

Robert Audi:
The Architecture of Reason
(1)

Introduction

My interest is in how experience is connected with reason, both theoretical and practical.

Both kinds of reasons, theoretical and practical, have explanatory as well as justificatory roles.... The connection between explanation and justification is a major concern of the theory of rationality.

Audi's goal:

— **To have a unified comprehensive theory of rationality.**

If, contrary to instrumentalism, experience may provide normative reasons for both beliefs and desire, then it may presumably be a basis of both theoretical and practical rationality. The theoretical reasons can ground justified (and hence rational) beliefs; the practical reasons can ground rational desire.

Part I. Theoretical Reason

Chapter 1. *Groundwork*

The basis of theoretical reason: what are the sources of justified beliefs? How are such beliefs grounded? How does their justification vary from one context to another? How may their justification be defeated by counter-evidence? What is the role of coherence or incoherence?

Chapter 2. *Superstructure*

- (i) How justification is transmitted from one belief to another?
- (ii) What is the relation between justification and rationality?

Part II. Practical Reason

Chapter 3. *Action, Belief and Desire*

The parallels between theoretical reason and practical reason: e.g. the analogy between inferential beliefs and the beliefs they are based on, and instrumental desires and the basic desires to which they are subordinate.

Chapter 4. *The Sources of Practical Reasons*

Basic practical reasons: self-interest (egoism)? Seeking pleasure and avoiding pain (hedonism)? Are basic practical reasons determined simply by our non-instrumental desires, above all by what we want for its own sake?

Chapter 5. *Desires, Intentions, and Reasons for Action*

Granted that there are some desires that are basic – they are desires not because they help fulfill some other desires, what sorts of relationships hold between desires that are basic, and desires based on those basic ones?

- (i) How might desires, taken together with beliefs, justify actions?
- (ii) How might practical reason be defeated: a *prima facie* rational desire may turn out, because of the perceived unpleasant consequences of satisfying it, not to be rational on balance.

Chapter 6. *Others as Ends*

- (i) If we love other people, we must want certain kinds of things not only *for them*, but *for their sake*. Does love, so conceived, imply a measure of irrationality? Can we, as egoists hold, rationally want something for others only so far as it will lead to something we want for ourselves?
- (ii) Is a kind of altruism rationally demanded of us? If it is, then practical reason provides a limited foundation for ethics, in the sense that a rational person will, under certain conditions, have adequate reason to treat others in accordance with some basic moral principles.

Part III. Rationality and Relativity

Chapter 7. *Relativity, Plurality, and Culture*

Is there a kind of relativity built into the notion of rationality, or at least consistent with it, relativity to one's own experience or culture?

An adequate theory of rationality must do justice both to the (i) variability that marks different ranges of experience and diverse cultural settings, and to (ii) the constancies that, because of important elements in our humanity, can be expected as recurring elements, at least in any civilized society.

Chapter 8. *Global Rationality*

If theoretical and practical rationality are the two basic kinds, we should expect a rational person to be rational in both respects, even if sometimes more in one than the other. If we have a unified, comprehensive account of rationality for both domains, we should have much of the theoretical material needed to understand the notion of a rational person.

[Conclusion]

The notion of a rational person has many dimensions, and the account we need will not simply fall in place when the other work is done. Even if we understand rational, belief, rational desire, and all the other concepts of rationality that apply to aspects of persons or their conduct, we must still integrate our results in a way that provides an overall view of what constitutes a rational person.

Chapter 1.

Groundwork (for Theoretical Reason)

I will consider the architectural picture in both the psychology and the epistemology of cognition, particularly in relation to the development and structure of belief the psychological side and, on the epistemological side, in relation to justification and knowledge.

1. Sources and Grounds of Justification

[1] Perception

Perception underdetermines beliefs, producing far fewer beliefs than it can support; but it overdetermines justification, providing justifying grounds for far more beliefs than we normally form and yielding far more justification than we need as warrant for many beliefs we do form.

[2] Introspection

Looking inward in a self-conscious moment, I am aware of my musical experience. This awareness provides a ground for justified introspective beliefs whether I form them or not.

[3] Memory

Memory should also be recognized as a source of justifying grounds and a source of justification. But:

- (a) Memory is preservative in a way introspection is not;
- (b) Memory is not by itself a source of belief; memory merely retains, for instance, a previous perceptual belief;
- (c) Memory is not a source of knowledge. For knowledge, memory is preservative, not generative.

[4] Reason

Reason is also a source of belief and justification.

⇒ **Four standard sources of belief and justification**

These four sources of belief and justification provide *grounds of justification*, and it is these grounds that confer justification.

The justification relation is epistemic, not logical. Conferral of justification, then, need not be inferential.

