



Why E.N. Matters
Four Forms of E.N.
E.N. \neq Science
E.N. \rightarrow Scepticism
Philosophical Knowledge



Evidence Neutrality

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Is Evidence Psychological?
Philosophy as System Building
New Evil Demon Problem



Overview

- 1 Why Evidence Neutrality Matters
 - Is Evidence Psychological?
 - Philosophy as System Building
 - New Evil Demon Problem
- 2 Four Forms of Evidence Neutrality
- 3 Objection 1: Evidence Neutrality is Unscientific
- 4 Objection 2: Evidence Neutrality \rightarrow Scepticism
- 5 Objection 3: Psychological Evidence Can't Ground Philosophical Knowledge



Two Views of Perceptual Evidence

- **Perceptual Evidence is Psychological**

My perceptual evidence consists in facts about the psychological states I am in when undergoing a perceptual experience. (If you don't think that evidence is propositional, the evidence might be the states themselves; I'm going to presuppose evidence is propositional, and factive, for this talk.) So, for instance, my perceptual evidence might include that I'm visually representing that there is a table in front of me.

- **Perceptual Evidence is External**

My perceptual evidence consists in facts that I perceive. So, for instance, my perceptual evidence might include that there indeed is a table in front of me.



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Advantages of Psychological Approach

- It explains, in the simplest manner possible, why people suffering illusions still get evidence. Their evidence is just the same as if their perceptions were veridical.
- It removes a certain kind of doubt about our evidence.
- It explains why we generally know what our evidence is.
- It offers an easy theory of evidence possession.



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Advantage of External Approach

It isn't the psychological approach.



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Disadvantages of Psychological Approach

- It doesn't remove all doubt about evidence, particularly not about fineness of grain.
- It leads to scepticism.

Williamson is a prominent recent advocate of the idea that the way to defeat the sceptic is to deny that people in sceptical scenarios have the same evidence as we do, and hence that evidence is not narrow and psychological.



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My philosophical evidence consists in facts about the psychological states I am in when thinking about philosophy. So, for instance, my philosophical evidence might include that I intuit that it is permissible to unhook myself from Thomson's violinist, or that I intuit that Mary learns something when she leaves the black and white room.

- **Philosophical Evidence is External**

My philosophical evidence consists in facts that I know. So, for instance, my philosophical evidence might be that it is permissible to unhook myself from Thomson's violinist, or that Mary learns something when she leaves the black and white room (if either of those claims are true).



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Evidence Neutrality

- Evidence Neutrality is, roughly, that we should be able to agree on what the evidence is.
- It is interesting to Williamson because it can serve as a premise in an argument for philosophical evidence being psychological.
- Williamson wants to reject this conclusion, and believes that he must reject Evidence Neutrality to do so.



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Williamson on Evidence Neutrality

Although the complete elimination of accidental mistakes and confusions is virtually impossible, we might hope that whether a proposition constitutes evidence is in principle uncontentionably decidable, in the sense that a community of inquirers can always in principle achieve common knowledge as to whether any given proposition constitutes evidence for the inquiry.

We never get told much more precisely what Evidence Neutrality is. This is something we'll come back to in section 2. For now we'll just



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The Argument for Psychologising Evidence

- 1 Evidence Neutrality; i.e., philosophers collectively have to agree on what the evidence is.
- 2 The only things philosophers collectively can ultimately agree on are psychological states.
- 3 So our evidence is ultimately psychological.



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Doubts About Premise 2

- Some common ground evidence is not psychological.
For instance it is accepted on all sides of debates about vegetarianism that it is possible to have a healthy diet without eating meat.
- We can doubt reports of psychological states.
For instance we might think people have misstated the content of their intuitions, or that they are overstating their strength.
- So Evidence Neutrality does not make **all** evidence psychological.
But it seems it will lead to taking some evidence to be psychological.
- (Note here that I'm not taking collective agreement to be *universal*; more like a generic. So think of the kinds of p for which we can say *Philosophers agree that p.*)



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Philosophical Questions

As Jonathan emphasised on Monday, one interesting question for methodologists is *What are philosophical questions?*. Three answers spring to mind.

First-Order E.g. Is it always wrong to lie? Does knowledge require sensitive belief? Are subsets parts of sets?

Conceptual E.g. What are the natures of our concepts WRONG KNOWLEDGE, BELIEF, SET, PART?

