

What is my evidence that here is a cup?

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Abstract This paper is about Susanna Schellenberg’s view on the explanatory role of perceptual experience. I raise a basic question about what the argument for her view might be. Then I develop two new problem cases: one involving “seamless transitions” between perception and hallucination and another involving the graded character of perceptual evidence and justification.

Keyword Perceptual evidence · Perceptual justification · Hallucination · Schellenberg · Experience first

In her characteristically subtle and provocative paper, “Phenomenal Evidence and Factive Evidence” (henceforth “PE&FE”), Susanna Schellenberg develops a novel epistemology of perception, based on her earlier work on the metaphysics of perception.

My plan is as follows. First I will try to get clear on certain elements of Schellenberg’s view. Then I will raise a basic question. Finally, I will develop a couple of new problem cases related to some those she herself discusses: one involving “seamless transitions” between perception and hallucination and another involving the *graded* character of perceptual evidence and justification.

1 Schellenberg on perceptual evidence and justification

Schellenberg compares and contrasts her view with the view of Timothy Williamson. The comparison with Williamson will help us to tease out some key elements of the view. It will also lead me to a basic question I have about it. So I start with Williamson.

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Suppose that Percy sees a white cup (the “good case”) while Hallie has a hallucination of a white cup (the “bad case”). Their experiences are “phenomenally identical”. In fact, we might suppose that Percy and Hallie are life-long phenomenal duplicates and that Hallie has no idea that her experience is hallucinatory.

Williamson holds that an individual’s total evidence consists in exactly those facts that the individual *knows* ($E = K$). Through introspection, both know that there *appears* to be a white cup there. So they have common introspective evidence about their own mental lives. However, since Williamson is no skeptic, he would say that Percy also knows a proposition about the environment that Hallie doesn’t know, namely *that there really is a white cup present*, or *Cup* for short. So Williamson endorses what I will call *Extra Evidence*. In sum:

Common Evidence: *there appears to be white cup there.*

Percy’s Extra Evidence: *there really is a white cup there (Cup)*

Williamson also advocates an evidence-based theory of (propositional) justification using the machinery of standard (non-Jeffrey) Bayesianism. He writes, “I also hold that beliefs are justified, when they are, by the subject’s total evidence... [w]hen one’s total evidence is e , the justified level of confidence (credence) in a hypothesis h is measured by the conditional probability of h on e ” (2005, 468).

These claims entail a striking result about Percy and Hallie. As we just saw, according to Williamson, Hallie only has the “introspective evidence” that there *appears* to be a white cup there, which supports Cup but falls short of *entailing* Cup. So he says that the conditional probability of Cup given her evidence is less than 1 (2000, 198–199). On Williamson’s view, Percy, by contrast, has an extra piece of evidence, namely Cup itself. So, on his view, the conditional probability of Cup on Percy’s evidence is 1. Williamson accepts the principle that the *more* probable it is that p given one’s evidence the *more* confident one can be that p —a principle which, according to White (2014, 309), is generally accepted. So Williamson accepts what I will call *More Justification*: Percy’s justified confidence in Cup exceeds Hallie’s justified level of confidence in Cup, *even though there is no difference in what it like for them* (2009, 361).

More Justification is striking because it flouts the intuition many of us will have about the case. Recall that Percy and Hallie are having phenomenally identical experiences as of a white cup, and neither has any reason to believe that any funny business is going on. Many of us will find it intuitive that they have the same degree of justification for believing Cup, contrary to More Justification (Silins 2005).

Now I turn to Schellenberg’s view. Like Williamson, she defends a version of Extra Evidence. But her version is quite different. And she rejects Williamson’s $E = K$ principle. (She doesn’t provide a general theory of what evidence is, or of what it is to possess evidence.)