*** “Justification”**

Other proposed analyses:

- (i) A justified belief is one that there is adequate reason for the believe to think true;
- (ii) A justified belief is one that is rationally acceptable, in the sense that one does not deserve criticism, from the point of view of rationality, for holding it;
- (iii) A justified belief is one that is reliably produced or sustained;
- (iv) A justified belief is one that appropriately expresses epistemic virtue.

Audi’s view:

___ Justification is ample *well-groundedness*. A justification is roughly an adequate ground.

A belief is *directly* grounded if it is directly resting on one or more of the standard sources; a belief is *indirectly* grounded if it is via inferential grounding related to the same sources.

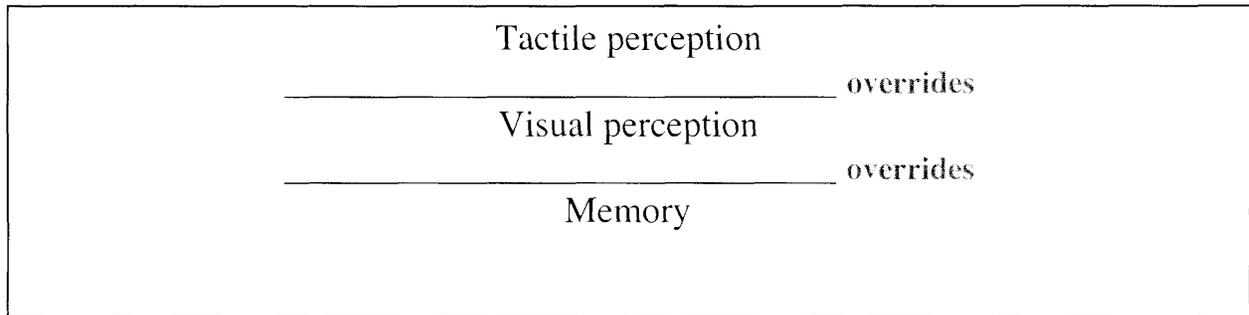
2. Defeasibility and *Prima facie* Justification

There is only little of indefeasible justification. [Even a sufficiently justified belief could be defeated by later discovered counter evidence.]

Even justification grounded in a standard source need not be indefeasible. It also has a second, related property: it is *prima facie*. The reason is not that it is weak, but that even a basic source provides only grounds that may not, on balance, justify.

The defeasibility of (*prima facie*) justification must not be assimilated to its eliminability.... Evidential grounds retain epistemic weight even when overbalanced by counter-evidence and even when undermining evidence

shows that they do not carry enough weight in the circumstances to sustain (overall) justification.



3. Epistemic Autonomy

The general question is whether, collectively, the standard sources are justificationally *self-sufficient*, that is, self-sustaining, in providing for all the justifying grounds of belief; and justificationally self-correcting, at least in providing for all the grounds of defeat of justification.

Q: Are the standard basic sources *autonomous*?

[Individual Autonomy]:

___ Each source yields the justification it does independently of confirmation from any other source.

[Collective Autonomy]:

___ Only the entire set of basic sources meets this independent condition.

Audi:

___ **There apparently is a measure of positive individual autonomy.... Certainly in the normal case, justification – of some degree – from one of the four standard sources does not wait upon corroboration from other sources.**

___ **Epistemic autonomy is consistent with conceptual dependence. A belief might have an isolated ground without in the least being isolated in content from other beliefs.**

There is reason to think that each of the four standard sources possesses individual autonomy and, collectively, they are self-corrective and perhaps self-sufficient.

4. Coherence

Incoherence can defeat justification, but coherence itself cannot create justification.... In principle, wishful thinking could yield as coherent a network of beliefs as the most studious appraisal of evidence.

[Conceptual Coherentism]:

___ One cannot believe in a proposition without having all of the concepts that figure essentially in it.

Audi:

___ This theory is both plausibly and readily combined with the kind of view I am developing.

Q: Can we have a belief involving concepts that we don't fully understand?
 ⇒ Tyler Burge's theory

5. Relativity and Contextual Element

[Contextualism]:

___ Whether one is justified, on balance, depends on one's overall circumstances. A defeater may or may not be present; hence, the same belief can be justified in one context, and not in another context.

Audi:

___ Context is not among the basic sources of the property of justification, but it is often basic to the process of justification.

6. Contextualized Foundations

[Foundationalism]:

___ The view that knowledge and epistemic justification have a two-tier structure: some instances of knowledge and justification are non-inferential, or foundational; and all other instances thereof are inferential, or non-foundational, in that they derive ultimately from foundational knowledge.

___ Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy

Two kinds of foundationalism have been suggested: both divide a person's beliefs into foundations and superstructure; both posit experiential and rational grounds as the basis of the foundational beliefs; and both countenance inference as a major building block by which the superstructure rises from the foundations.

