that it is presented as being the case that p , coming to believe that p is something the subject is *prima facie* justified in doing.

It might be objected that the presentationality of perceptual experience should be regarded as introducing a type of justification that is merely pragmatic or practical, not genuinely epistemic.³⁹ However, the normative connection between presentations and beliefs formed on their basis is not (or at least not merely) a matter of 'what works' or an issue of practical agency, that is, the status of belief in so far as it yields appropriate action; rather, it concerns the status of believing as such. An individual who believes that the world is exactly the way it is presented to her as being, absent reason not to so believe, is thereby being a *good believer* in so believing. (She may also be doing what works or somehow qualify as a good practical agent; these further assessments are consistent with the present point.) Her believing is

however, that such explanation must invoke a further mental state or source of justification. For example, Wright (2004b) has advanced the notion of a default or unearned 'entitlement of cognitive project', according to which believing p is antecedently warranted if (i) there is no evidence or non-regressive argument for p but (ii) some rational inquiry (e.g. science, philosophy, logic, mathematics) presupposes p . Conservatives may apply this explanation to the present case, to account for one's antecedent warrant for believing Φ , leaving just the question of what feature the target state, σ , possesses that could explain why it, but not various other mental states, provides justification in the way their position implies. It is to this question—faced by liberals and conservatives alike—that we now turn. For further discussion of liberal and conservative views of justification, see Pryor 2004 (Sect. 3) and Sect. 7 below.

³⁹ Cf. Horwich 2000 (pp. 167–8) on 'convenience'.

appropriate, and not merely in its connection to outcomes or actions. Contrast an individual who believes that the world is exactly the way she needs to believe it to be in order for her to act appropriately; such a person is not thereby being a good believer in so believing — though she may, perhaps, thereby be being a good pragmatist or practical agent. Or consider an individual who believes that the world is precisely the *opposite* of the way it is presented to her as being, though she lacks any reason for contravening her presentations: she has no reason to believe that the world is otherwise than how it is presented to her as being, but she believes this anyway. Such an individual is not being a good believer, unlike the individual whose beliefs do fit her presentations. To the extent that it is one's status as a believer rather than (or at least rather than merely) one's status as a practical agent that varies in light of changes in fit between one's presentations and one's beliefs, the justification in question can be deemed epistemic, rather than merely pragmatic or practical.

A second objection is that, even if perceptual experience can be regarded as providing genuinely epistemic justification for belief due to its presentationality, it is the *sensory* mode of presentation found in perceptual presentations that is the epistemic key. Notice, however, that the foregoing argument applies equally to states of proprioceptive awareness, in which it is presented, often without proprietary sensation (nor an especially rich phenomenology), that one's limbs are positioned a certain way (recall Sect. 3). One is thereby justified in believing that one's limbs are positioned that way. That it is appropriate to so believe on the basis of such presentations signals that the epistemic significance located above cannot be attributed to sensation, but to presentation.

The foregoing considerations regarding the epistemic significance of presentationality combine with the core quasi-perceptualist thesis that intuition is presentational to yield a constructive approach to the justificatory status of intuition. In so far as intuitions present the world as being a certain way, from the perspective of an intuiter, matters are not neutral. In having the intuition that p , it is presented, non-voluntarily, to the subject as being the case that p ; the world is presented p -ly, as it were. As in the case of perceptual experience, given that this is how things are from the subject's point of view, namely biased toward p in a way that appears, from the 'inside', to make p worthy of belief, it seems unreasonable to criticize such a subject as doing something epistemically improper in subsequently coming to believe that p , absent reason to so believe (e.g. absent special reason to doubt her intuition's reliability). Quite the opposite:

it would seem that the subject has at least some reason to believe that p ; it is *appropriate* for her to so believe. In the case of intuition as in the case of perceptual experience, given that it is presented as being the case that p , coming to believe that p is something such a subject is *prima facie* justified in doing.

There is a temptation, displayed in both historical and contemporary writings (see, for example, Bonjour 1998, pp. 103 and 114; Ludwig 2007; Markie 2013; cf. Chudnoff 2013, Ch. 4), to narrowly tie the epistemology of intuition to understanding. The foregoing counsels us to resist this, and not simply out of concern that an appeal to understanding does little more than pass the buck (What is understanding? How does *it* manage to yield the requisite epistemic status?) while raising further questions of its own (Are intuitions invariably based on understanding alone? Does recourse to understanding not ultimately make intuition an idle wheel, epistemically speaking? etc.). There is reason to be sceptical that intuition's justificatory status can be fully explained solely by appeal to the intuiters' understanding of what is intuited. Understanding is clearly not sufficient: a thinker might understand the principle of non-contradiction and its negation equally, though she is only justified in believing the former, the one she intuits (cf. Sosa 2007, p. 55). *Prima facie*, it is also not necessary: for example, Frege seems to have regarded the great mathematician Weierstrass as severely *misunderstanding* number; regardless, on the face of it, the latter could still be justified in believing on the basis of intuition various truths about number.⁴⁰ It is also not clear how understanding, to the extent that it concerns concepts or meanings, can by itself account for the apparent scope of intuitive justification, in particular, regarding non-empirical synthetic metaphysical — not merely 'conceptual' or 'analytic' — necessities (e.g. various theses about essence, nature, ground, or structure). These observations are not despotically, but they do square with the preceding reflections, which independently offer *prima facie* support for the view that it is not a subject's understanding of any item that makes it appropriate for her to believe on the basis of her intuition — no more than in the case of perceptual experience. Rather, in both cases, it is the character of her mental state, the intuition or perceptual experience itself — its being *presented* to her that it cannot be the case that both p and not- p , or

⁴⁰ Frege (1979, pp. 221–3) himself believed that Weierstrass, despite harbouring deep and serious confusions about number, had many 'true thoughts' about number based on 'sound intuition'.

that for any numbers a and b , $b + a = a + b$, for example—which makes it appropriate for her to believe that things are that way.⁴¹

We are now in a position to state the proposal: there is an epistemically significant link between presentational states and the beliefs one forms on their basis, a link that obtains independently of whether presentations are in fact truth-conducive, simply in virtue of their presentationality, so long as they are otherwise ‘innocent’—that is, when subjects lack reason to question them. Call this *presentationalism*:

Presentationalism

Given the nature of presentations, so long as x lacks reason to question x 's presentation, then x has at least some prima facie justification for believing that things are the way they are presented as being

