

Sosa on Virtue, Perception, and Intuition

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§1

In his book *A Virtue Epistemology*, Ernest Sosa considers an approach to intuitions inspired by an analogy to visual perception, which he calls the ‘traditional model’. The traditional model comprises a model of visual perception, conjoined with the claim that a parallel applies in the case of intuitions and philosophy. (Sosa does not distinguish these separate claims of the traditional model, taking its approach to perception for granted, and identifying the traditional model with the understanding of intuitions by analogy to perception. My reason for distinguishing the two components will become clear below.)

Here is Sosa’s presentation of the traditional model:

What, again, are intuitions? Visual perception inspires the traditional model, with its “eye of the mind,” and its “light of reason, or of nature.” Consider an example:

Belief that here is a fire.

Experience as if one (directly) sees that here is a fire.

The fact that here is a fire.

Here a visual experience mediates between the fact seen and the perceptual belief through which it is known. Experiences are able to provide justification that is foundational because they lie beyond justification and unjustification. Since they are only passively received, they cannot manifest obedience to anything, including rational norms, whether epistemic or otherwise. Since unmotivated by reasons, they can serve as *foundational* sources, as regress-stoppers. (45-46)

According to Sosa, visual experiences play two important roles with respect to perceptual beliefs: first, they play an important psychological role in the genesis of the belief; they ‘mediate between the fact and the belief.’ Second, they provide foundational justification for perceptual beliefs; they are able to do so because they ‘lie beyond justification’ and are ‘passively received.’

We gain further insight into Sosa’s characterization of foundationalism and perception by examining the contrast he finds between perceptual experience and intuition. Intuitions, Sosa suggests, are importantly different from perceptual seemings in a way that undermines a

perceptual model of intuitive justification. I find, in Sosa's text, two alleged disanalogies between perceptual justification and intuitive justification:

First, intuitions, unlike perceptual experiences, are *epistemically evaluable*. Sosa points out that "[a] reason can be assigned the wrong weight, as it attracts one's assent too much, or too little." (49) Sosa discusses cases of pernicious bias and enculturation, whereby the consideration of a certain propositional content attracts one's assent to an inappropriate degree; from wherever it may derive—cultural bias or elsewhere—I think the phenomenon is familiar enough; a standard form of philosophical debate disputes the proper weighting of various particular intuitions. I shall return to the question of the epistemic evaluation of intuitions—and in particular, to whether it represents a disanalogy with the case of perception—in §2 below.

The second reason Sosa suggests that intuitions are not able to play the analogue of perceptual experience is that visual experiences play a role in perceptual justification that enjoys no correlate in the case of intuitive judgment. Sosa writes:

What *intuitive* justification lacks is any correlate of the visual sensory experience beyond one's conscious entertaining of the propositional content, something that distinctively exerts a thereby justified attraction to assent. No such state of awareness, beyond the conscious entertaining itself, can be found in *intuitive* attraction. (55)

When I see the cheese, the state of having the perceptual appearance as if there is cheese plays a central epistemic role with regards to my eventual belief that there is cheese. This state, Sosa emphasizes, (a) attracts me to assent to the proposition that there is cheese, (b) does so with justification, and (c) is not identical to the conscious entertaining of the propositional content that there is cheese. By contrast, when I intuit that Gettier subjects do not know, there is no state that has all of these three features. There is, in this case, a strong attraction to assent that Gettier subjects don't know, and, setting aside the concerns about self-justification just mentioned, it is plausible that it confers justification. However, Sosa argues, that which attracts me to assent is nothing other than the conscious entertaining itself: "it is merely the presence of the propositional content to my consciousness that is exerting the attraction, by being thus present." (53) I shall consider Sosa's argument for this claim shortly.

So Sosa's case against the perceptual model of intuitions relies on the significance of two alleged disanalogies between perceptual experience and intuitive seemings. His critique, then, may be objected to in four ways: the perceptual theorist may argue, for each alleged disanalogy, that, contrary to Sosa's claims, it does not obtain, or, alternatively (or additionally), he may claim that, even if it does obtain, it is not ultimately undermining of the perceptual model. Not all differences represent important disanalogies.

In the next four sections, I will explore these four strategies. In §2, I agree with Sosa that intuitions are rationally evaluable, but I question whether this represents a genuine disanalogy with perceptual experience. Perhaps perceptual appearances are similarly evaluable. In §3, I question the importance, for the perceptual model, of foundational justification that does not admit of any justification whatever. In §4, I turn to Sosa's second disanalogy, and evaluate his

argument for the claim that in the case of intuitive justification, it can only be the conscious entertaining of a propositional content itself that serves to justify intuitive beliefs; in §5, I question why it should matter whether this is so.

