Schellenberg’s ‘Experience and evidence’

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Logical space

Good cases

Bad cases

see red

halluc. red
A question of perceptual epistemology ...
What is my evidence here ...

Good cases  Bad cases

see red  halluc. red
... and what is my evidence *here*?
Two parameters ...
Infallibilism?

• That star representing the actual world:
  – Must my evidence include it?
  – Infallibilists say: yeah!
Why infallible?

• ‘Analytic’ = true whenever ‘uttered’
  – Freely uttered, context-independent content, necessary: math and logic
  – Freely uttered, context-dependent content, contingent: ‘water is watery’, ‘I am here now’

• That would explain perceptual justification, maybe
Externalism?

• That big red oval:
  – When things are for me as if I see a red thing, is my evidence ever more specific (smaller) than it?
  – Externalists say: yeah!
Why external?

• Maybe because to be *this way* and to be looking at a room full of really good looking geniuses are equivalent, just the same thing
  – Compare: for Hesperus to be annoying and for Phosphorus to be annoying are equivalent, just the same thing
Infallible internalism

- Evidence = the whole big red oval
  - Carnap 1932; Lewis 1973
  - So conditionalize as follows:

- ugly green color stuff got conditionalized away
‘Standard’ infallible externalism

- Evidence = the true half of the big red oval in the good; nothing in the bad
‘Debased currency’ infallible externalism

- Evidence = the true half of the big red oval
  - BH
NB:

- On the ‘standard’ externalism of Williamson:
  - Nothing gets conditionalized away in the bad case
  - Which is implausible, because surely I can distinguish a case in which I dream of red from a case in which I dream of green.

- The sort of ‘debased currency’ externalism I have in mind does not have this consequence:
  - Externalism doesn’t say that perceptual evidence is always about the external world:
  - What is ‘external’ is the relation of evidence to the ‘phenomenological’:
  - Evidence is more specific than the ‘phenomenological’.
Fallible externalism

• Evidence = the good half of the big red oval
  – Logue; Pryor? SScch-1?
  – Conditionalize as follows:
Hybridized fallible and ‘standard’ infallible externalism

- Evidence = the good half of the big red oval
  - I’m assuming that SSch thinks evidence aggregates the fallible and ‘standard’ infallible externalist predictions

- Thus the same as the fallible externalist view
But what do the views *predict*?
Interaction with priors

• What I come out of a sense-perception believing is not fixed just by my evidence but by my priors:
  – Maybe I think I’m in the good case?
  – Maybe I think I’m in the bad case?
  – Maybe I dunno?

• Let’s see the predictions the various views make ...
Rows: priors; columns: facts
Then when we overlay ev ...
Infallible internalism

G

Good cases

Bad cases

see

red

halluc

red

B

Good cases

Bad cases

see

red

halluc

red

U

Good cases

Bad cases

see

red

halluc

red
Namely ...

• In <G, G> and <B, G> I end up believing I’m seeing a red thing;
• In <G, B> and <B, B> I end up believing I’m hallucinating a red thing;
• In <G, U> and <B, U> I end up uncertain whether I am seeing or hallucinating a red thing
Downsides?

• In <B, G> and <G, B> I’ve got no way back to the truth
  – But maybe that’s the fault of overreaching priors
  – And this is a prediction every view makes
'Standard' infallible externalism

Good cases

Bad cases

G

B

U

Good cases

Bad cases

see red

halluc red

see red

halluc red

see red

halluc red

see red

halluc red
Namely ...

• In <G, G> and <G, U> I end up believing I’m seeing a red thing;
• In <B, X> my view doesn’t change
• Otherwise defective
• In <G, B> I’m in a defective context: my overall view is inconsistent, with prior saying I’m hallucinating and perception saying I’m seeing a red thing
• In <B, G>, <B, B>, and <B, U> my view is weirdly indeterminate: it is no different from that I would have if I hallucinated a green thing
• In <G, U> my overall view is committal: perception does, though ‘articulate’ belief does not, decide whether I am seeing;
• Between <G, U> and <B, U> my overall view is asymmetric
‘Debased’ infallible externalism

G

Good cases

Bad cases

see red

halluc

B

Good cases

Bad cases

see red

halluc

U

Good cases

Bad cases

see red

halluc
Namely ...

• In <G, G> I end up believing I’m seeing a red thing;
• In <B, B> I end up believing I’m hallucinating a red thing;
• In <G, U> I end up with a view according to which I am seeing a red thing;
• In <B, U> I end up with a view according to which I am hallucinating a red thing;
• Otherwise defective
Downsides?

• In <B, G> and <G, B> I’m in a defective context: my overall view is inconsistent, with prior saying (eg) I’m seeing and perception saying I’m hallucinating a red thing

• In <G, U> and <B, U> my overall view is committal: perception does, though ‘articulate’ belief does not, decide whether I am seeing;

• Between <G, U> and <B, U> my overall view is asymmetric (though my ‘reports’ might be ‘internally’ the same)
Fallible externalism/SSch’s hybrid
Namely ...

- In \(<G, G>, <B, G>, <G, U>, \) and \(<B, U>\) I end up believing I’m seeing a red thing;
- Otherwise defective
Downsides?

- In <G, B> and <B, B> I’m in a defective context: my overall view is inconsistent, with prior saying I’m hallucinating and perception saying I’m seeing a red thing.
- In <B, G> and <B, U> I’ve got no way back to the truth;
- In <G, U> and <B, U> my overall view is committal: perception does, even if ‘articulate’ belief does not, decide that I am seeing;
- There is no way ever to come out believing I am hallucinating.
Now to some questions for SSch ...
How fallibilism?

• SSch on why ‘phenomenal evidence’ is evidence:
  – Evidence [is] something that gives us a reason for holding a belief (3)
  – It is rational to heed the testimony of mental states that are systematically linked to what they are of in the good case, since such states are truth-conducive in virtue of being systematically linked to what they are of in the good case (16)

• But:
  – What I am certain of now in sense-perception would seem to be that I am in a mental state that is systematically linked to looking at a room full of fabulous geniuses in the good case;
  – Believing that I am looking at a room full of fabulous geniuses on this basis would seem to be jumping to conclusions;
  – Our little pictures record this worry in my inability, according to the fallible externalist, to get back to the truth in <B, U> -- even despite my initial epistemic caution;
  – Which suggests to me that SSch’s ‘since’ requires further expansion.
Phenomenal valence?

• Premiss 1 of the case for phenomenal evidence is supposed to be not ‘the controversial one’:
  – When we perceive our environment or suffer an illusion or hallucination, then our environment seems a certain way to us. (5)
• But when I dream lucidly, my environment does not seem any way to me;
  – Still, one might think I at least can sometimes rationally learn how things are for me in lucid dreaming
  – Our little pictures reflect the impossibility of learning anything in the bad case on SSch’s view by excluding the star from what is believed always, in the bad column
• The apparent valence toward veridicality SSch seems to wish to place on sense-perception is the tip of an iceberg.
  – Do I misperceive the color of the blue mountains?
  – Am I in an inconsistent position on where the fish is if I know about refraction, or is ignorance bliss?
  – Must the spectral invert be mistaken? The oldster with a yellowed macula?
  – Are kids wrong that grownups look big?
• I think the answer in each case is ‘no’.
• Guys like Tye say ‘yes’. They assign a unique content to all states of a given ‘phenomenal’ type: such types have a ‘valence’ in a very specific direction. That makes them fallibilists. I can’t see any reason to be a fallibilist aside from endorsing this sort of valence. But this valence doctrine is really implausible (in my view).