

Knowledge and Reality, Lecture 20

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Two Arguments against Rationality of Perception

Setting Up Chapter 4

Four Theories of Perceptual Justification

Section 3.1

I want to **start** today's lecture with two arguments from section 3.1, about why one might think Siegel's argument is wrong, and experiences cannot be evaluated the way beliefs can.

1. Backward-looking;

Section 3.1

I want to **start** today's lecture with two arguments from section 3.1, about why one might think Siegel's argument is wrong, and experiences cannot be evaluated the way beliefs can.

1. Backward-looking;
2. Forward-looking.

Backward-Looking

1. Experiences are formed passively.

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2. Beliefs are formed actively.

Backward-Looking

1. Experiences are formed passively.
2. Beliefs are formed actively.
3. Only actively formed states are assessable as rational or irrational.

Backward-Looking

1. Experiences are formed passively.
 2. Beliefs are formed actively.
 3. Only actively formed states are assessable as rational or irrational.
- C. So beliefs, but not experiences, are assessable as rational or irrational.

Siegel's Response

- Premise 2 is ambiguous.

Siegel's Response

- Premise 2 is ambiguous.
- But on any plausible disambiguation, it is false.

What Activity Might Be (1)

Activity might be phenomenological; we feel ourselves forming beliefs.

- But this only applies to a small fraction of our beliefs.

What Activity Might Be (1)

Activity might be phenomenological; we feel ourselves forming beliefs.

- But this only applies to a small fraction of our beliefs.
- And the ones it doesn't apply to are still capable of being rational or irrational.

What Activity Might Be (2)

Activity might mean involving reasoning; our beliefs come from reasoning.

- Again, this is true for only a small fraction of our beliefs.

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- Again, this is true for only a small fraction of our beliefs.
- You didn't reason to the conclusion that there are words on the screen now.

What Activity Might Be (2)

Activity might mean involving reasoning; our beliefs come from reasoning.

- Again, this is true for only a small fraction of our beliefs.
- You didn't reason to the conclusion that there are words on the screen now.
- But all beliefs, even the not-formed-by-reasoning ones, can be rational or irrational.

What Activity Might Be (3)

Activity might mean involving reflection.

- Even if you didn't reason to the belief that there are words on the screen, or in any sense *reflect* before forming that belief, you *could have* reflected on it.

What Activity Might Be (3)

Activity might mean involving reflection.

- Even if you didn't reason to the belief that there are words on the screen, or in any sense *reflect* before forming that belief, you *could have* reflected on it.
- Maybe belief is active in that sense.

What Activity Might Be (3)

But again, not everything can be reflective.

- Toddlers don't have this kind of capacity for reflection, but can have rational beliefs.

Forward-Looking

1. Experiences cannot be adjusted.

Forward-Looking

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2. Beliefs can be adjusted.

Forward-Looking

1. Experiences cannot be adjusted.
2. Beliefs can be adjusted.
3. Being adjustable is necessary for being assessable for rationality.

Forward-Looking

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 2. Beliefs can be adjusted.
 3. Being adjustable is necessary for being assessable for rationality.
- C. So beliefs, but not experiences, are assessable as rational.

What Might Adjustable Mean Here

1. Subject to deliberation

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1. Subject to deliberation
2. Capable of being disowned

What Might Adjustable Mean Here

1. Subject to deliberation
2. Capable of being disowned
3. Change by habituation

What Might Adjustable Mean (1)

If we mean that the believer can deliberate their way out of them, then delusional beliefs are not rational or irrational.

- But in fact they are irrational.

What Might Adjustable Mean (1)

If we mean that the believer can deliberate their way out of them, then delusional beliefs are not rational or irrational.

- But in fact they are irrational.
- NB: I'm not so sure here; some of the cases Siegel mentions (like Capgras) feel almost *arational*.

What Might Adjustable Mean (2)

If we mean by adjustable that they can be disowned, this doesn't distinguish experience from belief.

- Experiences can be disowned.

What Might Adjustable Mean (2)

If we mean by adjustable that they can be disowned, this doesn't distinguish experience from belief.

- Experiences can be disowned.
- This isn't in the sense that you don't have them (again, think of the checker-shadow), but that you don't act on them.

What Might Adjustable Mean (2)

Note that this is a change from the previous 4 things we looked at.