Along the way, I will sketch the outlines of what, in my view, is the most promising approach to intuition, motivated strongly by an analogy to perception. Although I have been largely critical of Sosa's attack on the perceptual model of intuition, the view I sketch, based in virtues, competences, and apt belief, is one that should enjoy considerable affinity with Sosa's general approach to epistemology, and is not, I think, so very different from his preferred approach to intuition. But in §6, I will consider the implications of the view developed on what class is picked out by the term 'intuition', questioning Sosa's own traditional approach on which mere understanding conscious entertaining attracts intuitive assent. I suggest a fairly radical approach about how to situation the epistemology of intuitive judgments into questions about epistemology generally.

§2

Sosa makes much of the fact that intuitions are epistemically evaluable. There are good ways and bad ways to treat one's intuitions; Sosa considers questions about the proper weighting of intuitions, in light of the fact that some intuitions derive from unreliable sources, like wishful thinking or unreliable enculturation. On this point, there can be little doubt that Sosa is correct. There is room in metaphilosophical inquiry to question how much we ought to trust our own intuitions; a significant part of the burgeoning movement of 'experimental philosophy' is devoted squarely to this question. (Of course, questions about whether and how much to trust particular intuitions are much older than this new movement.)

One might take issue here by adopting a stronger-than-usual use of the term 'intuition'. Ludwig (2007), for example, thinks that only judgments produced by pure conceptual competence are intuitions. On such a view, it is less obvious that there is room to question the proper weighting of intuitions, since no intuitions result from, for instance, bias. I am here assuming that this rather extreme view is incorrect.¹ Indeed, I will propose a very liberal view about intuitions in §6. But if this very strong view is correct, then these questions will arise again with regard to how confident we should or should not be as to whether a particular thought is an intuition; not all inclinations to believe truths ought to be treated the same, and so there is still room rationally to evaluate a subject's treatment of a given intuition.

So intuitions are rationally evaluable, in the sense that there is room to question the proper weighting of intuitions, and the correct extent to which we ought to trust them. In this I fully agree with Sosa. However, it is not at all clear to me why Sosa thinks that this represents a disanalogy with perceptual experience. For just as there is room to question the proper trust to put in a particular intuition, so too is there room to question the proper trust to put in a perceptual

¹ I discuss reasons to oppose such restrictionist views in my "Intuitions and Begging the Question" (manuscript).

appearance. Indeed, on one natural reading, the central epistemic tradition of engagement with skepticism is a dialectic with regards to this question: yes, it *appears* as if I have hands; but ought I to *trust* that appearance? Insofar as this question is even sensible, perceptual experiences are rationally evaluable in the same way that Sosa has pointed out that philosophical intuitions are.

Plausibly, there is yet another way in which intuitions are rationally evaluable, beyond the question of how much the intuition that p ought to attract assent that p . Perhaps there is also room to evaluate the intuition itself. Well-functioning, virtuous epistemic agents are attracted to a certain class of truths; such attractions are a credit to their subjects. Almost everyone finds it intuitive that $4 > 3$; if someone had an intuitive repulsion from this truth, instead of the usual attraction, this would reflect badly on him as an epistemic agent, at least with respect to arithmetic.

The point is not limited to such simple contents; if someone has studied logic and finds DeMorgan's Laws intuitive, then she is, epistemically speaking (with respect to logic) better off than her peers who have no particular attraction to assent, and better off still than those who find the equivalence counterintuitive.

The phenomenon in question is a general one, extending well beyond philosophical questions. Expert poker players make much more reliable intuitive poker judgments than do novices; this even though, in some cases, they are unable, without confabulation, to articulate the considerations that led them to their judgments. Professional outfielders make excellent immediate judgments as to which direction to run in order to catch the ball, but few could tell you how they know. (McBeath *et al* (1995) argues that the best available data indicates that fielders, while running, seek to maintain a linear optical trajectory with monotonic increases in optical ball height.) We are all, in our small ways, Ramanujans.

Can we find in this feature of intellectual seemings a disanalogy with perceptual seemings? At first glance, it may appear as if we can. My intellectual seemings reflect my intellectual virtues; can the same be said of my perceptual seemings? One might think not if one assumed a traditional approach to perception, on which sensory experiences, generated passively and mechanistically by the world and early (say) visual processing, are passed directly to higher cognitive systems, who are asked to judge on their basis. But three problems beset this attempt to restore the asymmetry.

