

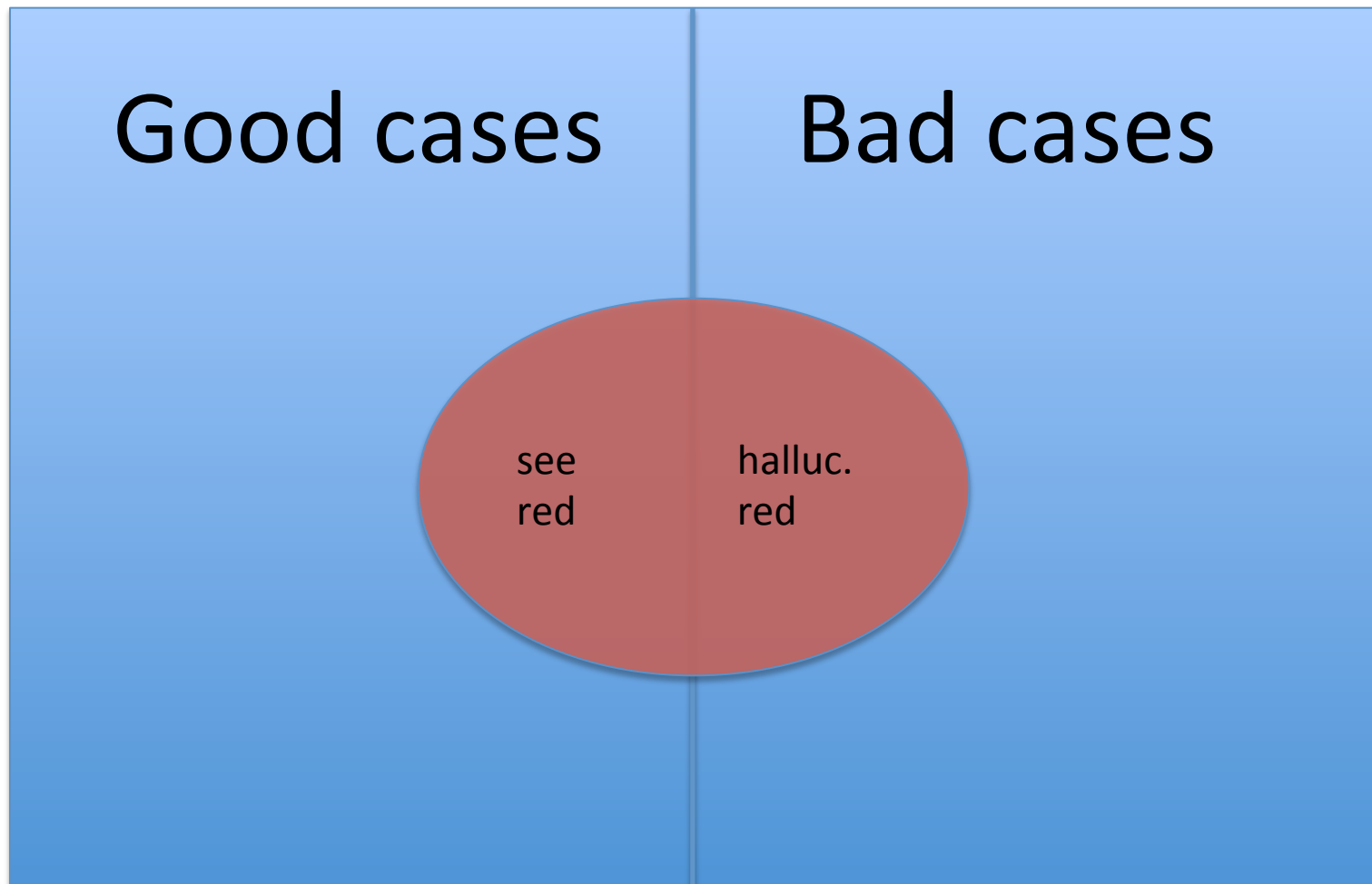
Schellenberg's 'Experience and evidence'

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Carolina Metaphysics Workshop