- Now we're denying that experiences lack the property in question, rather than that beliefs have the property.

In the case of belief, ceasing to rely on a belief can't come apart from ceasing to have the belief.

- This doesn't seem right to me.

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- A good juror can cease to rely on a belief from outside the court without ceasing to have it.

In the case of belief, ceasing to rely on a belief can't come apart from ceasing to have the belief.

- This doesn't seem right to me.
- A good juror can cease to rely on a belief from outside the court without ceasing to have it.
- There are hard questions here about what it means to rely on a belief, but they are practically significant.

What Might Adjustable Mean (3)

Maybe we can habituate ourselves into not forming beliefs a certain way.

- But it's even more plausible that we can habituate ourselves into not experiencing things a certain way.

What Might Adjustable Mean (3)

Maybe we can habituate ourselves into not forming beliefs a certain way.

- But it's even more plausible that we can habituate ourselves into not experiencing things a certain way.
- We can learn to hear an instrument as out of tune, to see a face as expressing a different emotion, and so on.

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Setting Up Chapter 4

Four Theories of Perceptual Justification

The Pink Drink and the Bird

Why are there two examples here and not just one?

- What differences are there between the examples?

The Pink Drink and the Bird

Why are there two examples here and not just one?

- What differences are there between the examples?
- Why do those differences matter?

The Pink Drink and the Bird

I guess it's because she wants to be explicit that she cares about both perception of objects (like the drink) and perception of events (like the flying).

- Is there any reason to think these would pattern differently with respect to what we care about here?

Reason-Power and Forward-Looking Power

Just what is the difference between these?

- Let's start with the text.

- Your visual experience gives you excellent reason to believe that the drink is pink.

- Your visual experience gives you excellent reason to believe that the drink is pink.
- Your visual experience (in which the bird looks to be moving) gives you excellent reason to believe that the bird is flying away.

Reason-Power

Experiences give you excellent reason to belief in their contents (or something like them).

Two Kinds of Reason

- Motivating

Two Kinds of Reason

- Motivating
- Justifying

Two Kinds of Reason

- Motivating
- Justifying
- Siegel is, I think, interested in **justifying** reasons.

Forward-Looking Power

Again, start with some quotes

- If you form the belief that the drink is pink on the basis of the visual experience, *ceteris paribus*, you'll have a well-founded belief.

- If you form the belief that the drink is pink on the basis of the visual experience, *ceteris paribus*, you'll have a well-founded belief.
- If you form the belief that the bird is flying away on the basis of your visual experience (in which the bird looks to be moving), *ceteris paribus*, you'll have a well-founded belief.

Forward-Looking Power

Experiences tend to make beliefs in their contents well-founded.

What is the Difference

- Providing a reason for the belief vs making the belief well-founded;

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- This is sort of a backwards-looking vs forward-looking distinction;

What is the Difference

- Providing a reason for the belief vs making the belief well-founded;
- This is sort of a backwards-looking vs forward-looking distinction;
- Except it's looking forward to a backwards looking thing.

The Powers Together

You'd think they go together fairly tightly.

- As Siegel says, experiences typically seem to have sort of both.

The Powers Together

You'd think they go together fairly tightly.

- As Siegel says, experiences typically seem to have sort of both.
- And the forward-looking power might be explained by the reason-power.

Reason-Power without Forward-Looking Power

Maybe if:

- (a) The reason provided is very very weak; and

Reason-Power without Forward-Looking Power

Maybe if:

- (a) The reason provided is very very weak; and
- (b) There is independent reason to believe otherwise.

Forward-Looking Power without Reason-Power

Maybe if beliefs can be well-founded by things other than reasons.

- We get deep into murky waters about the metaphysics of reasons here, and I'm not going to go firther.

Forward-Looking Power without Reason-Power

Maybe if beliefs can be well-founded by things other than reasons.

- We get deep into murky waters about the metaphysics of reasons here, and I'm not going to go further.
- Footnote 5 suggests this is why Siegel is not going further this way either.

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Four Theories of Perceptual Justification

Four Theories

1. Disjunctivist/Naïve Realist

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2. Reliabilist

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2. Reliabilist
3. Inferentialist

Four Theories

1. Disjunctivist/Naïve Realist
2. Reliabilist
3. Inferentialist
4. Dogmatist

Disjunctivist

- Appearances/experiences on their own have little epistemic charge.