Schellenberg puts her view by saying that Percy and Hallie possess common *phenomenal evidence*, but that Percy has “additional” *factive evidence*. She explains these types of evidence as follows:

Phenomenal evidence is individuated by the content type that is in turn individuated by the perceptual capacities employed. Factive evidence is individuated by the token content. (PE&FE, sect. 1)¹

She then explains that a “token content” is a “singular content ... singling out particulars” (PE&FE, sect. 1). So, for instance, Percy’s “factive evidence” is simply constituted by the singular content *that cup is white*.

The idea of a “content type” is more difficult. Schellenberg holds that Hallie’s hallucinatory experience has a *gappy* content about her environment. (A neo-Russellian might represent it as follows: <__, being a white cup>.) She says that this gappy content “has the form of a singular content while failing to be a singular token content” because there is no object present. So she holds that the aforementioned *token content* of Percy’s experience and the *gappy content* of Hallie’s experience “belong to a common type”, even if the former is “successful” and the latter is “gappy”.² This *type* of content, then, is an example of a “content type”, which constitutes the “phenomenal evidence” that Hallie and Percy have in common. She says that the content type “is neither a complete general proposition, nor a gappy token content” but rather a “potentially particularized” content or “content schema” (PE&FE, sect. 1).

So far, we have considered Schellenberg’s description of Percy and Hallie’s evidence in somewhat technical language. But it is natural to think that evidence is something that is potentially communicated or at least gestured at in ordinary language. That is so on Williamson’s view. Elsewhere (2012) I have asked Schellenberg how she would articulate, *in ordinary language*, “phenomenal evidence” and “factive evidence”, and the difference between them. She answers as follows:

The content type and token content of any subjectively indistinguishable perceptual experiences can be articulated in the very same way in natural language... Consider again a perceptual experience of a white cup. The content type and the singular token content can both be articulated with “that cup is white.” The demonstrative “that,” however, will play a different logical role in the two cases. In the content type, the demonstrative plays a character role—to use Kaplan’s terminology... It purports to refer to whatever particular, if any, there might be, without saying which it happens to be on a given occasion. By contrast, in the singular content, the demonstrative plays a content role. It refers to a specific particular singled out on a given occasion. (PE&FE, sect. 2)

¹ Schellenberg doesn’t explain “individuated by” here. Maybe she means that your phenomenal evidence on a certain occasion is just *identical with* a content type, and that your factive evidence is just *identical with* a token content. On the other hand, maybe she thinks that your factive evidence and phenomenal evidence are *distinct from* the associated content types or tokens which, she says, “individuate” them. (In line with this, elsewhere (2013, 736) she suggests that your factive evidence and your phenomenal evidence are things that *have* contents, not things that are *identical with* contents.) In that case, however, I wonder what kind of thing your factive evidence and phenomenal evidence *are*, according to Schellenberg.

² Schellenberg elaborates on this point elsewhere (2013, 730).

So it seems that, on this view, if Percy knew his evidence, he could articulate it in natural language as follows: “I have the [phenomenal] evidence *that that cup is white*, and, *in addition*, I have the [factive] evidence *that that cup is white*”.³

In sum, Schellenberg’s view of the two types of evidence, together with their ordinary-language characterizations, may be put as follows:

Common Phenomenal Evidence: *that cup is white*.

Percy’s Extra Factive Evidence: *that cup is white*.

To appreciate the difference with Williamson, consider a variation on the Percy-Hallie case. I have implicitly assumed hallucinating Hallie is an adult human capable of introspecting. But now suppose she a child or animal lacking the quite sophisticated capacity to know through introspection facts about how things appear to her. In that case, she cannot even know that there *appears* to be a white cup there, even though this is the case. Given Williamson’s $E = K$ thesis, this implies that Hallie in this case has *no* evidence whatever supporting her (false) belief that a white cup is there (2000, 199). This harsh verdict is counterintuitive—after all she is having an experience as of a white cup. By contrast, Schellenberg’s view avoids this harsh verdict by invoking the idea “phenomenal evidence”. This is one of the big payoffs of her view. On her view, whether or not Hallie can introspect, when she has her vivid hallucination of a white cup, she automatically has “phenomenal evidence” about her environment, constituted by a “content type” and expressible in ordinary language with “that cup is white”.