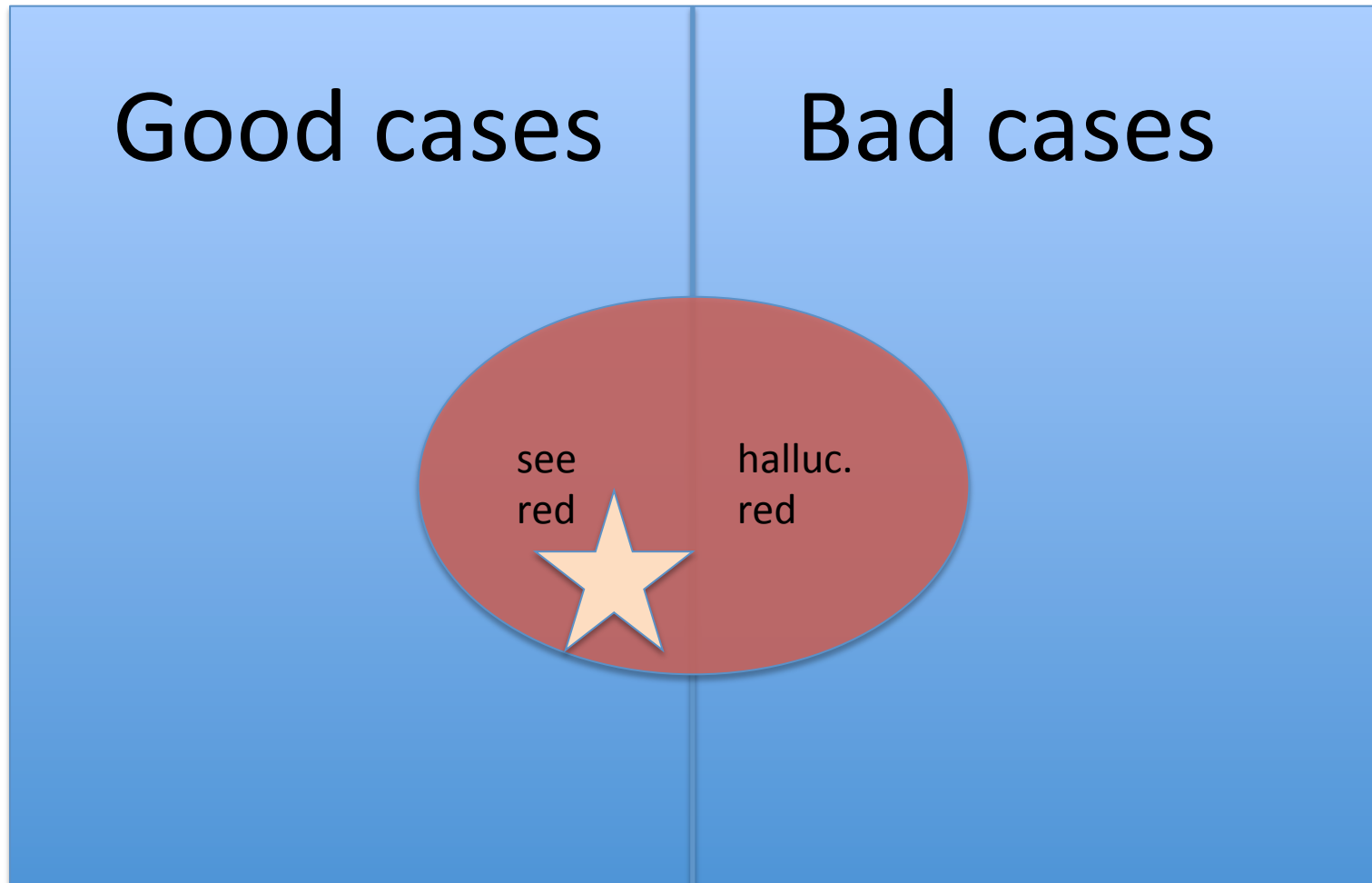
June 2011

Logical space

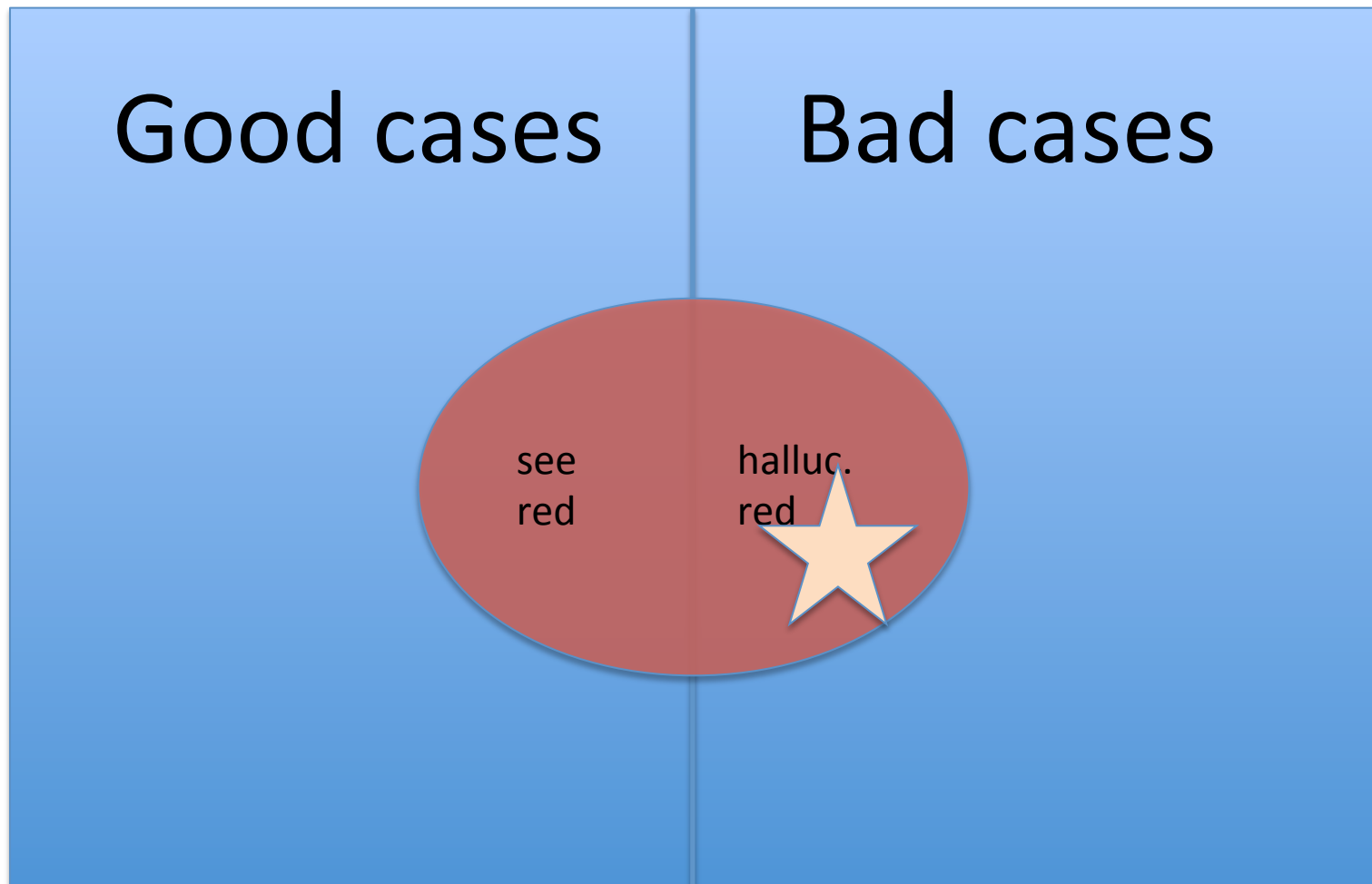


A question of
perceptual epistemology ...

What is my evidence here ...