Logical E.g. What are the natures of our words AND, OR?



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My answer is

- All of the above!
- I think that's true for both philosophy and science actually; science cares about concepts (and perhaps even words) as well as about their application.



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Philosophical Evidence

- Again, I want to say that all of these can be useful pieces of philosophical evidence.
- That might be too uncontroversial, so let me say something a little more controversial.
- I think any of the categories of evidence could, and indeed frequently do, provide excellent evidence for answering questions from any of these categories.
- In particular, I think intuitions can provide good evidence for an answer to a first-order question.



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3 Kinds of Liberalism about Methodology

Questions

First-Order
Conceptual
Linguistic

Evidence

First-order
Intuitive
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- The topics liberal says that all three are good questions.
- The evidential liberal says that all three are good evidence.

- The methodological liberal says that all three are good methodology.
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What are Intuitions

- I don't really know.
- Everything I say here will be neutral between two *kinds* of definition.

- One kind says that intuitions are seemings in a very weak sense.

The kind I mean is when I see a tennis player limping after a point and I say "She seems to be hurt."

- Another says that they are seemings that don't fall into one or other distinctive category, such as perceivings, inferrings, remembering, etc.
- It's a good question which is correct, or whether something quite different is, but it's not my question.



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Inputs to Philosophy

- The main aim of this paper is to defend a form of Evidence Neutrality, and with it a view of philosophy that includes some evidence being psychological.
- Before we get to those details, I want to start with the picture I have of philosophy, and why I'm motivated to resist the purely externalist picture of philosophy that Williamson offers.



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Human Knowledge

- Philosophy is largely about systematising disparate realms of knowledge.
- Some of that is knowledge we have from science, e.g., that physical and phenomenal states are correlated.
- Some of it is knowledge is folk wisdom, e.g., that there are mountains in Switzerland.
- And some of it is stuff we tacitly know, but needs to be elicited Meno-style through well designed thought experiments.



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The Role of Intuitions

- Intuitions, in any field, are a way of retrieving and articulating this kind of background knowledge. Philosophers make use of this method a lot, but it's hardly unique to philosophy.
- So a good creative director will have very reliable intuitions about what kind of ad campaign will work, even if she can't quite articulate why one campaign is better than another.
- We don't need to believe in anything as occult as Gödelian, or even Moorean, intuition to believe that a creative director can know what will and won't work by trusting her intuitions.
- Philosophical intuitions are often similar; in the hands of an expert they reveal knowledge that we can't explain, ground or justify to others.



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Evidence and Knowledge

- Given what we've said so far, you might expect evidence to be external facts.
- After all, I've said that the aim of philosophy is to systematise our *knowledge*.
- But we must remember that evidence plays multiple roles in epistemology.



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False Impressions

- A rational philosopher is responsive to her evidence.
- What should we say then about philosophers whose intuitions, though genuine, are mistaken?



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- There are some false intuitions.
- For instance, Frege thought Axiom V was true, and perhaps that's a false intuition.
- Frank Jackson had the intuition that Mary learns something on leaving the room. (Thanks to Julia Langkau for suggesting this example.)
- Philosophers claim to have different intuitions about swampman, so some of them must be mistaken.
- It would be very surprising if all our ethical intuitions turned out to be true.
For instance, I'd be very surprised if all of our trolley problem intuitions are true.



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- It seems implausible to say that all such philosophers lack any evidence for their views, and hence are not having beliefs that reflect their evidence, and hence are irrational.
- For instance, it seems implausible to say that Frank Jackson was being blatantly irrational when he concluded that physicalism was false on the basis of the Mary example.
- But if he had no evidence for his position, he would be blatantly irrational.
- So I conclude that his (false) intuition that Mary learns something on leaving the room was evidence. That means the state of his having the intuition was evidence, not the content of that intuition.



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Quality and Quantity of Evidence

- To the extent that misperceivers, and misintuiters, are rational, and that rationality requires respecting the evidence, we have to say that such thinkers have evidence.
- If evidence is factive, their evidence can't be the content of their intuition.
- The natural conclusion is that it is instead psychological evidence, i.e. the existence of the intuition.



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Part-Time Psychologising

Williamson seems to think that the main alternative to his position is that **all** evidence is psychological.

One result [of Evidence Neutrality] is the uneasy conception many contemporary analytic philosophers have of their own methodology. They think that, in philosophy, ultimately our evidence consists only of intuitions.