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- What has power is **perception**, where this is understood as a success term.

Disjunctivist

- Appearances/experiences on their own have little epistemic charge.
- What has power is **perception**, where this is understood as a success term.
- This is very externalist; what is happening on an occasion, and what force it has, depends on external factors.

Reliabilist

- Anything can provide positive charge as long as it is reliably tied to reality.

Reliabilist

- Anything can provide positive charge as long as it is reliably tied to reality.
- Typically, experiences are reliably tied to reality.

Reliabilist

- Anything can provide positive charge as long as it is reliably tied to reality.
- Typically, experiences are reliably tied to reality.
- There is nothing particularly special about perception.

Inferentialist

- On their own, experiences just provide positive charge for the proposition that one is having the experience.

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- Extra step needed to get to claims about the external world.

Inferentialist

- On their own, experiences just provide positive charge for the proposition that one is having the experience.
- Extra step needed to get to claims about the external world.
- Lots of options for next step.

Inferentialist

- One choice: what is the link claim? Presumably something about reliable connection.

Inferentialist

- One choice: what is the link claim? Presumably something about reliable connection.
- Second choice: how is the link claim grounded? IBE, Basic, something else?

Inferentialist

- One choice: what is the link claim? Presumably something about reliable connection.
- Second choice: how is the link claim grounded? IBE, Basic, something else?
- Third choice: does the individual perceiver have to appreciate the ground?

Dogmatist

- In the first instance, experiences provide positive charge for the proposition that one is having the experience.

Dogmatist

- In the first instance, experiences provide positive charge for the proposition that one is having the experience.
- But unless something stops them, they also provide positive charge for external world propositions.

Dogmatist

- In the first instance, experiences provide positive charge for the proposition that one is having the experience.
- But unless something stops them, they also provide positive charge for external world propositions.
- And the 'something' has to be accessible to the perceiver.

Dogmatist

The big difference with the inferentialist concerns presence vs absence of reasons.

- The inferentialist thinks you need a positive reason to go from Looks p to p .

Dogmatist

The big difference with the inferentialist concerns presence vs absence of reasons.

- The inferentialist thinks you need a positive reason to go from Looks p to p .
- The dogmatist thinks you need an absence of defeating reasons to go from Looks p to p .

How They Play with Rationality of Perception

Disjunctivism is no problem.

- In the bad case you don't have real perception, just apparent perception.

How They Play with Rationality of Perception

Disjunctivism is no problem.

- In the bad case you don't have real perception, just apparent perception.
- So there isn't much charge there.

How They Play with Rationality of Perception

Reliabilism isn't much of a problem.

- Provided we get the **reference class** right, the bad cases will be actually unreliable.

How They Play with Rationality of Perception

Reliabilism isn't much of a problem.

- Provided we get the **reference class** right, the bad cases will be actually unreliable.
- Bit of a trick here about getting the reference classes right, but not a big deal.

How They Play with Rationality of Perception

Inferentialism isn't much of a problem.

- Provided the 'link' is defeasible, and doesn't work in all cases, you can easily get that the support fails.

How They Play with Rationality of Perception

Dogmatism does look like a problem.

- Hijacked perception lacks defeaters that are apparent to the perceiver.

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- So the dogmatist thinks they have full charge.

How They Play with Rationality of Perception

Dogmatism does look like a problem.

- Hijacked perception lacks defeaters that are apparent to the perceiver.
- So the dogmatist thinks they have full charge.
- But they don't.

Two Dogmatist Responses

1. Maybe the perceiver could tell there was a problem; this seems optimistic.

Two Dogmatist Responses

1. Maybe the perceiver could tell there was a problem; this seems optimistic.
2. Maybe dogmatism just applies to a much narrower band of properties.

Dogmatism and Perception

Most actual dogmatists don't think we really **perceive** things like that something is a gun or a power-tool.

- They think we just perceive things like shapes and colors.

Dogmatism and Perception

Most actual dogmatists don't think we really **perceive** things like that something is a gun or a power-tool.

- They think we just perceive things like shapes and colors.
- This might be an implausible theory of perception, but it makes it seem more plausible that they couldn't be hijacked.

For Next Time

Chapter 5