... 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’
 - Context-dependent orthography, context-independent content, contingent: sensory states a la Carnap 1932, Lewis 1973, Chalmers 2003, BH
- 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

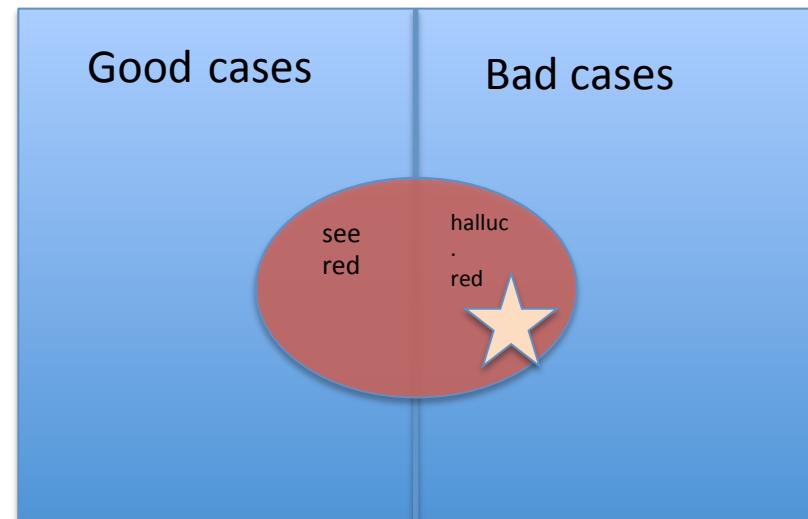
- Evidence = the whole big red oval
 - Carnap 1932; Lewis 1973
 - So conditionalize as follows:



- 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
 - McDowell? Martin? Campbell? Williamson? SSch-2?



'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? SSch-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



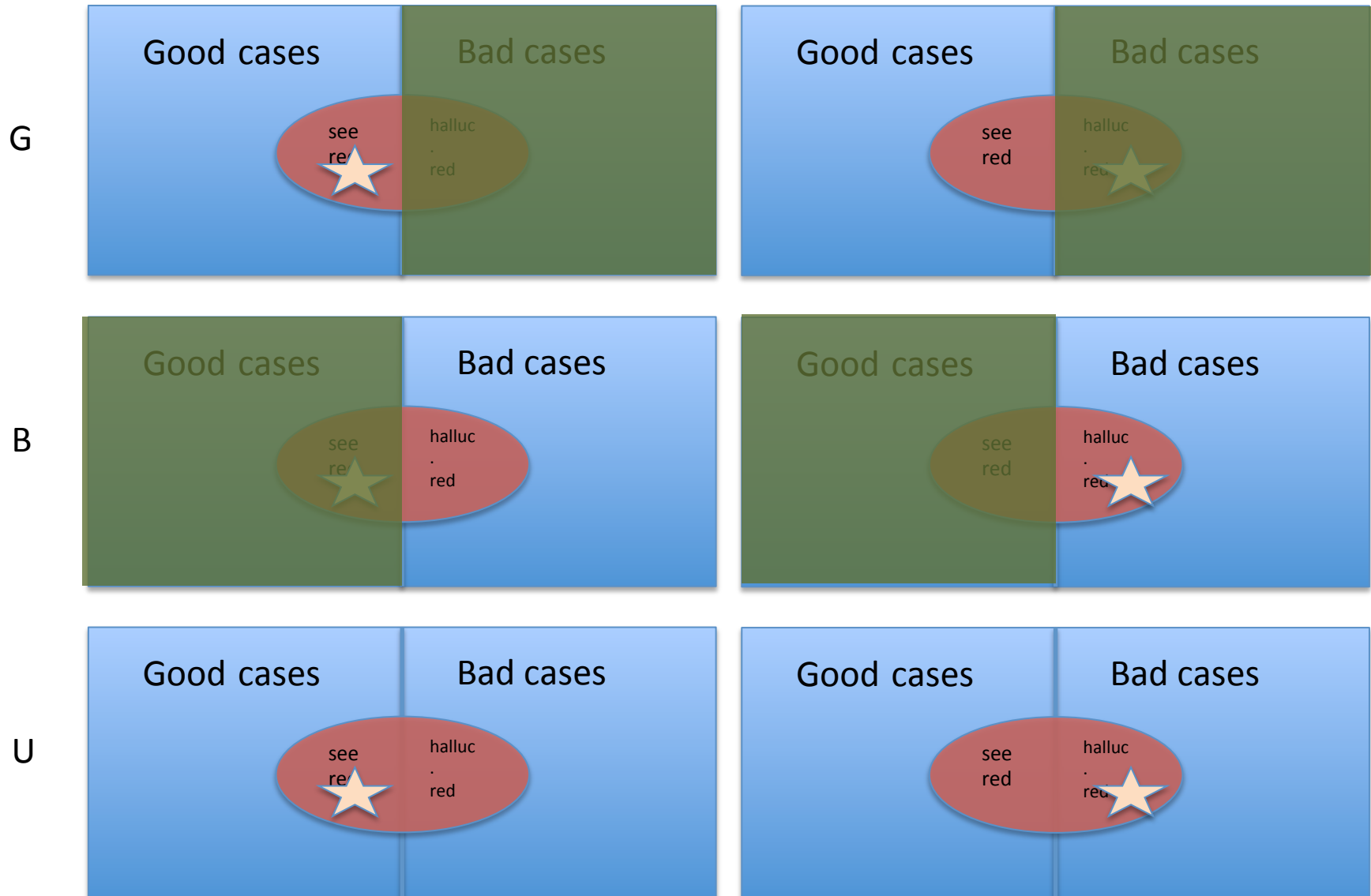
- Thus the same as the fallible externalist view