It should be mentioned that, since there is no white cup before Hallie, Schellenberg’s view apparently entails that Hallie’s phenomenal evidence (“that cup is white”) is *false*, contrary to the view supported by Williamson and others that evidence can only consist in *facts*. But Schellenberg is unperturbed. At the end of her paper, she herself points out that “phenomenal evidence *can be false*” (PE&FE, sect. 5, my italics).⁴

Now a natural question arises: Does the fact that, besides having “phenomenal evidence”, Percy has extra “factive evidence”, contribute something to the

³ Schellenberg’s view is that the first occurrence of “that cup” in Percy’s imagined speech plays a special “character role” (whereas the second occurrence plays the familiar “content role”, simply referring to the white cup). I note in passing that it is somewhat unclear what this means. There is no sentence of English that expresses (that is, is used to say) the character of “that cup is white”. In general, sentences of English are never used to express characters. Intuitively, in Percy’s imagined speech, both occurrences of “that cup” play the same semantic role, and rigidly designate the particular cup Percy sees. (Thanks here to Josh Dever)

⁴ Since she uses the term “phenomenal evidence”, one might think that Schellenberg holds that Hallie’s phenomenal evidence consists in a *fact about her own phenomenal or mental life*. In particular, one might think that Hallie’s phenomenal evidence is that there *appears* to be a cup before her, and, in general, a subject’s phenomenal evidence is constituted by facts of this kind. But this is obviously not a correct interpretation of Schellenberg’s view, for a number of reasons. First, on this view, phenomenal evidence would always consist in facts. Against this, at the end of her paper, Schellenberg notes that “phenomenal evidence *can be false*” (PE&FE, sect. 5, my italics). Second, Schellenberg holds that Hallie’s phenomenal evidence can be characterized in ordinary language with “that cup is white”, without resorting to phenomenal terms like “appears”. So phenomenal evidence is wholly about the environment. Third, Schellenberg holds that Hallie’s phenomenal evidence is constituted by a “content type”, and that instances of this type are ordinary contents about the environment, like *that cup is white*.

justification of his beliefs, beyond what is contributed by his having phenomenal evidence? Or is his extra factive evidence epistemically redundant?

Schellenberg devotes a section entitled “Evidence and Justification” to the issue of justification. I think that a close look at what she says reveals that she actually puts forward *two* distinct claims about justification.

First of all, she writes:

[The extra evidence] will have repercussions for what one is justified in believing.... while factive evidence supports singular beliefs as well as general beliefs, phenomenal evidence supports only general beliefs. (PE&FE, sect. 2)

In particular, thanks to his extra factive evidence, Percy is “justified in” having a certain *singular* belief about a particular existing cup. By contrast, because Hallie is hallucinating and only has “phenomenal evidence”, she is not justified in having this same singular belief, or indeed any singular belief about any existing cup, even if she might be justified in believing the general belief that there is *some* white cup before her. This implies that Percy and Hallie are in a position to form different justified beliefs. Call this *Different Justified Beliefs*.

I agree with Different Justified Beliefs. In fact, it follows naturally from familiar claims about content. To see this, start with another case. Suppose that Oscar and Twin Oscar are phenomenal duplicates who are both in pain. So they are both justified in believing what they’d express by saying “I’m in pain”. There is a sense in which their justified beliefs here differ, because they are different singular beliefs about different individuals. (There is another sense in which they believe the same thing, namely the narrow “*de se*” content *he himself is in pain*.)