Presentationalism tells us in virtue of what certain mental states provide prima facie justification for corresponding beliefs (i.e. their presentationality). But it is important also to be clear about what it does *not* say. For example, it is not committed to the puzzling thesis that Timothy Williamson (2007, Ch. 7) has labeled ‘evidence neutrality’ (i.e. the thesis that whether a proposition constitutes evidence is in principle uncontentiously decidable), and not simply because presentationalism is a thesis about justification rather than evidence: for in so far as two subjects have different presentations, presentationalism allows that they will be prima facie justified in believing different things. Presentationalism also does not imply that a presentation may by itself help one rationally overcome reasonable doubts about or genuine sceptical challenges to its content, or to consequences thereof, since such doubts and challenges may effectively deliver a reason to question the presentation.⁴² A related point is that

⁴¹ Compatibly with the points in this paragraph, a proponent of the proposal articulated immediately below can endorse some relation(s) between intuition and understanding. For instance, a given intuition's link to understanding might be said sometimes to enhance or diminish—‘intensify’ or ‘attenuate’, in Dancy's (2004, Ch. 3) illuminating taxonomy of relevance—one's *degree* of intuitive justification. (This is perhaps the lesson of the cases in Markie 2013.) It is also open to a proponent to hold that a given intuition's link to understanding explains its status as a priori. Or perhaps it underwrites a metaphysical link to facts intuited; see Sect. 6 for discussion of a Lockean version of this idea. Metaphysical, etiological, and other explanatory connections between intuition and understanding are pursued by Bealer (1998), Peacocke (2000, Sect. 5), Goldman (2007), and Sosa (2007, Ch. 3).

⁴² That is, they may provide warrant for disbelieving Φ . From the perspective of conservatism, they may be seen as removing one's antecedent warrant for believing Φ . Conservatism and liberalism are equally compatible with scepticism (and are therefore equally

presentationalism does not entail that any actual beliefs are in fact justified, since it is consistent with the hypothesis that all subjects have reason to question their presentations. Consequently, presentationalism can be accepted even by those sympathetic to scepticism regarding the epistemic significance of certain presentations (e.g. specific intuitions or perceptual experiences).

So much for what presentationalism does not say. Again, what it does say, or specify, is that in virtue of which certain mental states provide *prima facie* justification for corresponding beliefs, namely, their presentationality. In so far as the focus is justification, it remains compatible with alethic views of other types of epistemic status (e.g. evidence or certainty) as well as diverse approaches to the difference between true justified beliefs and knowledge (e.g. defeasibility theories). There are several reasons to like this account, beyond the intuitive motivation indicated above.

First, it is supported by reflection on standard cases of envatment—where subjects have the relevant presentations and hence possess *prima facie* justification for the corresponding beliefs. It is likewise supported by reflection on the phenomenon of blindsight (sensory or intellectual)—where subjects lack the relevant presentations and hence lack corresponding justifications.

Second, presentationalism provides a straightforward explanation of the fact that some mental states do, while other states—such as mere guesses, hunches, tendencies to judge, and beliefs formed via astrological calculations or wishful thinking—do not, provide *prima facie* justification: to wit, the former but not the latter are presentational. As should be clear, such explanation as applied to intuition is made possible by the core quasi-perceptualist thesis, which specifies an epistemically significant feature—namely, presentationality—that intuition possesses but various other mental states lack. In so far as minimalist views, criticized in previous sections, miss out on this feature, they miss out on this explanation.

Third, and relatedly, presentationalism explains the distinct epistemic profiles of perceptual experience and intuition, on one hand, and imagistic states, including states of imagination, whether sensory or intellectual, on the other. This might be thought unachievable by a

available to so-called sceptical invariantists) and with extant replies to scepticism (including Pryor's (2000) dogmatist reply; Wright's (2004b) entitlement reply, described in n. 38; and contextualist replies, described in n. 35, which may hold that in most contexts Φ is relatively innocuous). The present aim is not to refute scepticism, but to explain why certain mental states justify, if and when they do.

non-alethic approach, especially one that is broadly phenomenological (as presentationalism is). But an imaginer who willfully forms a vivid mental image of (say) a multi-coloured beach ball and imagines that it is in water before her is relevantly different from a perceptual experimenter to whom it is presented that there is a multi-coloured beach ball in water before her. The two subjects may enjoy identical visual images (involving redness, blueness, yellowness, circularity, etc.), perhaps thereby seeming to undergo the same objectual presentations (of the corresponding qualities); but the imaginer lacks the relevant contentful presentation — it is not *presented* to her as being the case that there is such a ball — and so lacks the perceptual experimenter's justification for corresponding belief. A similar contrast shows up in the intellectual case. Consider a subject capable of vivid geometrical imagination, for example, he forms a vivid mental image of two triangles which agree in two sides and the enclosed angle; unable to discern what follows, but instructed by his tutor to ponder various options, he imagines that any two such triangles are congruent. Contrast an intuiter to whom it is actually presented that any two such triangles are congruent: as we say, she just 'sees' that this is so, when she reflects on it. The imaginer and the intuiter may enjoy identical imagery (involving lines, angles, etc.), perhaps thereby seeming to undergo the same objectual presentations (of lines, angles, etc.); but the former lacks the relevant contentful presentation — it is not *presented* to her that any two such triangles are congruent — and so lacks the latter's justification for corresponding belief. Presentationalism smoothly accounts for the epistemic difference.⁴³

A fourth reason to like presentationalism is that it also has the resources to make sense of more subtle epistemic disparities, such as the epistemic difference between a subject with a clear, vivid intuition or perceptual experience and a subject whose intuition or perceptual experience is hazy or fuzzy. In the latter case, one may have some reason to question one's presentation (precisely because it is hazy or fuzzy); one does not have this reason when one's presentation is clear and vivid, and is, therefore, in an epistemically superior position: one is *more* justified. In this way, the gradability of presentations may ground a corresponding gradability in *prima facie* justification.⁴⁴

⁴³ Contrast Chudnoff 2012 (Sect. 3), which requires special accommodation for imagination and thus risks destabilizing the view in Chudnoff 2013, Ch. 3.