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Part-Time Psychologising

- That's implausible both as a claim about philosophers in general, and about what the alternatives are to Williamson's position.
- It was clearly part of Singer's evidence in *Animal Liberation* that eating a vegetarian diet was compatible with good human health.
- That's not just an intuition! Or at least, Singer (who isn't averse to relying on intuitions about cases) didn't just defend it as intuitive.



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Williamson on Perception

- My position is that carefully considered intuitions are evidence.
- I also think that, in some cases, the content of those intuitions is (non-psychological) evidence.
- This is very similar to Williamson's position on perception.
- When I see a desk in front of me, my evidence includes the fact that there is a desk in front of me.
- But when I hallucinate a desk in front of me, I still have some evidence, namely that there seems to be a desk in front of me.
- Williamson is forced to that position because he wants to say that deceived perceivers still have evidence.
- I want to say the same thing about deceived intuiters.



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What Kind of Agreement

- Evidence Neutrality requires that we agree about what the evidence is.
- This statement is ambiguous in an interesting way. (I'm indebted to Angela Harper for pointing this out to me.)
- It might require that if p is evidence, then we all agree about p , i.e., we all agree that p is true.
- Or it might require that if p is evidence, then we all agree that p is *evidence*.
- Call the first of these the **Alethic** reading and the second the **Apodeictic** reading.



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Alethic Neutrality

- This view says that each piece of evidence is such that we agree about it.
- That is, we agree that it is true.
- This is the version of Evidence Neutrality I want to defend.



Apodeictic Neutrality

- This view says that we must agree about what the evidence is, as such.
- So we must agree, for each proposition, not just whether it is true, but whether it bears on the proposition at issue.
- This seems to me to be false.
- If everyone agrees that p is true, it seems fine for someone to use it as evidence, even if other people think that it lacks evidential force.
- We'll come back to this in the discussion of rules and premises in the next section.



What is Evidence Neutrality

- One way to read Evidence Neutrality is as a descriptive claim.
- If S's peers do not agree about p , then p is not part of S's evidence.
- Another way is to read it as a normative claim.
- If S's peers do not agree about p , then S **should not** use p as evidence.
(I'm grateful to Jonathan Ichikawa for making the importance of this distinction clear.)



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Descriptive Evidence Neutrality

- This version of Evidence Neutrality seems false.
- If I have detected that p using a method I know to be reliable, then p is part of my evidence.
- That's true even if my friends don't agree that p is even true.
- Some people might disagree because they have distinctive views about the epistemology of disagreement, but I think you can know things your friends don't agree with.
- So we shouldn't defend this version of Evidence Neutrality, or even spend much time arguing about it.



Normative Evidence Neutrality

- This version of Evidence Neutrality is more interesting.
- There might be reasons why we should, as it were, *waive* evidence that our friends don't accept.
- This is what I'm going to argue for here.



What Kind of Norm

- Evidence Neutrality doesn't seem to be a *moral* norm.
- And it isn't an *epistemological* norm, though this is trickier.
- It doesn't seem to be irrational to rely on evidence your friends reject, though this may depend on just how we understand 'irrational'.
- It does seem like a very good *dialectical* norm.
- When arguing with someone, it's a good idea to start with evidence they accept.
- But that doesn't have any immediate consequences for methodology; maybe we shouldn't be aiming to convince the incorrigible.



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- What I want to argue is that it is a *methodological* norm.
- I think it's part of good practice in philosophy, and in other parts of academic inquiry, to rely only on evidence that is agreed upon by all parties to the debate.
- I think that, in general in the long run, theorists who adopt this norm will both (a) acquire more philosophical knowledge and (b) contribute more to the knowledge of the community.



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Four Versions of Evidential Neutrality

- Apodeictic; Descriptive ✗
- Apodeictic; Normative ✗
- Alethic; Descriptive ✗
- Alethic; Normative ✓
- Interestingly, all four versions seem strong enough to ground an argument for a (partially) psychological conception of evidence, and the fourth I think is true.



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Evidence Neutrality in Science

- If Evidence Neutrality is true, it is presumably true everywhere.
- So if it doesn't hold somewhere, e.g. science, it isn't true.
- That's one of the ways that Williamson argues.