First, the model of perception is dubious. Sensory experience looks to be more theory-laden, through and through. The generation of sensory experience is further integrated with the generation of perceptual belief than the response in question supposes.

Second, even if there is a step in the perceptual process that is generated entirely passively with respect to the epistemic agent, which is then passed on to another cognitive system—one which is susceptible to rational evaluation—that then decides whether to form a corresponding belief, it is not at all clear that the purely passive step would have the motivational force that Sosa claims for the relevant sorts of seemings. Remember, we seek a state that itself attracts its subject to

assent; a purely passive state, plausibly, does not so attract assent. If it is the higher cognitive function that makes the relevant alethic decisions, then that function might, when fed a given set of sensory experiences, attract its subject either for or against the content of those experiences. And this higher function, of course, should be rationally evaluable. There are proper and improper ways to form beliefs—and to be inclined to form beliefs—given particular experiences.

Third, even if the sensory experience is generated purely mechanistically, and even if it itself does attract assent, it is not clear why we should conclude from this that rational evaluation of those seemings is not possible. Of course, on certain views about epistemic normativity, according to which voluntarism is a critical element to evaluation, that a process is purely mechanistic entails that it is not evaluable in the relevant way. In my view, such views are ill-motivated. (Does doxastic involuntarism entail that no beliefs—or all beliefs—are justified?)

Sosa's own framework for a virtue epistemology gives us the resources to understand evaluation without agency. As Sosa points out, we can evaluate many different things, along many different dimensions. An archer's shot is good (partially) to the extent that it is aimed appropriately at the target; a cup of coffee is good (partially) to the extent that it is aromatic; a belief is good (partially) to the extent that it is likely, given the way it was produced, to result in truth. The class of things that are evaluable in this way is very large: it extends at least to everything with a characteristic function or *telos*. This including functions given by evolution—a heart is good (partially) to the extent to which it delivers blood throughout the body.

Given such a framework, it appears as though there is no reason to exempt sensory experience from the general pattern. Even if my sensory experiences are generated subconsciously and automatically, there is still a difference between good ones and bad ones. To put it (perhaps too) crudely, the good ones are the ones that match reality. Consider a person who, when he turns his eyes upon a table with a candle on it, has generated in his mind the experience as if there is a table with a rat on it (along with the accompanying inclination so to believe). Although his deficiency is at a low level of processing, our subject has a significant epistemic deficit. He does not, when forming beliefs about the external world, have and use the same skills that the rest of us do.

Evaluability must be distinguished from responsibility. (An archer may be unskilled through no fault of her own—by bad teaching, or forced drug ingestion, etc.) In my view, once this distinction is held in hand, any obstacles to considering perceptual seemings as rationally evaluable are nullified.

I conclude that, *contra* Sosa's suggestion, there is no difference between intellectual seemings and perceptual ones with respect to their rational evaluability. We can, should, and do evaluate epistemic agents with regard to how they use seemings of both kinds, and even with regard to which seemings they have.

§3

Suppose that, contrary to what I have been arguing in the previous section, the alleged disanalogy between perceptual seemings and intellectual ones holds up. Intellectual seemings are rationally evaluable in a way in which perceptual seemings are not. Why think that this undermines the perceptual model of intellectual intuition? Here is Sosa's presentation of the importance of this feature for perceptual justification:

Experiences are able to provide justification that is foundational because they lie beyond justification and unjustification. Since they are only passively received, they cannot manifest obedience to anything, including rational norms, whether epistemic or otherwise. Since unmotivated by reasons, they can serve as *foundational* sources, as regress-stoppers. When they help explain the rational standing of some other state or action, they do *not* thereby problematize their own rational standing. Being so passive, they *have* no such standing. (46)

But is it the case that a state can serve as a regress stopper only if it is not responsive to reasons, and not rationally evaluable? The traditional foundationalist view apparently embraces this requirement in order to provide a principled way to halt what would otherwise threaten to be an infinite regress. But it is not clear why, in light of the fact that it is possible for sensory experiences to be inappropriately sensitive to extra-mental reality, passivity in sensory experiences should allow them to serve as foundations without need of further justification—instead of ruling that, in the absence of justification, they are illegitimate sources of evidence. Compare someone who forms beliefs on the basis of astrology, and claims that the foundational tenets of astrological principles are received passively, and hence, unable in principle to be justified. The correct response in this case is surely to discount the alleged evidence, not to reject the general principle that sources of evidence ought to be good ones.