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 ...

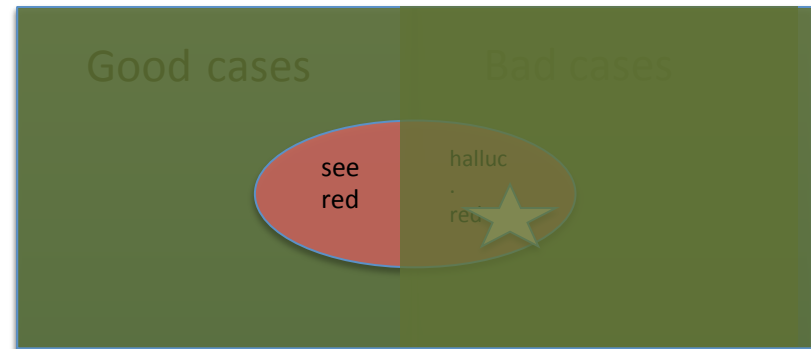
Rows: priors; columns: facts



Then when we overlay ev ...

Infallible internalism

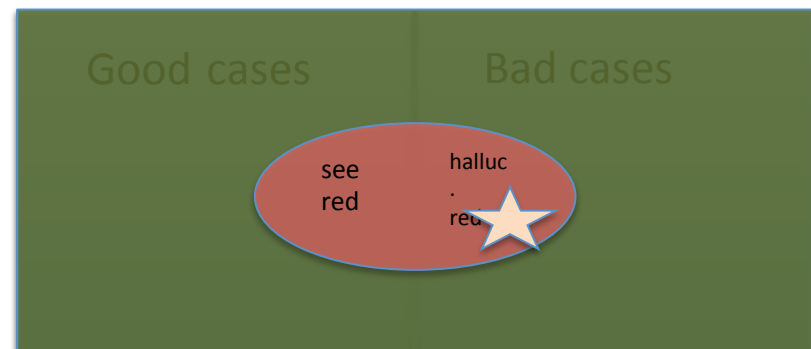
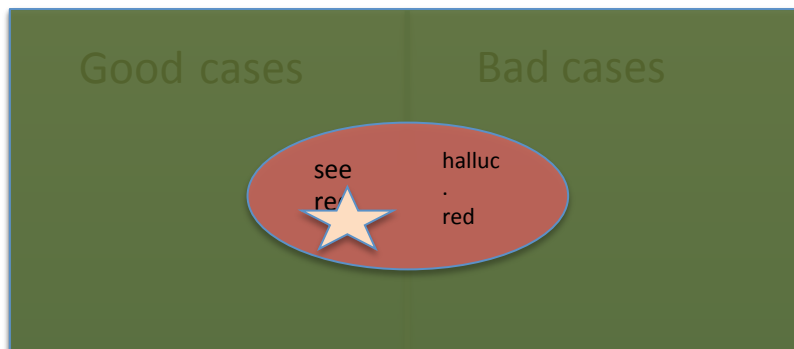
G



B



U



Namely ...