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Williamson on Evidence Neutrality in Science

If Evidence Neutrality psychologises evidence in philosophy, it psychologises evidence in the natural sciences too. But it is fanciful to regard evidence in the natural sciences as consisting of psychological facts rather than, for example, facts about the results of experiments and measurements. When scientists state their evidence in their publications, they state mainly non-psychological facts (unless they are psychologists); are they not best placed to know what their evidence is?



Williamson on Evidence Neutrality in Science

- 1 If Evidence Neutrality psychologises evidence in philosophy, it psychologises evidence in the natural sciences too.
- 2 Evidence in the natural sciences is not psychologised.
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- Evidence Neutrality doesn't psychologise evidence in science, it institutionalises it.
- This is a point Jessica Brown made in a seminar on Williamson's book last year at Arché; the rest of this section will be a development of that point.



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Evidence in Science

- Here's one way to preserve Evidence Neutrality in a field.
- Adopt some standards for something being evidence in that field, standards that are in practice (if not always in theory) decidable.
- Then take questions about whether those standards are good standards to belong to *another* field.
- That is, take it that people who are questioning the standards to be outside the community in the sense relevant to Evidence Neutrality.
- They might of course be part of another intellectual community, but they aren't part of this community.
- That way we can preserve Evidence Neutrality within every given community.



Foul Neutrality

- Compare a principle we might call Foul Neutrality governing a sport.
- It is fairly important that we have a decision procedure for what's a foul.
- We don't get that by psychologising evidence about fouls!
- Rather, we get it by institutionalising it. The referee's word is conclusive.
- The referees could be wrong, and indeed we could have interesting projects about improving the quality of referees.
- But when we engage in that project we've stopped playing football.
- The community of footballers (as such) satisfies FN because it's part of being in that community that we take the referee's word as final.



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Using and Testing Measuring Devices

- Science isn't like football in that it requires absolute respect of the referee's judgment.
- But it is frequently true that the project of using methods or devices to produce evidence is quite distinct from the project of evaluating whether those methods or devices are good.
- And we can sensibly individuate communities by looking at which methods they take as given.
- The short version of my response to this argument is that that's really how science works; i.e. that science consists of communities so individuated.



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Using and Testing Measuring Devices

- Each community has a refereeing institution.
- The referee is usually not a person, but will be more like a method. The upshot is that anyone who uses that method (correctly) gets to take its outputs as evidence.
- Most of the time, that's how normal science works.
- When it fails, we sometimes are pushed towards psychologising evidence in science.
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Using and Testing Measuring Devices

- Each community has a refereeing institution.
- The referee is usually not a person, but will be more like a method. The upshot is that anyone who uses that method (correctly) gets to take its outputs as evidence.
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Williamson on Evidence Neutrality in Science

- 1 If Evidence Neutrality psychologises evidence in philosophy, it psychologises evidence in the natural sciences too.
- 2 Evidence in the natural sciences is not psychologised.
- 3 So Evidence Neutrality does not psychologise evidence in philosophy.
- 4 If Evidence Neutrality were true, it would psychologise evidence in philosophy.
- 5 So Evidence Neutrality is false.



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Evidence and Computation

- We might think that evidence must consist of facts measured rather than something about their measurement, because those are the kinds of things we can submit to statistical testing.
- But that argument, if it works, proves too much.
- For results of any interest, you have to describe how you got them, as well as what you got.
- But you can't do statistical analysis on a description of a kind of measurement.
- So it isn't true that all scientific evidence consists of things you can plug into mathematical equations.



Evidence and Computation

- On the other hand, this picture of scientific practice does seem to support the institutional picture of evidence.
- Why is it that we report the methods as well as the result?
- One simple answer is that it is settled (relative to the kind of science we're engaged with) that using that method produces scientific evidence, and that in reporting our methods, we are reporting that we've satisfied the community's standards for evidence.
- At this stage, challenges to the method will belong to a different discipline.
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Evidence in Engineering

- We can see this even more clearly if we look at engineering settings rather than science settings. Imagine we're working on a bridge construction project, and we need to know the density of some concrete.
- We've got a machine that measures concrete density, so we use it and, assuming the answers are plausible, we'll take those answers as given.
- Evidence Neutrality will be satisfied because we'll agree to use the machine.



Evidence in Engineering

- Of course, the only reason we trust the machine is that there is someone, typically someone else, whose job it is to test the machine on a regular basis, and have it serviced if it isn't.
- That is, we trust machines because they are calibrated.
- Although we might not know the details of how this process works, we'll have a nice certificate saying the machine is in good condition to use.
- Now the folks who calibrate machines like this aren't perfect, so there are other people whose job it is to audit them on a regular basis.
- And auditors aren't perfect either, so there will be some body, perhaps a certification board, that oversees them.