Likewise, Percy and Hallie have justified beliefs they could express by saying something along the lines of “that cup is white”. For standard externalist reasons, there is a sense in which those beliefs differ. Percy succeeds in believing a singular proposition about a particular white cup that he sees, call it ‘cup₁₇’. By contrast, Hallie doesn’t see cup₁₇ or any other object, and we may suppose that she cannot form a singular belief about cup₁₇. Unlike Percy, Hallie has no justification for believing any singular proposition about this particular cup, which we may suppose to be quite remote from her.⁵

Now I turn to the second claim Schellenberg makes about justification. Like Williamson, she also clearly endorses a version of “More Justification”:

...factive evidence provides a rationality boost beyond the one that a perceiver already has from phenomenal evidence. This explains why Percy is in a better evidential position than Hallie. (PE&FE, sect. 1)

[My view] explains in virtue of what one is in a better epistemic position when one perceives than when one hallucinates. *One’s evidence in the good case*

⁵ One might think that internalists about justification cannot accept Different Justified Beliefs. But this is not true. Audi (2001, 32) and Silins (2005, 377) both recognize that mere phenomenal duplicates can have different justified beliefs owing to differences in what they are acquainted with, and offer formulations of “internalism about justification” on which it is compatible with this possibility.

justifies any supported belief to a higher degree than does one's evidence in the bad case. (PE&FE, sect. 2, my italics)

So, even though Schellenberg's version of Extra Evidence differs from Williamson's, she too combines it with a version of More Justification, which implies that Percy's belief in Cup (the general proposition *that there is a white cup there*) is "justified to a higher degree" than Hallie's belief in Cup.

Schellenberg's first claim about justification, namely Different Justified Beliefs, merely implies that there is a difference in *what* Percy and Hallie are justified in believing. By contrast, More Justification implies that there is a difference in *how much justification* Percy and Hallie have in believing certain things, for instance Cup.

In my view, what makes Schellenberg's view striking is that, like Williamson, she endorses a version of More Justification. After all, as I mentioned above, More Justification flouts the intuition many of us have about the case, namely that Percy and Hallie have the same degree of justification for believing Cup. And, unlike Different Justified Beliefs, it does not follow naturally from generally accepted ideas about content. If Schellenberg can provide a case for More Justification, this would be a significant result.

This brings me to a basic question I have about Schellenberg's view. As I explained, I can see the case for Different Justified Beliefs and I can also see how Schellenberg's version of Extra Evidence supports it. But what is her basis for the distinct claim of More Justification? As we saw, Williamson gives a clear argument for More Justification based his version of Extra Evidence and some standard Bayesian assumptions. But even if we *grant* Schellenberg's different version of Extra Evidence, I am not quite sure what her own argument for More Justification is. In the next section, I take this issue up.

2 What is Schellenberg's basis for More Justification?

I will critically discuss three possible routes Schellenberg might have to More Justification.

[1] Standard Bayesianism? We saw at the start of the previous section how Williamson naturally derives More Justification from his version of Extra Evidence together with a theory of propositional justification based on the ideas of standard Bayesianism.

Schellenberg does not likewise attempt to derive More Justification from her own version of More Evidence using standard Bayesian principles. In fact, it may be worthwhile to show that she cannot do so.

On Schellenberg's view, Percy's has the "factive" evidence "that cup is white". So, given standard Bayesianism, Cup has probability 1 on his evidence. For $P(e/e) = 1$ whenever it is defined. As for Hallie, Schellenberg's view is that Hallie's total evidence includes "phenomenal evidence" which, she says, can be articulated by saying "that cup is white". So it is very natural to suppose that, on Schellenberg's view, Hallie's phenomenal evidence *also* simply entails Cup, even

if that evidence happens to be false.⁶ Let us suppose that this interpretation is correct.⁷ Then, on standard Bayesianism, Cup has probability 1 conditional on her total evidence as well, even though she is hallucinating. (As we saw, this is not so on Williamson's view.) In short, unlike Williamson, Schellenberg *appears* to hold that that *both* Hallie and Percy are in possession of evidence that *entails* Cup. In that case, given standard Bayesianism, Schellenberg's own version of Extra Evidence fails to support her assertion of More Justification, that is, her assertion that Percy's evidence supports the belief in Cup "to a higher degree" than does Hallie's evidence.