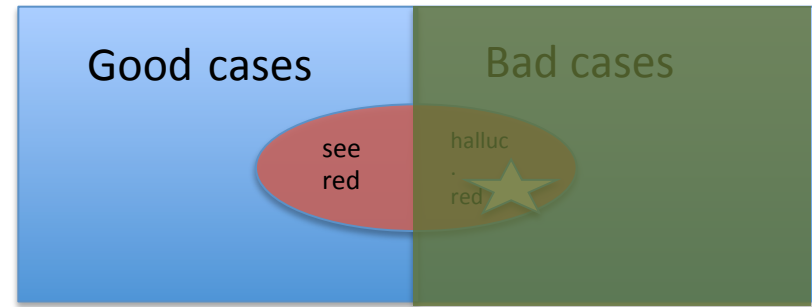
- In $\langle G, G \rangle$ and $\langle B, G \rangle$ I end up believing I'm seeing a red thing;
- In $\langle G, B \rangle$ and $\langle B, B \rangle$ I end up believing I'm hallucinating a red thing;
- In $\langle G, U \rangle$ and $\langle B, U \rangle$ I end up uncertain whether I am seeing or hallucinating a red thing

Downsides?

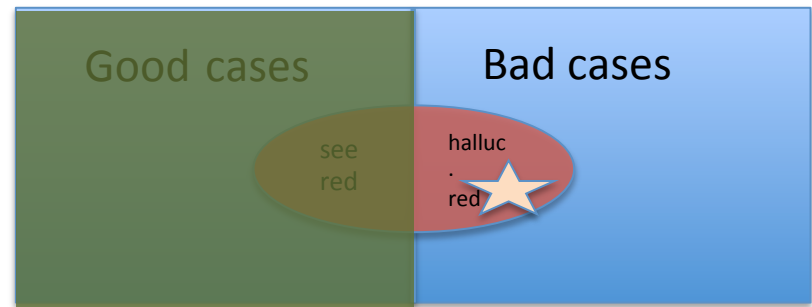
- In $\langle B, G \rangle$ and $\langle G, B \rangle$ I've got no way back to the truth
 - But maybe that's the fault of overreaching priors
 - And this is a prediction every view makes

'Standard' infallible externalism

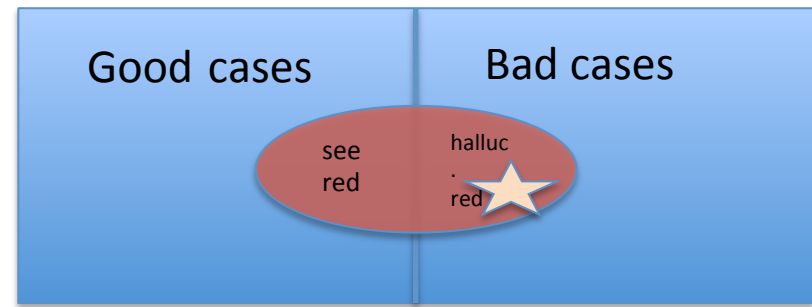
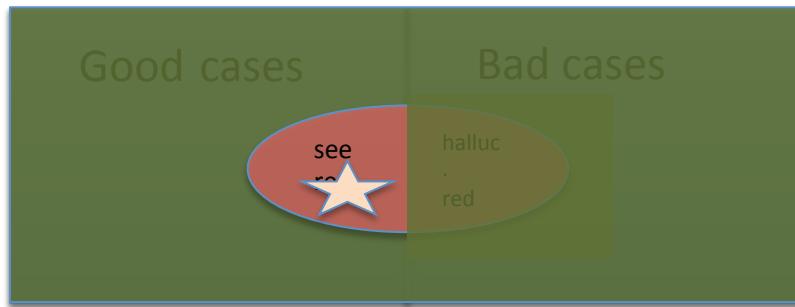
G



B



U



Namely ...