Evidence in Engineering and Science

- A positive mark from an auditor only licences a calibrator to approve a machine if the auditor is in turn certified. The board itself may need to be checked, so maybe it will have a board, perhaps including representatives of people like bridge builders who use the machines that we're all interested in.
- The crucial point about this story is that at every stage in the process, Evidence Neutrality is satisfied.
- It is similar, I think, in sciences, though the structure is more fluid.
- Just which sciences will validate the use of the measurement techniques in other sciences is not as straightforward as in engineering.
- And the precise boundary between questions that are internal to a given science and questions external to it will change over time.



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- When many questions central to the science start to turn on a particular kind of question about measurement, then those measurement questions may become part of the science. For instance, if experimental philosophy really takes off, perhaps questions about survey design will be regarded as philosophical questions in the future. More prominently, in recent years questions about the behaviour of satellites have become part of climate science because of the importance of satellites to climate measurement.
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Williamson's Objection
Institutions
Engineering



When Science Breaks Down

- The big difference between science and engineering is what happens at the end of the process.
- At a high enough level of abstraction, questions about evidence in engineering can become (loosely speaking) political questions, with ultimate questions of certification decided through somewhat political bodies.
- That's not what happens in pure science!
- So how might we satisfy Evidence Neutrality in basic physics?



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Evidence Neutrality in Basic Physics

- Two obvious answers spring to mind.
- One, either common sense or philosophy tells us that we can take perceptual evidence as given. So even in fundamental physics we can individuate the community in such a way that those who are raising sceptical doubts are doing something else, namely philosophy.
- The other answer is that we might take scientific evidence, at the most fundamental level, to be psychological states.



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- Certainly it isn't uncommon for philosophers of physics to take the role of physical theory to explain our observings.
- That's part of why we've ended up with such psychologically flavoured interpretations of quantum mechanics, from the Copenhagen interpretation to the many minds interpretation.
- Nor is it uncommon to hear theorists working on the foundations of statistical mechanics to take the evidence they ultimately have to explain to be psychological states.
- That's why some of them are so worried by the argument that the best statistical mechanical explanation of our current experiences is that the world just popped into existence.



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Evidence Neutrality in Basic Physics

- Perhaps that's just philosophers bringing in bad philosophical prejudices, but it seems like we can do science respecting Evidence Neutrality.
- That's because Evidence Neutrality usually is satisfied by the institutional structure of science, and when it isn't, it doesn't seem to destroy science to take some evidence to be psychological.
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Summary

- Evidence Neutrality is often satisfied by the institutional structure of science and engineering, so adopting Evidence Neutrality is not opposed to successful scientific practice.
- It is a *good thing* these domains accept Evidence Neutrality, because it allows for productive teamwork and division of intellectual labour.
- In basic sciences, Evidence Neutrality might imply that the evidence is ultimately psychological.
- But that isn't a *reductio* of Evidence Neutrality, because it's frequently accepted by theorists in those fields that evidence is indeed psychological.



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E.N. \rightarrow Scepticism
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No Exit
Rules vs Premises
Rule Neutrality



Overview

- 1 Why Evidence Neutrality Matters
- 2 Four Forms of Evidence Neutrality
- 3 Objection 1: Evidence Neutrality is Unscientific
- 4 Objection 2: Evidence Neutrality \rightarrow Scepticism
 - No Exit
 - Rules vs Premises
 - Rule Neutrality
- 5 Objection 3: Psychological Evidence Can't Ground Philosophical Knowledge



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From Neutrality to Failure

- Some people fail to be persuaded by genuinely good arguments.
- That suggests a problem.
- Couldn't we have very good evidence against a position, all of which is rejected by the partisans of that position?
- The simplest examples of this will be positions whose partisans are hostile to the very idea that evidence can tell in favour of anything at all.
- Wililamson uses that idea to argue against Evidence Neutrality, building on an idea we see in David Lewis's "Logic for Equivocators".



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Williamson on Psychological Evidence

Some scepticism, like scepticism about reason, is so radical that it leaves too little unchallenged for what remains as shared evidence to be an appropriate basis for evaluating the claims under challenge.



