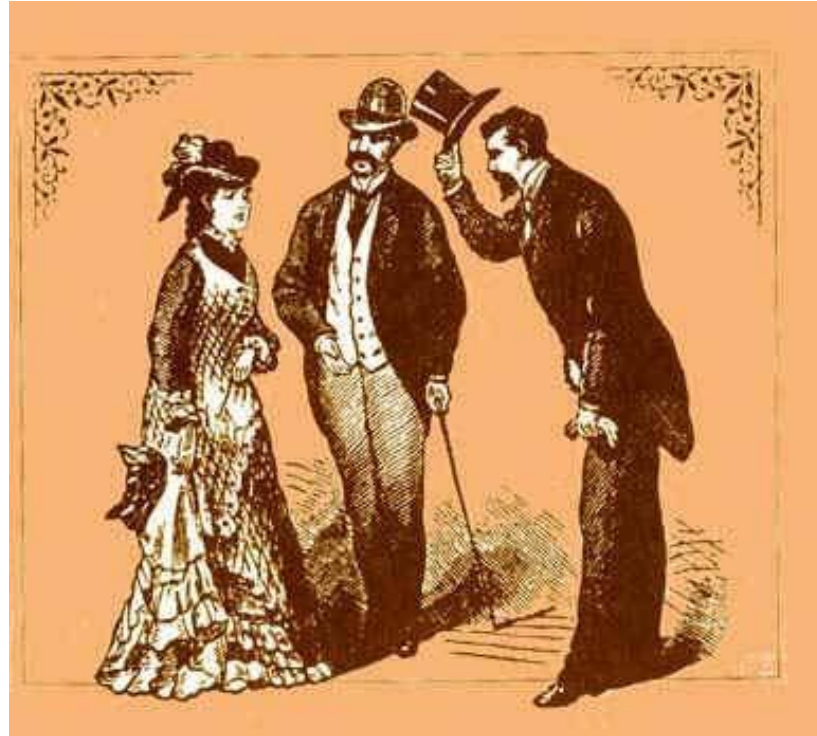


Experience as a limit

Benj Hellie

Overview

- Introduction
- On the X-relation
- Menus of views
- Zombies and the limit view
- The case for the limit view



INTRODUCTION

Aim

- Disjunctivism: veridical experiences “take in” the environment
- What is the relevant background metaphysics?

A test case

- A view about the property that specifies the conscious nature of a veridical perceptual experience of an item c “as red”:
- **Being a case of R ly seeing c 's redness**
 - R is a sort of placeholder for “whatever is held constant between a subject and his inverted duplicate looking at opposite-colored objects”
- Redness is monadic
- What is presupposed if we like that property?



ON THE X-RELATION

The X-relation

- X is a relation between properties and events
- e's manner of being experiential is F iff $X(F,e)$
 - I'm assuming "manners of being experiential" to be more robust than mere conjunction, something like a "family" of determinates of *consciousness*
- e is an experience iff there is some F such that $X(F,e)$
- Note that these are mere biconditionals, no claims yet about explanation or "in virtue"

X and Instantiation

- $X(F,e) \rightarrow \text{Instantiated-by}(F,e)$
 - Accordingly X isn't intentional
 - Not “projective phenomenal character-of” reln
- X is smaller than Instantiation
 - Not every property experience e instantiates is part of its manner of being experiential
 - Perhaps some events that instantiate a certain matter of being experiential are not experiences???

X's metaphysical status

- Is X a mere conjunction?
 - Eg e instantiates F and F is experiential
- Or a manner of instantiation?
 - Eg e instantiates F experientially
- A relation or an operator?
- Ontologically committing or syncategorematic?
- At present let's leave such questions open

A bit more on X

- All facts supervene on the facts not about experience and the facts about X
- Accordingly can't change the facts about experience except by changing the facts about X
- The possible facts about experience are exhausted by the possible facts of X-relatedness

Sometimes and always

- F is sometimes experiential iff:
 - Sometimes, when instantiated, it's instantiated as a manner of being experiential
 - $[\exists e: Fe] X(F,e)$
- F is always experiential iff:
 - Whenever it's instantiated, it's instantiated as a manner of being experiential
 - $[\forall e: Fe] X(F,e)$
- Quantifiers ranging over possibilities

Questions about sometimes and always

- I. Of the properties, how many are sometimes experiential?
 - All or some? (None is the wrong answer)
- II. Of the properties that are sometimes experiential, how many are always experiential?
 - All, some, or none?

Options

I.	II.	All	Some	None
All	Panpsychism	Sometimes the property suffices, o/w X can always get involved	X alone makes for experience = Limit view	
Some	Special properties make for experience	Sometimes the property suffices, o/w X sometimes can get involved	Weak X, needs an oomph from the right properties	



MENUS OF VIEWS

Positions to ignore

- <All, All>: panpsychism seems a bit wack
- <*, Some>: isolate pure strains first
- <Some, None>: seems very complicated

Positions to highlight

- $\langle \text{Some, All} \rangle$ = special property view
- $\langle \text{All, None} \rangle$ = limit view

Special property views

- Certain properties are distinctive of and sufficient for experience.
- Familiar examples:
 - Qualia theory
 - Brentanoesque “phenomenal intentionality” views
 - Acquaintance with the manifest
 - Mixed views ...