- In $\langle G, G \rangle$ and $\langle G, U \rangle$ I end up believing I'm seeing a red thing;
- In $\langle B, X \rangle$ my view doesn't change
- Otherwise defective

Downsides?

- In $\langle G, B \rangle$ 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 $\langle B, G \rangle$, $\langle B, B \rangle$, and $\langle B, U \rangle$ my view is weirdly indeterminate: it is no different from that I would have if I hallucinated a green thing
- In $\langle G, U \rangle$ my overall view is *committal*: perception does, though 'articulate' belief does not, decide whether I am seeing;
- Between $\langle G, U \rangle$ and $\langle B, U \rangle$ my overall view is *asymmetric*

'Debased' infallible externalism

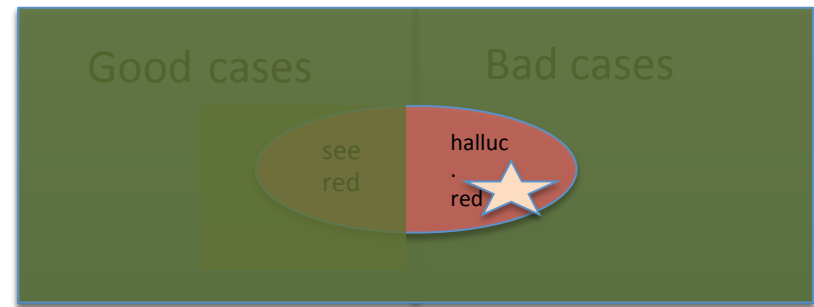
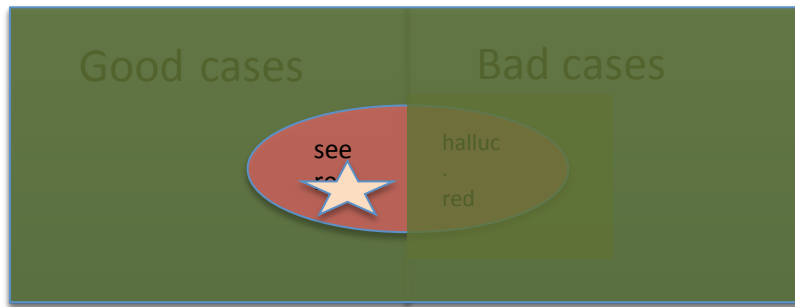
G