[1]. Psychological Foundationalism

___ The view that if we have any beliefs at all, then we have at least one which is not (inferentially) based on any further belief; and that any inferential belief one has are, directly or indirectly, based on some non-inferential belief one has.

[2]. Epistemological Foundationalism]:

___ The view that if (at a given time) one has any justified beliefs at all, then one has at least one non-inferentially justified belief; any other justified belief one has is adequately justified by, and would not be justified apart from its (positive) dependence on, at least one non-inferentially justified belief.

Audi:

Our beliefs are numerous and varied; and the requirements for justified belief do not impose on our cognitive systems any single pattern or any fixed structure.

A better figure is that of a tree: it may develop new roots at any time and in any direction; old roots may grow or, in some cases, wither; the root system may be more than sufficient to support the rest of the tree or quite inadequate to the task; nutrients may flow upward from root to branch and foliage or downward along similar path; and the composition of both roots and branches changes over time.

Superstructure



Foundations
(non-inferential beliefs)

The architecture of reason = The architecture of nature

Chapter 2.

Superstructure (of Theoretical Reason)

A belief can arise from other beliefs, and thereby on the basis of premises they represent, without one's thinking of those premises; and when it is so based, then if the premises express an adequate ground for the belief, it may be justified by them. In this way our beliefs grow, and our perspective thereby widens.

1. Spontaneous Inference

I conceive rational persons not as constantly reasoning, or as always self-consciously logical, in arriving at beliefs but rather as having in some sense *internalized* rational standards which then guide them without conscious thoughts one might cite in explicitly rationalizing their behavior.

2. Inferential Beliefs

A great many of our beliefs are inferential, in the wide sense implying evidential grounding in further belief.

3. Inferential Ground

Unless a belief is justified, it cannot inferentially justify a second belief.

Suppose it is true that a belief justify a further belief based on it *only* if the former is itself justified; under what further conditions does it justify the latter? → entailment

4. The Transmission of Justification

For the second belief to be justified on the basis of the first, I must not only understand the evidential connection between their propositional objects, my premise belief must also serve as a basis of the belief it justifies.

A belief is justified *by* an inferential ground only if it is based *on* that ground.

5. Principles of the Transmission of Justification

[the perceptual principle]:

— If a person has a clear sensory impression that x is F and on that basis believes that x is F , then this belief is *prima facie* justified.

[the introspection principle]:

— If a person has a clear introspection that x is F and on that basis believes that x is F , then this belief is *prima facie* justified.

[the memory principle]:

— If a person has a clear memory that x is F and on that basis believes that x is F , then this belief is *prima facie* justified.

[the principle for entailment]:

— If (a) one justifiably believes a proposition, q ,
 (b) q entails p ,
 (c) this entailment is within the scope of one's understanding; and
 (d) One believes p on the basis of q ,
 then one has some degree of justification for believing that p .

[the principle for induction]:

— If (a) one justifiably believes a proposition, q ,
 (b) q inductively supports p ,
 (c) this support relation is within the scope of one's understanding;
 and
 (e) One believes p on the basis of q ,
 then one has some degree of justification for believing that p .

* Where the initial justification is the minimal degree that can provide justification on balance, unless the inductive support is very strong, the belief that p will not acquire justification, or at least not enough to render the person justified, on balance, in believing p .

[the principle of overriding]:

— One's justification for believing p is overridden if one has, equally accessible to one, at least as good (undefeated) justification for believing a proposition logically incompatible with p .

§ Internalism vs. Externalism

[Epistemic Internalism]:

___ One is justified in holding a belief p , only if the justification for p is internally accessible to one.

[Epistemic Externalism]:

___ To be justified in holding a certain belief, one does not need to have internal access to the justification of the belief. One could have simply the reliability of a belief-producing process.

___ “Externalism is the view that a person might know something by being suitably situated with respect to it, without that relationship being in any sense within his purview. This view allows that you can know without being justified in believing that you know.”

___ The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy

Audi:

The theory of justification I present is internalist.

Rational conduct is most often understood in terms of what actions, from the agent’s perspective, it is reasonable to expect will succeed, not in terms for what in fact does succeed.

§ Rationality

Global rationality is roughly a capacity concept, implying the ability to grasp certain obvious truths and to make certain kinds of warranted inferences from them, as well as the ability to reason practically.

[Conclusion]

In both the theoretical and the practical reason, there are basic sources; there is spontaneous formation of on-basic elements from foundational ones; there is transmission of justification and rationality from foundations to superstructure; there are interacting cognitions and experiences; and sometimes there is the defeat of justification, or of rationality, even at the basic level.