Perhaps some lingering worry is grounded in concerns about alternative means of resolving the Pyrrhonian problematic. How are perceptual beliefs to be justified, if not by some states that do not themselves demand justification? Sosa's own answer, if I understand it correctly, could here suffice: perceptual beliefs formed by virtue of perceptual competences are justified. When I exercise epistemic skill—skill that will, in appropriate environments, result in a high preponderance of true beliefs—and when the environment does cooperate, such that my skill does issue into a true belief, my belief is justified, and, in Sosa's terms, animal knowledge. This, even though—in a sense, *because*—that skill is the sort of thing that is susceptible to epistemic evaluation.

Admittedly, this picture of perception seems to depend on the claim of the previous section, that perceptual seemings are rationally evaluable. However, even if this approach to perception is rejected—in my view, a mistake—the parallel approach for intellectual seemings appears to be a viable option. We know, for example, many arithmetical, logical, and philosophical truths via the exercise of a certain epistemic competence; this competence manifests partly in the deliverance, when certain propositions are considered, of certain intellectual seemings, and partly in apt treatment of those seemings, accepting their pull towards the right beliefs in the right circumstances. This exercise of competence is our regress-stopper; this, even though—partly *because*—it is rationally evaluable.

At this level of generality, this approach is consistent with a broad spectrum of metaphilosophical views. It is silent, for instance, on the controversial question as to whether the competence in question is one that is guaranteed by, or constitutive of, the relevant concepts, and on whether it is *a priori*. Sosa's own view, which bears on these controversial questions, is that intuitive attraction to assent is triggered by pure conscious entertaining with understanding. I turn now to this feature of Sosa's view.

§4

The second disanalogy Sosa alleges between perceptual seemings and intellectual seemings is that in the latter case, but not in the former, that which attracts and justifies assent is the conscious entertaining of the propositional content itself. The argument for this claim is that no alternative approach can account for a certain class of intuitive errors: namely, those in which one feels a genuine intuitive attraction to assent to a proposition, even though that proposition is false. In such cases, Sosa says, we cannot say that our reason for believing that *p*—that which attracts us to assent that *p*—is the fact that *p*, since *p*, being false, is not a fact. Nor will it do to say that we have no reason at all to believe that *p*; ignorance, Sosa says, must be distinguished from irrationality. Sosa concludes:

[M]y rational basis for attraction to assent to the propositional content lies in nothing more than my conscious entertaining of that content.

...

Since it is now supposed to be false that *q*, one would speak falsely if one cited as one's reason just the fact that *q*. I see no better way to protect one's rationality, and one's rational basis, against this untoward outcome, than to say that, even if it is false that *q*, so that one's reason cannot be the fact that *q*, one's reason might still perfectly well be what one takes to be the fact that *q*. And the same goes, *mutatis mutandis*, when we seek a rational basis, not for a full-fledged judgment, but only for an initial attraction. (53-54)

I am inclined to agree with Sosa that, in cases of intuitive justification gone wrong, there must nevertheless be some reason for believing as we do. So it won't do to say, in all cases, that when one has intuitive justification for believing that *p*, the reason for believing (or for attraction to believe) is the fact that *p*. But I am not convinced that the best alternative account is one that identifies the reason with the conscious entertaining of the propositional content that *p*. More options are worthy of consideration.

One option is to be more externalist about reasons. In cases in which the intuition is working well and delivers truth, the fact that *p* is among the reasons for believing that *p*; in cases that are internally very similar, but where one's intuitive belief is false, one simply lacks that reason. But we needn't, it saying this, say he had no reason at all; perhaps he has other reasons, common to both cases, so that there are a number of different reasons available in the good case. For example, one might still have the reason that that *p* is of kind Φ , where Φ propositions tend to be

true. More generally, whatever reasons one had that underwrote the attraction towards p can still be in play as reasons to believe that p .