B



U



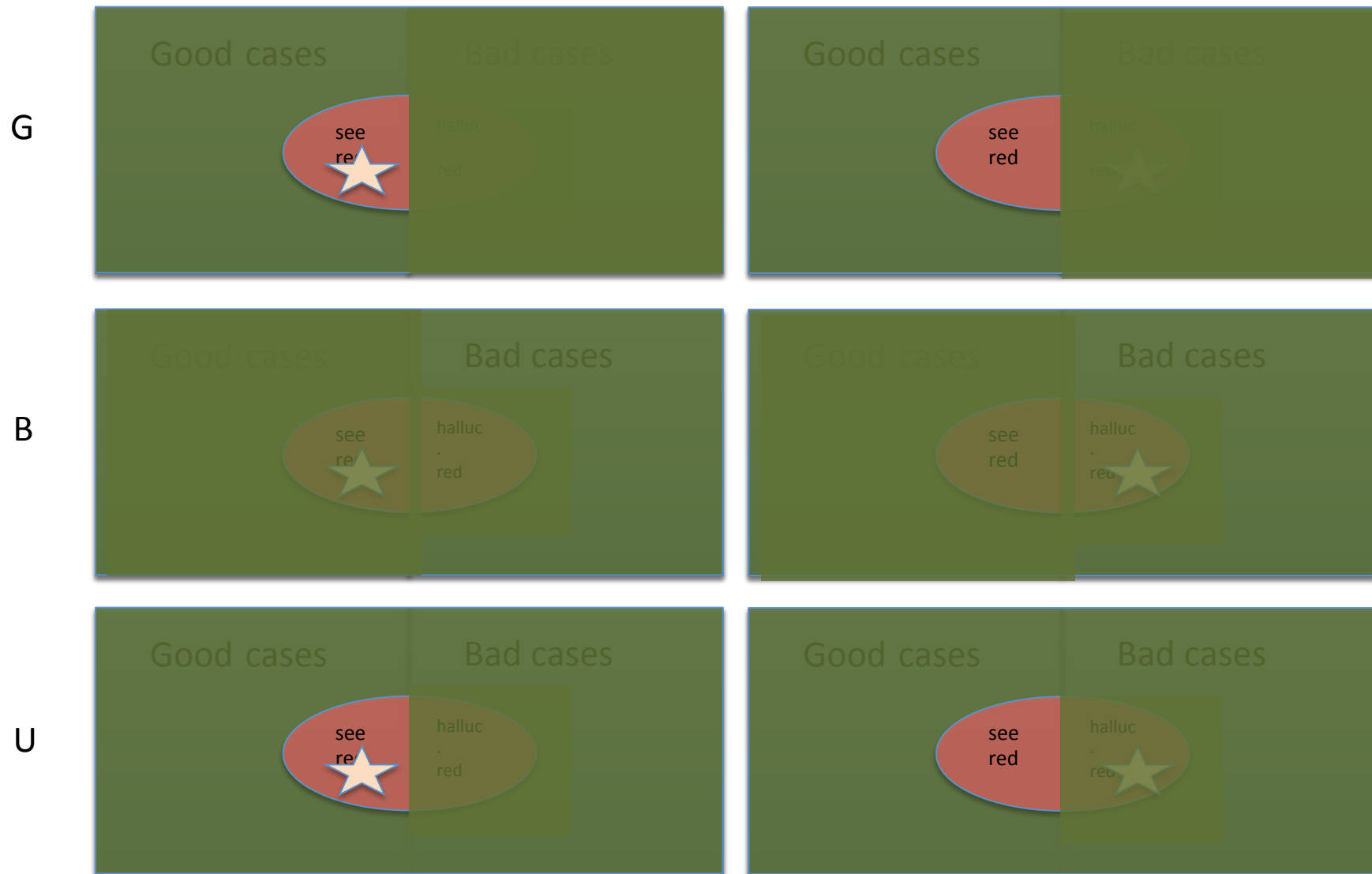
Namely ...

- In $\langle G, G \rangle$ I end up believing I'm seeing a red thing;
- In $\langle B, B \rangle$ I end up believing I'm hallucinating a red thing;
- In $\langle G, U \rangle$ I end up with a view according to which I am seeing a red thing;
- In $\langle B, U \rangle$ I end up with a view according to which I am hallucinating a red thing;
- Otherwise defective

Downsides?

- In $\langle B, G \rangle$ and $\langle G, B \rangle$ 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 $\langle G, U \rangle$ and $\langle B, U \rangle$ my overall view is *committal*: perception does, though 'articulate' belief does not, decide whether I am seeing;
- Between $\langle G, U \rangle$ and $\langle B, U \rangle$ my overall view is *asymmetric* (though my 'reports' might be 'internally' the same)

Fallible externalism/SSch's hybrid



Namely ...

- In $\langle G, G \rangle$, $\langle B, G \rangle$, $\langle G, U \rangle$, and $\langle B, U \rangle$ I end up believing I'm seeing a red thing;
- Otherwise defective

Downsides?

- In $\langle G, B \rangle$ and $\langle B, B \rangle$ 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 $\langle B, G \rangle$ and $\langle B, U \rangle$ I've got no way back to the truth;
- In $\langle G, U \rangle$ and $\langle B, U \rangle$ 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).