⁴⁴ The fact that not all presentations are created equal might carry important implications for philosophical methodology. For instance, while all intellectual presentations have at least

Presentationism might also be motivated through a comparison with alternative proposals. Consider, for instance, the view that certain mental states provide *prima facie* justification because they are ‘irresistible’ or, in the terminology introduced above, compelling: specifically, certain states (notably, perceptual experiences) provide *prima facie* justification for corresponding beliefs because they compel those beliefs (cf. Dworkin 1996, p. 118; Dretske 2000). This irresistibility thesis suffers from the problem that desirous or wishful thinking is also compelling; recall *The Impassioned Scientist*.⁴⁵ To avoid such counterexamples, the irresistibility thesis must be supplemented with a restriction to a subclass of compelling states. But why those compelling states and not others? It is difficult to see how the restriction could avoid being arbitrary or *ad hoc*. Moreover, if what is supposed to *make* such states epistemically valuable is their compellingness, then it is not clear how such a restriction would be coherent, let alone motivated. Presentationism, by contrast, rules out such states in a principled manner: desirous or wishful thinking are not cases of presentational states (recall virtue (iii) in Sect. 4). It follows that counterexamples to the irresistibility thesis are not counterexamples to presentationism, which has the resources to explain the epistemic asymmetry to which our reactions to such cases appear to be attuned.⁴⁶

Presentationism, if true, provides an explanation of the justificatory status of intuition, as it is conceived by the quasi-perceptualist. It thus enables the quasi-perceptualist to preserve—and, in fact, to explain—the epistemic status accorded to intuition by rationalists,

some (defeasible) epistemic significance, certain intellectual presentations (e.g. transitivity intuitions) may, while others (e.g. anti-coincidence intuitions) may not, be clear or vivid enough to justify building one’s whole theory around them. It is a virtue of the present view that it illuminates the source of such disparity.

⁴⁵ See also Markie 2006 (Sect. 2). The irresistibility thesis seems to be an epistemological correlate of the problematic idea that because the kleptomaniac is compelled to steal, she is justified in stealing.

⁴⁶ Presentationism enjoys analogous advantages over Huemer’s non-presentationalist, seemings-based approach, which he dubs ‘phenomenal conservatism’. Huemer suggests that certain mental states, such as intuitions and perceptual experiences, provide *prima facie* justification in the way that liberalism implies in so far as *most beliefs happen to be based on them*: ‘when we form beliefs, with a few exceptions ... our beliefs are based on the way things seem to us’ (2007, p. 39). This inevitability thesis seems to be an epistemological correlate of the problematic idea that because most actions happen to be based on self-interest, one is justified in acting out of self-interest. For relevant critical discussion of Huemer’s phenomenal conservatism, see Markie 2006 (Sect. 1).

answering (Q₁). And this without simultaneously allowing the same status to be granted to such apparently epistemically indigent states as mere guesses, hunches, tendencies to judge, and beliefs formed via astrological calculations or wishful thinking, answering (Q₂). In effect, the view provides a principled explanation of why intuition, but none of these other phenomena, serves as an epistemic source. Hence the view is not overly permissive. At the same time, it is not overly restrictive or sceptical: for instance, it allows (but need not entail) a positive verdict about the standard practice in logic, mathematics, and philosophy of regarding at least some intuitions—for example, those clear and vivid intuitions that we lack reason to question—about particular cases and ‘first principles’ or axioms as possessing a positive epistemic status.

6. Benacerraf-style worries

It is sometimes suggested that a theory of intuition that emphasizes similarities with perceptual experience founders on worries regarding the connection between thinkers and causally inert denizens of a ‘third realm’ (Frege’s term for the home of what is neither material nor mental). This was Paul Benacerraf’s (1973, pp. 673 ff.) objection to Gödel’s invocation of intuition in the philosophy of mathematics. J. L. Mackie (1977, pp. 24 and 38) raised a similar objection to the claim, which he ascribed to Plato, that we intuit ‘objective moral values’. Neither objection is insurmountable. But first it is important to clarify their significance vis-à-vis the present project. For in both cases, it was not intuition but rather Platonism—Gödel’s Platonism about numbers and Plato’s Platonism about values—that initiated the objection. While a quasi-perceptualist view of intuition and a Platonistic metaphysics are sometimes considered jointly, the two views, and the questions that must be answered for them to fulfil their theoretical purposes, diverge in at least two ways. After explaining this divergence, I will identify four possible quasi-perceptualist responses to Benacerraf-style worries: *evasive*, *quietistic*, *humble*, and *substantive*.

First, all Platonistic theories of mathematics, morality, modality, and various other domains face Benacerraf-style worries regarding the connection between thinkers and the non-causal, non-spatiotemporal entities (numbers, values, possibilities, and so forth) that, on such theories, thinkers’ attitudes are of or about. This remains so whether

or not those theories hold that such attitudes include intuitions (some do not).⁴⁷ Simply put, Benacerraf-style worries are quite general, and do not introduce a challenge that applies specifically to intuition, nor even to a quasi-perceptualist (as opposed to minimalist) view of intuition. Therefore, it is not this challenge that critics who legitimately ask, of intuition in particular, ‘what it really is’ and ‘how it manages to yield the relevant knowledge’ (as in the quotation from Boghossian in Sect. 1, which is aimed at intuition in particular) primarily require us to engage — and which the core quasi-perceptualist thesis and presentationalism are meant to answer.⁴⁸

Second, the core quasi-perceptualist thesis and presentationalism are theses about a type of mental state and its justificatory status; they are neutral on the further issue of, for example, the status of the truth-conditions for the state’s contents, and in particular on whether those conditions invoke numbers, values, possibilities, and other non-causal, non-spatiotemporal entities (as Platonists will hold). Both theses are consistent with a variety of metaphysical positions, including nominalism, idealism, constructivism, and other non-Platonist views that deny non-causal, non-spatiotemporal entities and thus secure an ‘evasive’ solution to Benacerraf-style worries.⁴⁹ For instance, nominalists may hold that attitudes about mathematics, morality, and so forth are ultimately of or about the physical world (where all the nominalist’s truths reside), so causal connections are available (e.g. an attitude with the content that three are more than two might be causally connected to suitably related collections, or

⁴⁷ Benacerraf’s (1973) original worry in his seminal article ‘Mathematical Truth’ was aimed at those who accept the ‘realist’ horn of a dilemma focused on truth and truth-conditions. Field’s (1989, pp. 230–9) self-described reconstruction of Benacerraf’s worry is explicit that Platonism, not intuition, is the culprit; in fact, Field (2005, p. 78) emphasizes the problem for *empiricists* who accept a Platonistic metaphysics. Presumably this includes Quine, who combined Platonism about sets with a holist epistemology; others include Lewis (1986, §2.4), Hale and Wright (2000), and Williamson (2007, Chs 5–6). Balaguer’s (2009, Sect. 5) summary also effectively conveys this point.