Here I am not using standard Bayesianism to argue *against* Schellenberg's views. (Maybe Schellenberg rejects standard Bayesian assumptions.) My point is just that she cannot use it as a basis *for* More Justification. She needs a different argument.

[2] **More Evidence = More Justification?** Schellenberg tentatively says that "having more evidence for a proposition p means that p is better justified" (PE&FE, sect. 2). Call this informal principle *More Evidence = More Justification*. Soon after, she asserts More Justification. So her basis for More Justification might derive from this principle together with her view that Percy has "more evidence" for Cup: Percy has phenomenal evidence and factive evidence for Cup whereas Hallie only has phenomenal evidence.

But this principle is unclear. How does Schellenberg understand "having more evidence for p ". (If by this she means "having more justification for p ", then the principle becomes trivially true, but of course in that case it cannot be used in a non-question begging argument *for* More Justification.) On some interpretations, the principle is false. There are many other cases in which one has "more evidence" for p in some sense but not "more justification" for believing p .⁸ For instance, suppose that some friends of Pip and Heidi were in a card game last night but neither Pip nor

⁶ I note in passing that it is unclear whether Schellenberg thinks that phenomenal evidence is *always* false in hallucination cases. Suppose that there happens to be a white cup before Hallie, so she is having a "veridical hallucination". Maybe in this version of the Hallie case Schellenberg would say that Hallie's phenomenal evidence is true, just as she would (presumably) say that Percy's phenomenal evidence is true.

⁷ My interpretation of Schellenberg in the text is that she thinks that Hallie's phenomenal evidence *entails* Cup. On this interpretation, she holds that phenomenal evidence is *truth-conditional*, so it makes sense to say that it can stand in entailment relations. That interpretation is also supported by her remark that "phenomenal evidence *can be false*" (PE&FE, sect. 5, my italics), which shows that she thinks that phenomenal evidence sometimes entails a falsehood like Cup. (If she thinks Hallie's phenomenal evidence doesn't entail Cup, what *does* she think it entails?) But I should mention that I am not completely sure that this interpretation is correct. For she also claims that phenomenal evidence is "constituted by" a *content type*. And, while *contents* are truth-conditional, it is just not clear to me whether "types" of content are also truth-conditional. If Schellenberg holds that types of content are *not* truth-conditional, and if she holds that phenomenal evidence is "individuated by" types of content, then she might claim that *phenomenal evidence* is also not truth-conditional. In any case, if Schellenberg's view is indeed that phenomenal evidence is *not* truth-conditional, I would say that her view is problematic. For it is a truism that evidence is the sort of thing that can be said to entail or rule out various hypotheses, so, on any reasonable view of evidence, it should be truth-conditional (Williamson 2000, 194–200).

⁸ In fact, there are well-known cases where $E1$ is evidence for H , and $E2$ is evidence H (on the standard "probability-raising" account of evidence-for), but a subject who has $E1$ and $E2$ has *less* justification for H than a subject who only has $E1$. (Thanks to Sinan Dogramaci here.) Another potential counterexample to "More Evidence = More Justification" is a case where one acquires new evidence for p but one is *already* certain that p , so that one doesn't thereby gain any more justification for believing p .

Heidi was there. The next day a friend who was there tells Heidi “someone won \$100 last night!” and then later tells Pip “someone won \$100 last night – by the way, it was John.” There is some sense in which Pip has more evidence than Heidi for the belief that someone won \$100: Pip gets general information *and* singular information supporting this belief, whereas Heidi only gets general information. But it simply doesn’t follow from this difference that Pip’s belief that someone won \$100 is “more justified” than Heidi’s belief that this happened. Intuitively, despite this difference, they might be *equally justified* in believing someone won \$100, if they are equally trusting of their informant who told them so.

Maybe the Percy-Hallie case is like this. True, since Percy is seeing a particular cup while Hallie is merely (unwittingly) having a hallucination of one, Percy has singular information supporting Cup that Hallie lacks. But this doesn’t show that Percy is “justified to a higher degree” in believing Cup (that is, *some white cup is present*). In any case, since Schellenberg’s tentative “More Evidence = More Justification” principle is unclear and may be open to counterexamples, it cannot provide a strong basis for More Justification.