I find this externalist approach to reasons plausible. But even if we construe reasons internally, we aren't forced into Sosa's identification of intuitive reasons with conscious entertaining of propositional contents. Indeed, Sosa's own remarks suggest an alternative that he does not explore. In the quotation given above, Sosa suggests that we identify the reason with "what one takes to be the fact that q ". Sosa seems to be assuming an identity between that which one takes to be the fact that q with the conscious entertaining of the content:

There is no better response to the query as to the rational basis of my attraction, as to the reason for which I am thus attracted than something like this: because of what seems to me to be the fact that p . And *this amounts to saying* that it is merely the presence of the propositional content to my consciousness that is exerting the attraction, by being thus present, since nothing more than the propositional content is available to "seem to me to be the fact that p ," not if it is false that p , so that there is no fact there to exert the rational attraction. (53, my emphasis)

But this assumption is questionable. In cases of deviant intuition, where one is intuitively attracted to some false p , it is plausible to say that the reason to believe p is that which seems to one to be the fact that p . It is less plausible, however, to suggest that the conscious entertaining of the propositional content that p is that which seems to the subject to be the fact that p . A conscious entertaining of a propositional content—that is, an episodic mental event—is hardly the sort of thing that we are likely to mistake for a fact. These two belong to wholly distinct ontological categories; the one, a kind of mental experience, and the other, a state of the world. By hypothesis, in the relevant cases, the subject is wrong about certain key features of the reason for believing: he thinks that it is a fact, when it is not; relatedly, he thinks that it is true, when it is not. But if the reason is the conscious entertaining itself, he's wrong even to think that it is true *or false*, for episodic mental events are neither. This strikes me as an extreme result.

What, then, is a more plausible candidate for that which seems to the subject to be the fact that p ? I can think of two natural suggestions. One possible candidate is the fact that q , where q is some true proposition similar but not identical to p . One sees suggestions like this particularly frequently in literature in modal epistemology and the necessary *a posteriori*; Kripke tells us that when we're attracted to assent to the proposition that Hesperus could be other than Phosphorus, our attraction is based on not on the fact that Hesperus could be other than Phosphorus—for there is no such fact—but instead of the fact that something that looked just like Hesperus could be other than Phosphorus. This is one way to accommodate the data Sosa focuses on without taking bases to be conscious entertainings.

Another way is to hold the contents fixed, but to let propositions be reasons even when they are not facts. On this approach, that which one falsely takes to be the fact that p is the false proposition that p ; this proposition—not the conscious entertaining of it—is one's reason for believing that p . This is a rather natural way, I think, to develop Sosa's suggestion that it is that which we took to be a fact that is the reason; that which we took to be a fact was, instead, a false proposition.

I conclude that the case in favor of treating conscious inclinations as the relevant reasons is under-motivated. Furthermore, I think that there is some pressure against this approach. Conscious entertainings alone do not seem sufficient for attraction to assent, even for propositions that are intuitive. I remarked in a previous section that skill is exercised when we find a proposition intuitive; someone less skillful at recognizing certain truths may be just as good at entertaining a proposition, while much less good at recognizing it as true. Furthermore, it seems possible to entertain intuitive propositions in non-alethic contexts—purely hypothetical domains, for instance, or in engagement with fiction, or in practical reasoning—without being attracted to believe them; the question of their actual truth just doesn't come up.

§5

The final place I wish to put pressure against Sosa's critique of a perceptual model of intuition is in the significance of the claim I have been disputing in the previous section. Even if, in the case of intuitive judgments, the conscious entertaining of the propositional content itself were that which justifies and attracts assent, why should this undermine the perceptual model of intuition? To be sure, this appears to represent a difference—a feature of intuitive justification that is not apparently present in perceptual justification. (It is not very plausible that visual seemings are identical to the conscious entertaining of a propositional content; for example, perceptual seemings are different from imaginative experiences with the same content.) But that there is this difference does not entail that there is an undermining disanalogy. Perceptual judgment depends on sensory organs in a way that intuitive judgment does not, but *this* difference does not undermine the perceptual model of intuition.

If it is an essential element to the epistemology of perception that there be a state of perceptual seeming that is passively received, and not answerable to rational evaluation, then the difference Sosa alleges here may be relevant. For if the only state in play is a conscious entertaining—the sort of thing that is deliberate, not passive—then there is nothing, in the case of intuitive justification to play the critical role in a perception-like belief-forming process. So construed, the critique collapses into Sosa's first alleged disanalogy, and my earlier response is again apt: it is no requirement on a foundationalist epistemology that there be a state that is passively received, not subject to evaluation; and indeed, perceptual justification does not have that structure. Sosa's objection seems to be aimed not at a general approach to intuitive justification as analogous to perceptual justification, but at such an analogy, assuming a particular sort of classical foundationalist approach to perceptual justification.²