⁴⁸ The quotation from Boghossian in Sect. 1 appears in the context of a discussion of intuition as an answer to the question ‘How could our justification for MPP [modus ponens] be non-inferential?’ (2000, p. 231). The objection is made without reference to Benacerraf (or Platonism). Similarly, when Kitcher (2000, p. 75), cited in n. 1, decries intuition as ‘elusive’ and ‘cloudy’, he is explicit that this objection is meant to be independent of the ‘well-known puzzle of Paul Benacerraf’s about how [knowledge of Platonic truths] could possibly work, [which is] not my main concern here.’

⁴⁹ Perhaps precedent may be traced to Descartes — arguably the paradigm quasi-perceptualist — who, according to many scholars (see, for example, Nolan 1998), endorsed nominalism, not Platonism. Locke is fairly clear that, in his view, intuitions are of or about ideas.

whatever state of affairs the nominalist deems relevant to the truth of ‘Three are more than two’); Lockean conceptualists may hold that attitudes about mathematics, morality, and so forth are ultimately of or about concepts, where concepts are understood as mental entities (ideas), in which case causal connections are once again available. One noteworthy feature of the latter position is that it seems to allow a theoretical role for conceptual understanding in explaining how attitudes about mathematics, morality, and so forth might achieve truth-conduciveness (e.g. the reliability of a mental state with the content that three are more than two might be underpinned by regular causal connections to suitably understood ideas) — though, to many minds, at sizeable cost.⁵⁰ However, the point is not the tenability of any particular non-Platonist approach to mathematics, morality, and the like, but rather that non-Platonist approaches proffer metaphysical frameworks within which intuitions (e.g. the intuition that three are more than two, anti-torture intuitions, the Gettier intuition, the non-contradiction intuition, etc.), viewed as presentational states, may be called upon to play a substantial epistemic role, as described by presentationalism. In this way, a Platonistic theory of the metaphysical status of what intuition is of or about is wholly optional and may be rejected — and suspicions regarding non-causal connections entirely bypassed — by non-Platonists wishing to endorse the theses regarding the nature and epistemic status of intuition defended here.⁵¹

To be clear, none of this is meant to imply that proponents of the core quasi-perceptualist thesis and presentationalism who also happen to endorse Platonism suffer defeat at the hands of the Benacerraf-style questions about connections they thereby inherit. On the contrary, a growing chorus of theorists recommends a ‘quietistic’ solution to — or, better, dissolution of — the problem posed by Benacerraf that in one way or another dismisses the demand for a connection (see, for example, [Katz 1981](#), Ch. 6; [Dworkin 1996](#), p. 125; [Lewis 1986](#), Sect. 2.4; [Hale 1994](#); [Pust 2004](#); [Linnebo 2006](#), Sect. 3; [Grundmann 2007](#), pp. 84–5). Alternatively, quasi-perceptualists could adopt a ‘humble’

⁵⁰ For an overview of the myriad problems facing conceptualism (in some domains called ‘psychologism’), see [Balaguer 2009](#) (Sect. 4). Recall also the reservations about understanding-based accounts expressed in Sect. 5.

⁵¹ That the perceptual analogy is and should be agnostic on such metaphysical issues is further indicated by the range of options regarding the metaphysical status of what perceptual experiences are of or about. For example, some philosophers of perception — recently, [Robinson \(1994\)](#) and [Foster \(2000\)](#) — have embraced an idealistic or constructivist metaphysics. The metaphysical options are roughly similar in the two cases.

response, maintaining their position while reasonably acknowledging that we currently lack the sought-after explanation—which, to my knowledge, no non-question-begging argument has yet established is in principle impossible (see Linnebo 2006, pp. 552–3). Hence, another strategy is to attempt a ‘substantive’ response, consisting of a positive proposal. Recent philosophy has uncovered several candidates, including for example a plenitudinous account (Balaguer 1995) which proliferates Platonic truths, so thinkers are bound to have accurate attitudes about some portion of them; a historical account (Burgess and Rosen 1997, pp. 41–9) which highlights thinkers’ backgrounds and training, through which their attitudes may be educated and refined; or a naïve realist account on which successful attitudes about the third realm constitutively depend on the truths that are grasped (Bengson forthcoming; cf. Chudnoff 2013, Ch. 7). While these explanations remain to be subject to thorough examination, their potential availability confirms that Platonist rationalism remains a viable theoretical option.⁵²

Importantly, these four responses to Benacerraf-style worries do not offer theories of our target mental state, intuition, nor an account of its justificatory status. So, they do not answer the primary questions in this paper, and they are not competitors to the quasi-perceptualist and presentationalist theses defended here. To illustrate, recall the quietistic response that dismisses the demand for a connection: even if such dismissal manages to eliminate the need to theorize about connections, it does not eliminate the need for those who endorse rationalism to develop and defend their view that there is a distinctive non-sensory mental state, intuition, with positive epistemic status. Consider also a substantive response, for instance, the plenitudinous view, which in the case of mathematics holds that ‘all the mathematical objects which possibly *could* exist actually *do* exist’ (Balaguer 1995, pp. 304 ff.): while this position is designed to trivialize mathematical accuracy (i.e. all we need to do is to have a mathematical attitude and *whatever* it is, so long as it is consistent, it will be true), it is not an account of our target mental state, intuition, nor a theory of its justificatory status. Likewise, although the rejection of Platonism evades Benacerraf-style questions about connections, rationalists who adopt an anti-Platonist stance do not thereby evade all questions; they, too, must in addition provide an

⁵² In case evidence is needed that my assessment is not idiosyncratic, Field (2005, p. 77) acknowledges, ‘There are various answers to this [Benacerraf’s challenge] that seem satisfactory’; he cites the plenitudinous account. There are other accounts, in addition to those listed in the text (e.g. Bonjour 1998, Sect. 6.7, among others).

account of the nature and epistemic status of intuition. For example, while the Lockean conceptualist view described above locates entities to which thinkers' attitudes—perhaps even their intuitions—might somehow be causally related, it does not yet tell us what intuitions are or how they, by contrast with epistemically indigent states such as mere guesses, hunches, or tendencies to judge, succeed in justifying corresponding beliefs. In sum, Platonist and non-Platonist rationalists alike must provide an account of the nature and epistemic status of intuition, *in addition to* whatever answer—evasive, quietistic, humble, or substantive—they might give to Benacerraf-style questions about connections. These lacunae can, however, be filled by embracing the present effort to systematically develop and defend a quasi-perceptualist view of the nature and epistemic status of intuition—a view which should, therefore, be of broad interest, holding relevance for theorists with vastly different metaphysical perspectives.