[3] Stronger Linkage? Schellenberg writes:

[Factive evidence] is evidence of a different kind insofar as the systematic linkage to the environment is stronger than the one governing phenomenal evidence. More specifically, it is evidence of a different kind because it is provided by successfully employing perceptual capacities in a particular environment. So factive evidence provides a rationality boost beyond the one that a perceiver already has from phenomenal evidence. (PE&FE, sect. 1)

This passage suggests yet a third basis for More Justification. Schellenberg says that factive evidence is “governed by” a linkage to the environment, that phenomenal evidence is “governed by” a (different) linkage to the environment, and that *the former linkage is stronger than the latter*. Call this “Stronger Linkage”. Maybe her idea is that it is Stronger Linkage which grounds More Justification, the claim that Percy’s belief in Cup is “justified to a higher degree” than Hallie’s belief in Cup.

I would raise two problems. First, Schellenberg assumes that linkages come in degrees of strength and that one can be “stronger than” another. But what this mean? Does Schellenberg just mean that having factive evidence derives in every case from successfully perceiving the world, whereas phenomenal evidence doesn’t in all cases derive from successfully perceiving the world?

My second problem is, I think, more serious: in any case, it is far from obvious that Stronger Linkage (whatever Schellenberg’s understanding of it may be) supports More Justification. Such a principle is not immediately compelling. (After all, even if “Stronger Linkage” is true, many find it plausible that Percy and Hallie are justified to the *same* degree in believing Cup.) And I’m not sure how it might be supported by argument.

To sum up: even if we *grant* her version of Extra Evidence, I am not sure what Schellenberg’s basis for asserting More Justification might be.

3 A problem case: seamless transitions between good and bad cases

Schellenberg applies her view to the Brain-in-the-Vat Case and Evil Demon Case. These might be called *between-subject good-bad cases*. Schellenberg thinks her view correctly entails that there is a difference in evidence between subjects in these cases.

Elsewhere (2011) I have used a related but somewhat different case to make a new problem for certain views of evidence and justification, a problem that I think is tougher. We might call this different case a *diachronic within-subject case*. More recently, in “What is my evidence that there is a hand?” (2014), Roger White has independently used the very same case to make exactly the same argument.

Here is an example of the type of case:

Seamless Transition Case. Hallie starts out having a perfect hallucination of a white cup on a table, although she has no idea that she is hallucinating. Then her hallucination ceases, but at the same time a white cup is placed on a table before her. The result is that she transitions between hallucination and veridical perception. Yet there is no phenomenal change in her experience. In fact, there is also no other change in her phenomenal life at all. *Even so, suppose that, at the transition point, Hallie becomes more confident in Cup, the proposition that there is a white cup there.* (Pautz 2011, p. 427, n. 19; White 2014, 312).

Let me emphasize that Hallie’s increase in confidence is not due to her being assured by others that there is a white cup there, or anything like that. She just becomes more confident at the transition point.

What is unique about the Seamless Transition Case, as compared with the standard between-subject cases that Schellenberg focuses on, is that it is a *diachronic within-subject case*. We are following a single subject through time. Because of this, we can ask what kind of *changes* in confidence the subject has a justification for, which we cannot do in the standard between-subject cases. I have stipulated that, at the transition point, Hallie *increases* her confidence in Cup, even though she doesn’t then undergo any phenomenal change, and has no idea she is transitioning from the hallucinatory case to the veridical case. Here now is the question: Does Hallie have a *justification* for increasing her confidence?

Let us first ask what the verdict of Schellenberg’s view is. Recall that Schellenberg’s accepts Extra Evidence and holds that “one’s evidence in the good case justifies any supported belief to a higher degree than does one’s evidence in the bad case” (PE&FE, sect. 2). So she accepts More Justification as well as Extra Evidence (even though, as we saw, it is not obvious how she might support More Justification). On her view, then, at the transition point, Hallie’s belief in Cup becomes “justified to a higher degree” than it was before the transition point.

