

Abstract

In this paper I intend to argue for a position on the justification of memory beliefs. I call that position Mnemonic Phenomenal Conservatism (M-PC). My position is most similar to that set out by Huemer in *The Problem of Memory Beliefs*. M-PC is a dualist theory insofar as it endorses both a preservationist condition (PRES) and a conservative condition (PC). Mnemonic Phenomenal Conservatism can be stated as follows:

M-PC:

- a) PC: If it seems to S that p, then, in the absence of defeaters, S thereby has at least some degree of justification for believing that p; and
- b) PRES: For any subject, S, his memory belief p is justified all-things-considered at T2 iff p is justifiedly formed by S at an earlier time, T1.

I motivate M-PC in three ways. The broad contours of my argument are as follows:

- i) Firstly, I argue for the dualistic nature of any satisfactory account. I do this in Section 2 by showing that our intuitions regarding the justification of memory beliefs are likely to be influenced by the perspective that we take. These are the 'historical' and the 'time-slice' perspectives. Since we consider memory beliefs from two distinct perspectives, a satisfactory theory of memory beliefs must account for the intuitions generated by looking at problem cases from each of these perspectives.
- ii) Secondly, I argue that PRES is a necessary part of a satisfactory account. I do this in Section 2 by a reductio on the denial of PRES. There, I also show that a similar preservationist condition is unable to account for our time-slice intuitions: our puzzle is missing a piece. Throughout the paper, the way that PRES operates in dealing with problematic examples should convince us the PRES does most of the heavy lifting in accounting for our historical intuitions.
- iii) Finally, I argue that PC is the missing piece of the puzzle. My argument to this effect is abductive. While evidentialism (two-types), coherentism and reliabilism fail to account for our time-slice intuitions, PC does so with very little fuss. Thus, PC provides the most plausible condition to add to PRES. Section 3 and 4 show that together these conditions handle mnemonic problem cases of every standard variety.