

Warrant and immediate justification

The talk deals with immediate justification of perceptual beliefs. The core of the issue concerns the proof of the existence of the external world given by G. E. Moore (1939): what justifies Moore in believing that he is not in a skeptical scenario.

Two theses have been set up depending on the treatment of the skeptical hypotheses. On the one hand, the *Conservatism* – following Pryor’s terminology – holds that the justification of a perceptual belief, like one has hands, is mediate. The justificatory force of the argument is given by the possession of independent justification to disbelieve skeptical hypotheses (brain in a vat, evil demon) about one’s experience (Wright 2000; Davies 2000, 2003). On the other hand, the *Liberalism* claims that one’s perceptual experience is a source of immediate justification of one’s perceptual belief. A subject needs not have independent justification in order to believe that she has hands besides her perceptual experience. This position is founded on certain warrant we have to believe given our epistemic status (Pryor 2000, 2004, 2007). Nevertheless, that explanation does not deal directly with the kind of skeptical hypotheses above.

The paper reaches with Liberalism and an internalist position. The conservative thesis will be left out. Justification is considered immediate, *prima facie* and defeasible. And it is taken as a property of perceptual beliefs – the fact of being justified – independently of whether we can show that our belief is justified.

Liberalism has been recently slightly reformulated by Silins (2007). He understands it as the thesis that perceptual experience is a source of immediate justification for perceptual beliefs and it is that experience which furthermore gives us justification to disbelieve skeptical hypotheses (brain in a vat, evil demon). Following that interpretation, he endorses a new position he calls the *Rationalist Liberalism* (RL): experience is a source of immediate justification for perceptual beliefs; however, having perceptual justification in believing we have hands is something different from having justification to reject skeptical hypotheses about our experience. In order to have an immediately justified belief we need both justifications. In other words, it is not sufficient for Moore be immediately justified in believing he has hands grounded on his perceptual experience, he must also have independent justification for rejecting skeptical hypotheses about his experience.

My first aim is to show that: First, the RL seem not add so much to the Liberal thesis. RL must be only understood as a response to the Conservatism respect to the skeptical hypotheses: we can have independent justification in believing we are not in a skeptical scenario without being committed to endorse Conservatism. Second, given those two claims: (1) perceptual justification is independent of the justification for rejecting skeptical scenarios and, (2) if (a) one’s experience as of hands immediately justifies one in believing that one has hands, then (b) one has reason to believe that he is not in a skeptical scenario (Silins 2007, 133); we could consider b as a defeater in the traditional explanation of Liberalism. That is to say: (a) one’s experience as of hands immediately justifies one in believing that one has hands, if (b*) one has no evidence that he is not in a skeptical scenario. In other words, RL could be understood as: one is immediately justified in believing one has hands if one has independent justification for defeating possible defeaters of kind b*. Then, the RL condition of having independent justification to reject skeptical hypotheses could be interpreted in the Liberal account as the reasons we have for defeating the b* defeaters. So, it seems that RL is not different of Liberalism.

The second objective is to give an account of what is the kind of warrant the Liberalist disposes for being immediately justified and avoiding skeptical scenarios. The explanation of warrant will not give a definitive answer against the skepticism, it will be partial. Nevertheless, it will be consider the best partial solution to the problem.