Now here is an undeniable principle linking degree of justification with level of confidence: if at time t your belief that p becomes “justified to a higher degree” than it was before t , then you have justification for increasing your confidence in

p. Putting all this together, Schellenberg is committed to claiming that at the transition point, Hallie has a *justification* for increasing her confidence in Cup.⁹

But we find this verdict to be radically mistaken. Recall that there is no phenomenal change in Hallie's experience at the transition point, and she has no idea that she is transitioning between hallucination and veridical perception. In fact, there is no other phenomenal change in her mental life at all. Her increase in confidence in Cup is totally *capricious* and *irrational*. As I put the point (2011, p. 427, n. 19), there is just no sense in which her increase in confidence is epistemically OK. As White (2014, 312) puts it, we find it "baffling".¹⁰ She has no justification at all for increasing her confidence in Cup.

Schellenberg may hold onto her view and insist Hallie *does* have such a justification. But at the very least our reaction to this case provides strong reason to doubt that view.

4 A second problem case: graded perceptual justification and evidence

Consider the following case:

The Complex Percy Case: Percy is having an ordinary veridical experience of two uniformly colored tomatoes and two uniformly colored bananas on a table in ideal light. It is obvious to him that each of the tomatoes is a shade of red and that each of the bananas is a shade of yellow. So he has a great deal of justification for believing these simple color propositions. What is less obvious to him is whether the shades of red of the two tomatoes are different. It *kind of* seems to him that they are, and if forced to choose he would go for the "different" option, but he cannot be so confident. (If it is a case of a difference in color, it is what practitioners of psychophysics call a *just noticeable* difference in color.) Likewise, it *kind of* seems to him that the distance between the tomatoes is slightly greater than the distance between the bananas. While he isn't justified in outright *believing* this, his experience justifies him in having *some* level of "credence" in it.

Often epistemologists simplify. They ask what makes it the case that one has a justification for outright believing here is a hand, or here is a white cup. But the real facts about perceptual justification are more complex. In particular, perceptual justification is graded. For instance, in the Complex Percy case, Percy is not justified

⁹ Here is an analogy. If at time *t* you get expert testimony for a hypothesis *p*, so that your belief in *p* becomes "justified to a higher degree", then you have a justification for becoming more confident in *p*. Likewise, if Schellenberg is right that at the transition point Hallie's belief in Cup becomes "justified to a higher degree", then Hallie has a justification for then becoming more confident in Cup. I don't see what could justify treating the cases differently.

¹⁰ The claim that Hallie's increase in confidence lacks justification does not depend on any controversial transparency assumption about evidence (which Schellenberg rejects in her paper), nor does it depend on the assumption that indistinguishability from the inside entails sameness in justified levels of confidence (an assumption which leads to a sorites paradox). The claim is rather based on our immediate reaction to the case. Compare our immediate judgment that in Gettier cases the subjects don't have knowledge.

in outright believing certain subtle propositions about colors and distances, but he does have a justification for having various levels of confidence in them. Of course cases of graded perceptual justification like this could be multiplied.

Schellenberg herself implies that perceptual justification is graded when she says, “One’s evidence in the good case justifies any supported belief to a higher degree than does one’s evidence in the bad case” (PE&FE, sect. 2). I expressed some worries about that particular claim, but I very much agree with her that perceptual justification is graded. What I am suggesting now is that, even *within* a good case or bad case, one has more justification for some propositions than for others.

Schellenberg’s epistemology of perception is evidence-based. Presumably, she would say that Percy has some “factive evidence” for obvious color and distance propositions, and that he also has some “factive evidence” for the subtler color-difference and distance propositions I have discussed. Maybe Schellenberg should modify her view to incorporate the idea that different pieces of evidence have different “weights”. So Percy’s justified level of credence in some propositions is higher than his justified level of credence in others.