7. Immediate justification

At least since Descartes, a prominent motivation for a theory of intuition, especially one that emphasizes similarities with perceptual experience, has been to uphold a type of foundationalist view of the structure of justification and knowledge. Like Platonism, however, a strict foundationalist architecture is wholly optional and may be rejected by those wishing to endorse the core quasi-perceptualist thesis. At the same time, I believe it is worth investigating the prospect that intuition is, or might be, a source of immediate justification for belief (arguably, a necessary though not sufficient component of foundationalism). Specifically, this section pursues the idea that intuitions and perceptual experiences are equally equipped to serve as 'non-justified justifiers', that is, to provide *prima facie* justification without requiring justification for themselves in turn.

Let us call a presentational state σ of x *translucent* iff, in having σ , it is presented to x that p is so, and there is no content q (where $q \neq p$) such that it seems to x that p is presented as being so by q 's being presented as being so. Perceptual experience is translucent in this sense. When enjoying a perceptual experience as if there is a red apple on the table, for instance, it is presented to one as being the case that there is a red apple on the table. But it typically does not seem to one that this is presented as so *by* something else being

presented as so.⁵³ (On the contrary, as so-called direct realists have observed, it typically seems to one that one is directly presented with the fact itself.) Contrast a case of ‘secondary’ perception, in which one comes to see that the petrol tank is empty *by* seeing that the gauge reads ‘E’ (cf. Dretske 1969, pp. 153 ff.). It may be presented to such a person that the tank is empty, though she lacks perceptual experience of the tank and its properties; rather, the gauge serves as her perceptual guide, as it were. Presumably, in such a case it will seem to her that it is presented as being the case that the tank is empty by being presented with its being the case that the gauge reads ‘E’. Thus the mental state that she is in when she sees that the tank is empty is not translucent: phenomenologically, it is not direct. Hence it is a state of ‘secondary’ perceptual awareness, not a perceptual experience.

Translucence enables a similar distinction in the intellectual case. On one hand is intuition, which is translucent in the indicated sense. When one has the intuition that identity is transitive, for instance, it is presented to one as being the case that identity is transitive. But it typically does not seem to one that this is presented as so *by* something else being presented as so. Similarly, when one has the intuition that Gettier’s Smith does not know, it is presented to one as if Gettier’s Smith does not know. But it typically does not seem to one that this is presented as so *by* something else being presented as so.⁵⁴ (On the contrary, it typically seems to one that one can ‘just see’, directly, that it is so.) Contrast a case involving a philosopher who is persuaded by Williamson’s (2000, Ch. 4) argument for the anti-luminosity thesis (namely, that there are no states such that if we have them, then we are in a position to know that we have them). Such a philosopher may well report that this anti-luminosity thesis is now presented to her as

⁵³ In having a perceptual experience, one may be presented with multiple contents, some of which hold (at least in part) in virtue of the others. For example, in having an experience as if there is a red apple on the table, it may be presented to one *that there is a red apple on the table* and, in addition, *that the facing surface of the apple is red*. Although one is presented with both contents, and the former holds in virtue of the latter (at least in part, we may suppose), in having that experience it typically seems to one that it is presented that there is a red apple on the table but not *by* its being presented to one that the facing surface of the apple is red.

⁵⁴ As in the case of experience, in having an intuition one may be presented with multiple contents, some of which hold (at least in part) in virtue of the others. For example, in having the intuition that Gettier’s Smith does not know, it may be presented to one *that Smith does not know* and, in addition, *that it is lucky that Smith’s belief is true*. Although one is presented with both contents, and the former holds in virtue of the latter (at least in part, we may suppose), in having that intuition it typically seems to one that it is presented that Smith does not know but not *by* its being presented to one that it is lucky that Smith’s belief is true.

being true, when she considers it, though she does not have the intuition that it is true; rather, she has simply ‘followed the argument where it leads’. In such a case it may seem to her that it is presented to her as being the case that no state is luminous *by* various other things being presented as being so, namely, those (putative) facts denoted by the premisses which (putatively) entail the conclusion. Thus the mental state that she is in when it is presented to her as being the case that the anti-luminosity thesis is true is not translucent: phenomenologically, it is not direct. Hence it is what we might call a state of ‘secondary’ intellectual awareness, not an intuition. Only the latter has a direct realist phenomenology.

We can now formulate the quasi-perceptualist view of intuition:

Quasi-perceptualism

Intuitions are translucent intellectual presentations⁵⁵

A corollary thesis would seem to hold for perceptual experiences, understood as translucent sensory presentations. Supposing that we regard presentational states, which are baseless (i.e. not mediated), as ‘immediate apprehensions’ and allow the precise notion of translucence to serve as an explication of the casual notion of ‘directness’, the result is a non-metaphorical version of the traditional conception of intuition as a kind of *direct, immediate apprehension akin to perception*.

Translucent presentations are mental states that are not based on any other conscious state (hence baseless) and do not proceed via the presentation of some intermediate content (hence translucent). This is not to take a stand on the question of whether they are the products of some other type of transition. Nor is it to suggest that they are always or even typically ‘snap’ or unreflective responses; on the contrary, just as a translucent sensory presentation with a certain content may occur only in the wake of substantial looking and searching, a translucent intellectual presentation with a certain content may occur only in the wake of substantial contemplation and reflection. The claim is not that translucent presentations lack precursors or preparation, but rather that they cannot be conceived as consciously mediated transitions from the

⁵⁵ An *intellectual* presentation can be understood *positively*, for example, as a presentation that essentially involves the deployment or exercise of concepts. Or it can be understood *negatively*, for example as a presentational state that does not essentially involve sensation or proprioception. While I myself accept a positive characterization, the quasi-perceptualist thesis itself is neutral on this issue. The thesis is also consistent with but does not imply the view, opposed by a disjunctivist approach to intuition, that successful and unsuccessful intuition—much as perceptual experience—belong to the same ‘fundamental kind’ (cf. Martin 2002, p. 404).

presumed truth of one proposition to that of a second proposition, nor as the conclusions of such transitions.⁵⁶ Given this, we may regard translucent presentations as *non-inferential*, and, in turn, classify the *prima facie* justification they confer upon beliefs as basic, direct, or *immediate justification*—justification that is neither inherited, preserved, nor otherwise transmitted from any other conscious state.

