Deductive Inference and Mental Action

What is deductive inference? The question has been intensively addressed in discussions tracing back at least to Frege and to Lewis Carroll. A good answer needs to recognize two new elements: one from the domain of contents or propositions, and one from the realm of mental action. A good answer also has to explain the connection between these two elements. I argue that the new contents cannot be explained using extant materials from natural deduction or axiomatic systems; that the goal of logic should be characterized in terms of the new elements; and that properly deployed, these two new elements can be used to elucidate the role of knowing-that and knowing-how in deductive inference. The new elements also play a role in an account of justification more generally.

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