In short, when one has a certain experience, then there is a ranking in one’s justified levels of confidence in various propositions, from the very low (small credence) to the very high (outright belief). Here now is the problem: What is it about the experience, or the circumstances, that determines this—that is, that determine what the subject’s relative justified levels of credence are for various propositions (Pautz 2011, 397–398)? Call this the *grounding question* about degrees of justification.

On many views, this question is hard to answer. On *simple dogmatism* (e.g. Pryor 2000), if you have no reason to believe defeaters obtain, then you have “immediate” justification for *outright believing* environmental proposition *p* just in case *you have an experience that “represents” that p*. But, on standard views, *having an experience that represents that p* is a binary condition: your experience either represents a proposition, or it doesn’t.¹¹ So, on the face of it, there is nothing in this view that might explain why Percy’s has a lower justified level of confidence in some propositions than in others. It appears that, on this view, you either have immediate justification for *outright believing* a proposition, or you have no immediate justification at all. On *acquaintance-based views*, the basis of perceptual justification is just being acquainted with environmental facts, the truth-makers of our immediate perceptual beliefs. But most take acquaintance to be binary: either you are acquainted with a fact, or you are not. So the same problem arises. On Williamson’s *knowledge first view*, in the normal case, we just know certain things about your environment and not others. This is the basis of perceptual justification. But knowledge, too, is binary, not gradable. You cannot know one proposition “more than” another.

At first blush, Schellenberg’s view may have more resources than these other views for answering the grounding question. As we saw in Sect. 2, one notion in her

¹¹ For instance, on many views, having an experience that represents a certain proposition is explained in terms of having a state that tracks a certain state of affairs in good cases. But this “tracking” condition doesn’t admit of degrees.

theory is a graded notion, namely *strength of a linkage*. In particular, she thinks that the linkage governing factive evidence in the good case is “stronger than” the linkage governing phenomenal evidence in the bad case, and that this means that there is a graded difference in justification *across* good and bad cases (“More Justification”). So maybe Schellenberg could answer the grounding question by saying that, even *within a case* (such as the Complex Percy case), there can be differences in “strength of linkage” for various pieces of evidence. But I am not at all sure what this might mean or how such an account might go.¹²

In my view, a more natural answer to the grounding question builds on an idea due to Jim Pryor (2000, 547). Pryor holds that in experience we are presented with certain propositions about the environment with “phenomenal force”. He doesn’t discuss the matter, but maybe we should add that in experience we are presented with some propositions with *more* “phenomenal force” than others, and that plays a role in grounding differences one’s justified level of confidence in those propositions.¹³

Might Schellenberg accept this answer to the grounding question? I do not think so. This answer to the grounding question goes naturally with a general *experience-first* approach to perceptual justification, according to which the conscious character of experience plays a prominent and essential role in grounding facts about perceptual justification. By contrast, Schellenberg’s view might be described as a “capacities first approach”. So, I am unsure how she might answer the grounding question about the graded character of perceptual justification.

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¹² In many cases, Schellenberg might naturally suggest a different answer to the grounding question, one appealing to *background beliefs*. For instance, suppose that at the zoo you have various confidences in various hypotheses about what kinds of animals you are seeing. This obviously derives from nothing but differences in your degree of justification for *background beliefs* connecting visible properties with different animal types. However, I don’t see how Schellenberg might similarly appeal to nothing but differences in the justification of background beliefs to answer the grounding question in my Complex Percy case (or the similar cases in Pautz 2011, 397–398). As I am about to explain, here it is very natural to invoke the idea that some propositions about color or distance are presented with more “phenomenal force” than others.

¹³ For a brief discussion of the graded phenomenal force idea, both in the perceptual domain and the intuitive domain, see Pautz (2011, 397–398). Morrison (ms) develops a view of this kind in the perceptual domain (though his motivation is not answering my question of what grounds differences in degrees of perceptual justification).

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