

"Perceptual Entitlement and Natural Norms"

Reliability theories of perceptual warrant--and in particular perceptual entitlement--see perceptual warrant turning on the reliability of the perceptual system and the transition to perceptual belief. The case of the massively deceived, disembodied brain-in-a-vat is a familiar challenge to such theories: warrant should persist in such a case, even though reliability vanishes. So how could warrant turn on reliability, if warrant persists when reliability vanishes? Alvin Goldman proposed relativizing warrant to reliability in "normal worlds." Ernest Sosa proposed relativizing it to warrant in the actual world. Neither provide good accounts. Neither explain why warrant should persist when reliability vanishes. In other work I ("Epistemic Entitlement" *Nous* 2011) have proposed a more biological account of perceptual warrant where it consists in the normal functioning of the belief forming process for the human visual system has as an etiological function producing true beliefs reliably. And since the system can function normally outside of normal conditions, a brain-in-a-vat can enjoy warranted perceptual beliefs. This paper juxtaposes this account to Burge's account in his 2003 PPR paper, "Perceptual Entitlement." Burge sees perceptual warrant turning on matter of fact reliability in normal conditions, where normal conditions are formative conditions for the natures of perceptual states. If a perceptual state is reliable in normal conditions, then he claims it contributes to warrant in any condition. I argue that Burge's account does not fully explain why this should be so.