Quasi-perceptualism together with presentationalism thus implies that intuitions, like perceptual experiences, can be understood as direct and immediate apprehensions that justify without themselves requiring justification in turn. They are, in this sense, *given* (or, if you like, *prima facie given*).⁵⁷ In having a perceptual experience as if there is a red apple on the table, it is thereby *given* to one as being the case that there is a red apple on the table. In having the intuition that it cannot be the case that both *p* and not *p*, it is thereby *given* to one that it cannot be the case that both *p* and not *p*.

It is natural to wonder how this conclusion fits with the conservative view, described in section 5, that a presentational state justifies belief only if its subject has some other state that is antecedently warranted. The conclusion for which I have just argued is that intuition, like perceptual experience, is a non-justified justifier, where σ is a non-justified justifier iff (i) for some σ' ($\neq\sigma$), σ justifies σ' , even though (ii) there is no σ'' ($\neq\sigma$) such that σ'' justifies σ . This is distinct from what might be called an *autonomous* non-justified justifier, which adds a third condition: there is no σ''' ($\neq\sigma$, $\neq\sigma'$) such that σ justifies σ' only if σ''' has positive epistemic status. Conservatives must deny (whereas liberals may affirm) that translucent presentations are autonomous non-justified justifiers. But that does not preclude them from holding that translucent presentations are (non-autonomous) non-justified justifiers; nor that intuition, like perceptual experience, satisfies (i) in virtue of its presentationality

⁵⁶ '[W]e distinguish at this point between intuition and ... deduction; because the latter, unlike the former, is conceived as involving a movement or succession' (Descartes 1628, Rule III). Intuitions can of course be causally related to prior deductions or other transitions (recall n. 14). Ewing 1941 is a rich examination of intuition's relation to reflection and inference; see also, for example, Koksvik 2013.

⁵⁷ I will assume, following many contemporary epistemologists, that such features as success, infallibility, incorrigibility, self-justification, uninterpretedness, and non-conceptualness are not essential to the notions of the given or immediate justification (see, for example, Pryor 2005, Sect. IV). As I understand it, what is needed to establish givenness is a direct, immediate apprehension that is a non-justified justifier—as secured by the combination of quasi-perceptualism and presentationalism. Contra Sellars, the given (in this sense, at least) is not a myth.

(as presentationalism says). Conservatives regard the antecedently warranted state as a necessary (or ‘enabling’) condition for a presentational state to justify subsequent belief; but it is not that in virtue of which the presentation justifies, nor is it a justification for the presentation itself. Consequently, conservatives as much as liberals can embrace the modest foundationalist thesis, vindicated by quasi-perceptualism, that intuition, like perceptual experience, is a source of immediate justification.

8. Conclusion

I have argued that intuition and perceptual experience, though different, are at a certain level of abstraction the same kind of state or event. Whereas x has the perceptual experience as if p iff it is translucently sensorily presented to x that p , x has the intuition that p iff it is translucently intellectually presented to x that p . This ‘metaphysical’ parallelism looks to have interesting epistemological implications, for translucent presentations are poised, by their very nature, to justify belief without themselves requiring justification in turn.

Not all philosophers will be happy with this result. However, it should be clear that resistance cannot be justified by familiar appeals to the alleged ‘relativity’, ‘instability’, or ‘hopelessness’ of certain intuitions (e.g. Stich 1988, Cummins 1998, Weinberg et al. 2001, Weinberg 2007). Such appeals, even *if* accurate (I have my doubts; see Bengson 2013b), would not threaten quasi-perceptualism or its epistemological implications. At most they would indicate that we have a standing reason to question certain intuitive presentations, in which case those intuitions would not actually justify—a conclusion not at odds with the view, defended here, that such intuitions are nevertheless *poised* to do so.⁵⁸

While a comparison between intuition and perception is not new, the potential theoretical significance of such a comparison, when suitably disciplined, may not yet be fully realized. Quasi-perceptualism has the benefit of allowing an integrated psychology and epistemology: it articulates what intuition is—a translucent presentation, just like perceptual experience—and, *in so doing*, accounts for how intuition could have genuine epistemic significance—again, just like perceptual experience. I have argued that it also exhibits several additional

⁵⁸ A model may be empirically discovered auditory illusions (e.g. Deutsch 1992), or perhaps experiences as of distal events whose veracity we have standing reason to doubt.

virtues, demonstrated by its potential to explain various psychological and epistemic data in a unified manner. Although the perceptual analogy has often been dismissed as encouraging a theoretically useless metaphor, this suggests that the converse may be true: by embracing quasi-perceptualism, rationalists may begin to meet the challenge to supply a theoretically satisfying treatment of their favoured epistemic source.⁵⁹

References

- Anscombe, G. E. M. 1957: *Intention*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Ayer, A. J. 1946: *Language, Truth, and Logic*, second edition. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Balaguer, Mark 1995: 'A Platonist Epistemology'. *Synthese*, 103, pp. 303–25.
- 2009: Balaguer, Mark, 'Platonism in Metaphysics'. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy [online encyclopedia], Summer 2009 Edition, edited by Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/platonism/>>.
- Bealer, George 1992: 'The Incoherence of Empiricism'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 66, pp. 99–138.
- 1998: 'Intuition and the Autonomy of Philosophy'. In Depaul and Ramsey 1998, pp. 201–39.
- Benacerraf, Paul 1973: 'Mathematical Truth'. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 70, pp. 661–79.
- Benacerraf, Paul and Hilary Putnam (eds) 1964: *Philosophy of Mathematics: Selected Readings*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bengson, John 2013a: 'Presentation and Content'. *Noûs*, 47, pp. 795–807.