More on special property views

- Hume-style and Ockham-style considerations support analyzing $X(F,e)$ as follows:
- For $X(F,e)$ is for $[Fe$ and F is a special property]
- X a reflex of instantiation + the special category
- Does no real work in yielding experientiality

Limit views

- Picture here is nonexperiential facts being brought within experience;
- The fact that e is F is “permeated with consciousness”
- Such permeation is the sole source of consciousness
- Experience serves not as a thing but as a sort of “limit”

Friends of limit views

- These are rather more rare; examples:
 - Lichtenberg?? (Es denkt)
 - Wittgenstein??
 - Kripkenstein?
 - Valberg's "horizontal" conception

More on limit views

- Here F's association with experience is entirely contingent
- Since there is experience, this supports taking X to reflect a distinctive aspect of reality
- Here we can say that the X facts are fundamental to experience
 - The biconditionals should be “is for”s:
 - For e to be experientially F is for X(F,e)
 - For X(F,e) is not for [Fe and F is special]

Properties and the limit view

- Is *bearing X to F* a property? If so looks like there are some properties that suffice for experience
- In response let X be syncategorematic
 - A way of instantiation
 - An operator
 - A binary predicate of the ideology

Limit & SP & the test case

- Recall: being a case of Rly seeing c's (monadic) redness
- On limit view this property can be characteristic of the manner of being experiential of an event that has it
- On certain implementations of SP view, maybe not: my inverted duplicate lacks it, so SP might ban it on grounds of indiscriminability or some such



ZOMBIES AND THE LIMIT VIEW

An illustration

- Zombies:
 - Familiarly, guys who are duplicates of us in all respects but experience, which they lack
- Let's assume a qualia theory
- This is a special property view
- Then what is typically found to be a zombie is a guy who is a physical duplicate but who lacks qualia
- Mutatis for intentional/Edenic consciousness

Advances in zombie theory

- The limit view separates experientiality from any possible properties of events
- Accordingly if there are qualia, there are two kinds of zombies:
 - Weak zombies: physical + qualia duplicates without X
 - Strong zombies: physical duplicates without qualia or X
- Mutatis for intentional/Edenic consciousness

Why believe in weak zbs?

- An argument the limit theorist could give:
 - Some properties are revealed as experiential
 - Anything revealed is nonphysical
 - Hence some nonphysical properties are experiential
 - Strip X off these and you get a weak zombie

“Weak zombies are hard to imagine”

- Some imaginative aids
- Someone could accept either of the following, if so he believes in weak zombies
 - Edenic trees make edenic sounds and have edenic colors without any relevant experience
 - Qualia are objective but experience is subjective; accordingly on A-theory of perspective, everyone else is a weak zombie



THE CASE FOR THE LIMIT VIEW

In favor of the limit view

- For $\langle *, \text{None} \rangle$: transparency
- For $\langle \text{All}, \text{None} \rangle$: no principled place to draw the line

Transparency

- Consciousness or experience, they say, is transparent
- A natural interpretation: experience itself only comes in one variety
- Any other differences between facts about experience are due to facts not about experience

Transparency and special properties

- On special property views, there's more than one variety of "experience itself"
- Qred is one sort, Qblue another sort
- On such views, experience is not transparent

Transparency and limit theory

- On such views there is only one variety of consciousness itself
- Namely X
- Indeed if X is syncategorematic experience isn't anything
- So limit theory secures transparency
- Of course so does <Some, None> theory

Other interpretations of transparency

- Phenomenal noise/double vision/other intrinsic aspect of the visual system looks to be on surfaces of objects/is hard to focus on
 - No it doesn't
 - Not a general claim about consciousness
- To find out about consciousness we do x
 - Literal transparency has to do with how something *is*, not with our responses to it

Summary

- Argued for $\langle *, \text{None} \rangle$
- Limit view = $\langle \text{All}, \text{None} \rangle$
- Now will argue if $\langle *, \text{None} \rangle, \langle \text{All}, \text{None} \rangle$
- General concern about alternatives: hard to see where to draw the boundary

Types of proposal

- Intrinsic: in terms of the natures of the properties
- Response-dependent: in terms of some psychological or epistemic response to the properties

Intrinsic

- Must be qualitative
 - But intentional and acquaintance-involving properties aren't qualitative
- Can't be physical
 - Why not? Granting that some X-relata are nonphysical, why must all of them be?

Response-dependent

- Must be revealable
- This could motivate the non-physical requirement
- After all plausibly no physical properties are revealed to *us*.

Concern

- To whom?
- Surely not to the subject (dogs etc)
- Better: to some idealized sympathizer
- But why suppose physical properties of events couldn't be revealed to God?