

Here is the third and final installment of my response to Matt's initial comments.

Matt writes "But I take it that for Schellenberg explaining the epistemic force of experience requires postulating no more of a common factor than the involvement of the 'same perceptual capacities'." Matt is right that on my view the perceptual capacities employed in experience are what ground the epistemic force of experience in virtue of certain properties of these capacities. However, employing such capacities yields perceptual content. (I argue for this in my "Perceptual Content Defended", *Nous*, 2011). More specifically, I argue that employing perceptual capacities yields a content type that subjectively indistinguishable experience have in common. Employing perceptual capacities in a particular environment yields a token content that covaries with the environment of the experiencing subject. It is important that employing perceptual capacities yields perceptual content, since ultimately we want to say that the content of experience can play a role in inferences. We can infer things from the content of our experience. For instance, we can infer that there is an apple on the table in virtue of having evidence that that red apple is on the table. This is one important aspect of the epistemic impact of experience. But as Matt notes, the fact that experience has content is not what explains its epistemic force.

Matt asks whether Swampman can possess perceptual capacities? If perceptual capacities are understood in an evolutionary way, then Swampman could not possess the capacities in play. However, if they are understood in a non-evolutionary way, then Swampman could possess the relevant capacities. After all, no past experiences are necessary to possess such capacities. The condition for their possession is understood counterfactually: if one possess the capacity to single out red, then one would be able to single out an instance of red, were one related to such an instance. For my purposes, I can remain neutral on whether capacities are understood in an evolutionary or a non-evolutionary sense. For reasons independent of the paper, I want to understand them in a non-evolutionary way. But one can accept everything I say in the paper and understand them in an evolutionary way.

Now Matt asks a more general question, namely why the metaphysical structure of experience matters in explaining its epistemic force. The standard epistemological question asked about experience is how experience justifies beliefs. In answering this question, it is often assumed that experience provides us with evidence and the discussion focuses on what the relationship is between this evidence and the beliefs that experience justifies. I am not addressing this question in this paper. I am asking a more fundamental question, namely what it is about experience that in can be the kind of thing that has an epistemic impact.

Thanks again to Matt for his great comments. I really appreciate it!