⁵⁹ Earlier drafts of this paper were presented at the 2008 Pacific Division Meeting of the APA, a seminar at Yale University, and the NYU/NYIP La Pietra Workshop on the A Priori. I have benefited greatly from discussions about this material with numerous people, including participants in these events, and in particular Derek Ball, George Bealer, Tomas Bogardus, Paul Boghossian, Jessica Brown, Ray Buchanan, Eli Chudnoff, Jonathan Dancy, Josh Dever, Sinan Dogramaci, Tamar Szabo Gendler, Enrico Grube, Mike Huemer, Cory Juhl, Anna-Sara Malmgren, Aidan McGlynn, Marc Moffett, Elliot Paul, Adam Pautz, Ian Phillips, Bryan Pickel, Mark Sainsbury, Raul Saucedo, Daniele Sgaravatti, Ed Sherline, Ernie Sosa, Amia Srinivasan, Briggs Wright, and Jennifer Wright. I would also like to thank three anonymous referees and the editor of *Mind* for many helpful comments. I am especially grateful to Dan Korman, Anat Schechtman, and David Sosa for myriad insightful suggestions and criticisms.

- 2013b: ‘Experimental Attacks on Intuitions and Answers’. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 86, pp. 495–532.
- 2014: ‘How Philosophers Use Intuition and ‘Intuition’’. *Philosophical Studies*, 171, pp. 555–76.
- forthcoming: ‘Grasping the Third Realm’. In Gendler and Hawthorne, forthcoming.
- Bengson, John, Enrico Grube, and Daniel Z. Korman 2011: ‘A New Framework for Conceptualism’. *Noûs*, 45, pp. 167–89.
- Boghossian, Paul 2000: ‘Knowledge of Logic’. In Boghossian and Peacocke 2000, pp. 229–54.
- 2001: ‘Inference and Insight’. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 63, pp. 633–40.
- 2009: ‘Virtuous Intuitions: Comments on Lecture 3 of Ernest Sosa’s *A Virtue Epistemology*’. *Philosophical Studies*, 144, pp. 111–19.
- Boghossian, Paul and Christopher Peacocke (eds) 2000: *New Essays on the A Priori*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bonjour, Laurence 1985: *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- 1998: *In Defense of Pure Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Broad, C. D. 1923: *Scientific Thought*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Burgess, John and Gideon Rosen 1997: *A Subject With No Object*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cappelen, Herman 2012: *Philosophy Without Intuitions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Casullo, Albert 2003: *A Priori Justification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chalmers, David 2002: ‘Does Conceivability Entail Possibility?’ In Gendler and Hawthorne 2002, pp. 145–200.
- 2014: ‘Intuitions: A Minimal Defence’. *Philosophical Studies*, 171, pp. 535–44.
- Chisholm, Roderick 1957: *Perceiving: A Philosophical Study*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Chudnoff, Elijah 2011: ‘What Intuitions are Like’. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 82, pp. 625–54.
- 2012: ‘Presentational Phenomenology’. In Miguens and Preyer 2012, pp. 51–72.
- 2013: *Intuition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Cohen, Jonathan L. 1973–1974: ‘Guessing’. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 74, pp. 189–210.
- Cohen, Stewart 1984: ‘Justification and Truth’. *Philosophical Studies*, 46, pp. 279–95.
- Conee, Earl 1998: ‘Seeing the Truth’. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 58, pp. 847–57.
- Cottingham, J., R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch (trans.) 1985: *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cummins, Robert 1998: ‘Reflection on Reflective Equilibrium’. In Depaul and Ramsey 1998, pp. 113–27.
- Dancy, Jonathan 2004: *Ethics without Principles*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Depaul, Michael and William Ramsey (eds) 1998: *Rethinking Intuition: The Psychology of Intuition and its Role in Philosophical Inquiry*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Descartes, René 1628: *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*. In Cottingham et al. 1985, pp. 9–78.
- Deutsch, Diana 1992: ‘Paradoxes of Musical Pitch’. *Scientific American*, 267, pp. 88–95.
- Devitt, Michael 2005: ‘There is No A Priori’. In Steup and Sosa 2005, pp. 105–15.
- Dretske, Fred 1969: *Seeing and Knowing*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- 2000: ‘Entitlement: Epistemic Rights Without Epistemic Duties?’ *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 60, pp. 591–606.
- Dworkin, Richard 1996: ‘Objectivity and Truth: You’d Better Believe It’. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 25, pp. 87–139.
- Earlenbaugh, Joshua and Bernard Molyneux 2009: ‘Intuitions are Inclinations to Believe’. *Philosophical Studies*, 145, pp. 89–109.
- Ewing, A. C. 1941: *Reason and Intuition*. London: H. Milford.
- 1951: *The Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Field, Hartry 1989: *Realism, Mathematics, and Modality*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- 2005: ‘Recent Debates about the A Priori’. In Gendler and J. Hawthorne 2005, pp. 69–88.
- Foster, John 2000: *The Nature of Perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Frege, Gottlob 1979: *Posthumous Writings*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

- Gendler, Tamar Szabo and John Hawthorne (eds) 2002: *Conceivability and Possibility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2005: *Oxford Studies in Epistemology*. volume 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- forthcoming: *Oxford Studies in Epistemology*, Vol. 5. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gödel, Kurt 1964: 'What is Cantor's Continuum Problem?' In Benacerraf and Putnam 1964, pp. 258–73.
- Goldman, Alvin 2007: 'Philosophical Intuitions: Their Target, Their Source, and Their Epistemic Status'. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 74, pp. 1–26.
- Goldman, Alvin and Joel Pust 1998: 'Philosophical Theory and Intuitional Evidence'. In Depaul and Ramsey 1998, pp. 179–97.
- Gopnik, Alison and Eric Schwitzgebel 1998: 'Whose Concepts are They Anyway? The Role of Philosophical Intuition in Empirical Psychology'. In Depaul and Ramsey 1998, pp. 75–91.
- Greenough, Peter and Michael Lynch (eds) 2006: *Truth and Realism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Grundmann, Thomas 2007: 'The Nature of Rational Intuitions and a Fresh Look at the Explanationist Objection'. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 74, pp. 69–87.
- Hale, Bob 1994: 'Is Platonism Epistemologically Bankrupt?' *Philosophical Review*, 103, pp. 299–325.
- Hale, Bob and Crispin Wright 2000: 'Implicit Definition and the A Priori'. In Boghossian and Peacocke 2000, pp. 286–319.
- Hardy, G. H. 1940: *Ramanujan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heck, Richard 2000: 'Non-conceptual Content and the "Space of Reasons"'. *Philosophical Review*, 109, pp. 483–523.
- Hintikka, Jaakko 1999: 'The Emperor's New Intuitions'. *Journal of Philosophy*, 96, pp. 127–47.
- Horwich, Paul 2000: 'Stipulation, Meaning, and A Priority'. In Boghossian and Peacocke 2000, pp. 150–69.
- Huemer, Michael 2001: *Scepticism and the Veil of Perception*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- 2007: 'Compassionate Phenomenal Conservatism'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 74, pp. 30–55.
- Katz, Jerrold 1981: *Language and Other Abstract Objects*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Kitcher, Paul 2000: 'A Priori Knowledge Revisited'. In Boghossian and Peacocke 2000, pp. 65–91.