Suppose that the conscious entertaining is that which attracts assent. The assent is still a cognitive performance, evaluable as competent or not, and successful through competence or not. In cases in which conscious entertaining of an intuitive proposition attracts assent in a way

² It may be that Sosa's own intent here is less different from the approach I am outlining than it at first appears; his fn. 7 on p. 55, for instance, suggests a direction for reconciling a perceptual approach to intuitions with Sosa's own virtue-theoretic approach.

that is an epistemic credit to the subject, and the subject goes on to assent to the truth, displaying proper epistemic skill and sensitivity, she has intuitive justification. If she also gets her belief right through the exercise of such skill, she believes aptly and has animal knowledge. This can be so in a way closely analogous to perceptual justification and perceptual knowledge: when my perceptual systems work properly and deliver to me the perceptual seeming as though p , and I responsibly and virtuously believe that p on this basis, I believe that p with justification. If I also, in so doing, come to believe a truth, and do so through the exercise of my competences, then I believe aptly and so know.

§6

I conclude with a brief discussion of the proper scope of a view about intuitive knowledge and justification. Under what circumstances does a belief, or an attraction to assent, count as *intuitive*? Sosa's answer is, when the attraction is triggered simply by the conscious, understanding entertaining of the propositional content. However, I suggested in §4 that the argument motivating this approach was unpersuasive; that in many prototypical cases of intuitive judgment, the reason that attracts our assent to p is not always or exclusively the conscious entertaining of p , but rather some non-psychological propositions. Three possibilities I considered were: (a) the proposition that p itself, whether or not that proposition is a fact; (b) some fact q , where, in the good cases, q is identical to p , and where, in the bad cases, q is confused with p ; and (c) some corpus of (externalist) evidence supporting p , which, in good cases, includes p , and which, in bad cases, does not.

If intuitive justification is understood in the way sketched, in terms of intellectual competences, while relaxing the requirement that the relevant attraction be triggered purely by conscious entertainment, how are we appropriately to restrict the relevant class of intuitive judgments? As I have emphasized, intuitive justification and intuitive knowledge can be understood at a level of abstraction that renders their epistemology perfectly general and continuous with perceptual justification. What, then, is unique about intuitive justification?

Let me briefly suggest a radical answer: nothing. There are, of course, prototypical philosophical intuitions, that fit closer to a certain archetype: that Gettier subjects do not know is, arguably, an *a priori* fact knowable on the basis of a certain kind of conceptual competence. I do not wish to dispute these elements of philosophical tradition. But I do not think that it will do to say with generality that intuitive judgments are *a priori*, or that they are the deliverances of a competence that is entailed by concept possession. Expert logicians have intuitions I do not have, even if they do not have concepts I lack. And it is intuitive, to me now, that I exist, but my judgment that I exist is based on my experience, and so not *a priori*. Timothy Williamson (2007) suggests that philosophical discourse about 'intuitions' does not pick out a special category at all,³ and that in some cases, it even refers to beliefs based on perceptual experience: ontological nihilists who say

³ Williamson (2004) identifies intuitions with judgments generally; in his (2007) presentation, he drops this suggestion, arguing instead that the term does not pick out a category of interest.

there are no mountains say something counterintuitive; so it is intuitive that there are mountains—but my justification for there being mountains is straightforwardly perceptual.

Standard philosophical language seems to favor Williamson's approach here. Just about any judgment can, in certain contexts, felicitously be described as intuitions. (Someone claims that it is essential to being a Republican that one support the Republican Presidential candidate; I reply that Colin Powell is a Republican who supported Obama. If my interlocutor now accuses me of begging the question, claiming that Powell is not a real Republican, I may retreat to the claim that at least it is intuitive that Powell is a Republican.) Whether we call an inclination an intuitive one is primarily a question of language pragmatics.⁴

Interestingly, this liberal approach to intuitions fits well with Sosa's broad, competence-based approach to epistemology. Intuitive judgments are just judgments, and intuitions are just attractions to assent. The attractions are justified when they reflect skill; the deliverances are knowledgeable when they are correct through the exercise of skill. Perceptual justification is importantly analogous to intuitive justification because it comprises a proper subset of intuitive justification.

Whether or not this liberal approach to intuition is correct, it should be recognized that general approach I have been sketching to knowledge and justification, in terms of skill and competence—which is, I think, Sosa's own approach—is attractive and plausible, and provides the resources for a tight analogy between perceptual justification and intuitive justification.

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⁴ I explore and defend this approach much further in my manuscript, "Intuitions and Begging the Question".