- Koksvik, Ole 2013: 'Intuition and Conscious Reasoning'. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 63, pp. 709–15.
- Kornblith, Hilary 2002: *Knowledge and Its Place in Nature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lehrer, Keith and Thomas Paxson 1969: 'Knowledge: Undefeated Justified True Belief'. *Journal of Philosophy*, 66, pp. 225–37.
- Lewis, C. I. 1929: *Mind and the World Order*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Lewis, David 1983: *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 1986: *The Plurality of Worlds*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Linnebo, Øystein 2006: 'Epistemological Challenges to Mathematical Platonism'. *Philosophical Studies*, 129, pp. 545–74.
- Ludwig, Kirk 2007: 'The Epistemology of Thought Experiments: First versus Third Person Approaches'. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 31, pp. 128–59.
- Malmgren, Anna-Sara 2011: 'Rationalism and the Content of Intuitive Judgements'. *Mind*, 120, pp. 263–327.
- Mackie, J. L. 1977: *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*. London: Penguin.
- Markie, Peter 2006: 'Epistemically Appropriate Perceptual Belief'. *Noûs*, 40, pp. 118–42.
- 2013: 'Rational Intuition and Understanding'. *Philosophical Studies*, 163, pp. 271–90.
- Martin, M. G. F. 2002: 'The Transparency of Experience'. *Mind & Language*, 4, pp. 376–425.
- Miguens, Sofia and Gerhard Preyer (eds) 2012: *Consciousness and Subjectivity*. Heusenstamm, Germany: Ontos Verlag.
- Nolan, Lawrence 1998: 'Descartes' Theory of Universals'. *Philosophical Studies*, 89, pp. 161–80.
- Osbeck, L. M. 1999: 'Conceptual Problems in the Development of a Psychological Notion of "Intuition"'. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 29, pp. 229–50.
- Parsons, Charles 1995: 'Platonism and Mathematical Intuition in Kurt Gödel's Thought'. *Bulletin of Symbolic Logic*, 1, pp. 44–74.
- 2008: *Mathematical Thought and Its Objects*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pautz, Adam 2007: 'Intentionalism and Perceptual Presence'. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 21, pp. 495–541.

- Peacocke, Christopher 2000: 'Explaining the A Priori: The Program of Moderate Rationalism'. In Boghossian and Peacocke 2000, pp. 255–85.
- 2004: *The Realm of Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Price, H. H. 1932: *Perception*. London: Methuen.
- Pryor, Jim 2000: 'The Sceptic and the Dogmatist'. *Noûs*, 34, pp. 517–49.
- 2004: 'What's Wrong with Moore's Argument?' *Philosophical Issues*, 15, pp. 349–77.
- 2005: 'There is Immediate Justification'. In Steup and Sosa 2005, pp. 181–202.
- Pust, Joel 2000: *Intuitions as Evidence*. New York: Garland Publishing.
- 2004: 'On Explaining our Knowledge of Necessity'. *Dialectica*, 58, pp. 71–87.
- Quinn, Warren 1993: *Morality and Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, Howard 1994: *Perception*. London: Routledge.
- Salmon, Wesley 1967: *The Foundations of Scientific Inference*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Schapiro, Tamar 2009: 'The Nature of Inclination'. *Ethics*, 119, pp. 229–56.
- Siegel, Susanna 2011: 'The Contents of Perception'. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy [online encyclopedia], Winter 2011 Edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/perception-contents/>>.
- Sosa, Ernest 1996: 'Rational Intuition: Bealer on Its Nature and Epistemic Status'. *Philosophical Studies*, 81, pp. 151–62.
- 1998: 'Minimal Intuition'. In Depaul and Ramsey 1998, pp. 257–70.
- 2007: *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge*, Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2009: 'Replies to Commentators on *A Virtue Epistemology*'. *Philosophical Studies*, 144, pp. 137–47.
- Steup, Matthias and Ernest Sosa (eds) 2005: *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Stich, Stephen 1988: 'Reflective Equilibrium, Analytic Epistemology and the Problem of Cognitive Diversity'. *Synthese*, 74, pp. 391–413.

- Thomson, Judith Jarvis 2008: 'Turning the Trolley'. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 36, pp. 359–74.
- Tolhurst, William 1998: 'Seemings'. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 35, pp. 293–302.
- van Inwagen, Peter 1997: 'Materialism and the Psychological-continuity Account of Personal Identity'. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 11, pp. 305–19.
- Weatherson, Brian 2003: 'What Good are Counterexamples?' *Philosophical Studies*, 115, pp. 1–31.
- Weinberg, Jonathan, Shaun Nichols, and Stephen Stich 2001: 'Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions'. *Philosophical Topics*, 29, pp. 429–60.
- Weinberg, Jonathan 2007: 'How to Challenge Intuitions Empirically Without Risking Scepticism'. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 31, pp. 318–43.
- Williamson, Timothy 2000: *Knowledge and Its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2007: *The Philosophy of Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wilson, T. D., S. Lindsey, and T. Schooler 2000: 'A Model of Dual Attitudes'. *Psychological Review*, 107, pp. 101–26.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig 1976 [1937]: 'Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness', tr. P. Winch. *Philosophia*, 6, pp. 409–25.
- Wright, Crispin 2004a: 'Intuition, Entitlement, and the Epistemology of Logical Laws'. *Dialectica*, 58, pp. 155–75.
- 2004b: 'Warrant for Nothing (and Foundations for Free)?' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 78, pp. 167–212.