Lewis on Question Begging

The radical case for relevance [i.e. dialethism] should be dismissed just because the hypothesis it requires us to entertain is inconsistent. That may seem dogmatic. And it is: I am affirming the very thesis that Routley and Priest have called into question and—contrary to the rules of debate—I decline to defend it. Further, I concede that it is indefensible against their challenge. They have called so much into question that I have no foothold on undisputed ground. So much the worse for the demand that philosophers always must be ready to defend their theses under the rules of debate.



Lewis and Williamson Against Neutrality

- The point Williamson and Lewis make is clear enough.
- There are certain radical views that (a) we know to be mistaken, but (b) the nature of the position is such that it has, by its own lights, defences against the actual grounds for our knowledge that it is mistaken.
- Of course its lights are bad lights; our reasons are good reasons.
- But such positions have partisans. (This is clearer in Lewis's case than in Williamson's.)
- If our only evidence is the evidence they'll let us share, we won't have evidence against these positions.
- And that might suggest we don't really know the positions are mistaken, contrary to assumption. Reductio.



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Rules and Evidence

- That argument is too fast.
- Evidence Neutrality is a claim about evidence.
- It isn't a claim about what we can do with evidence.
- To see the importance of this distinction, recall the fable of Achilles and the Tortoise.



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Achilles and the Tortoise

- Achilles knows p , and $p \rightarrow q$. He wants to infer q .
- The tortoise says, wait a second, are you sure that's a good inference?
- Achilles says he is sure. He's sure, he says, that $(p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q$.
- The tortoise thinks for a second, and then says that that does sound right. Let's have that as another premise he says.
- Achilles happily agrees, and then proceeds to infer q .



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- Achilles says he is sure. He's sure, he says, that $(p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q$.
- The tortoise thinks for a second, and then says that that does sound right. Let's have that as another premise he says.
- Achilles happily agrees, and then proceeds to infer q .



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Achilles' Second Argument

- ① p
- ② $p \rightarrow q$
- ③ $(p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q$
- ④ So, q



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Achilles and the Tortoise

- The tortoise is still not sure. He wants to know how Achilles is drawing that conclusion.
- Achilles says he's sure that if $(p \wedge (p \rightarrow q) \wedge ((p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q$ then q .
- The tortoise agrees that looks true, and says it seems like a pretty good premise to have.
- Achilles tries again to infer q .



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Achilles' Third Argument

- 1 p
- 2 $p \rightarrow q$
- 3 $(p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q$
- 4 $(p \wedge (p \rightarrow q) \wedge ((p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q$
- 5 So, q



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Achilles and the Tortoise

- And the tortoise is again worried about why he's drawing that conclusion.
- The story continues for a surprising while, with Achilles adding more and more premises, and seemingly getting no closer to overcoming the Tortoise's worries.



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Achilles and the Tortoise

- And the tortoise is again worried about why he's drawing that conclusion.
- The story continues for a surprising while, with Achilles adding more and more premises, and seemingly getting no closer to overcoming the Tortoise's worries.



Achilles' Fourth Argument

- 1 p
- 2 $p \rightarrow q$
- 3 $(p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q$
- 4 $(p \wedge (p \rightarrow q) \wedge ((p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q$
- 5 $(p \wedge (p \rightarrow q) \wedge ((p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q) \wedge ((p \wedge (p \rightarrow q) \wedge ((p \wedge (p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow q$
- 6 So, q



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Lessons of the Fable

- There's a mundane lesson to be drawn from that, and an exciting lesson.
- The mundane lesson is that there is a distinction between premises and rules, and we need that distinction at the very least in logic.
- The exciting lesson is that rules aren't the kind of things that stand in need of rational justification.
- They are, to put it perhaps in Wittgensteinian terms, things that justify, rather than things that are justified.



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Justifying the Lesson

- We can imagine the tortoise not as an unhelpful interlocutor, but as our own nagging doubts. Our own inner Descartes, if you like.
- If the rules have justifications, then we should be able to give them.
- And if we give them, we can add them as extra premises from which we reason.
- But this is the key mistake Achilles makes.
- At some point we need to stop adding premises, and start doing something with the premises.
- And that can't always be supported by reasons.



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Rules Without Justification

- So I conclude rules don't need justification, i.e., they don't need justifying by evidence.
- That doesn't mean anything goes—you have to use *correct* rules. But you don't have to have any distinct justification for them.
- If you don't have to have any distinct justification for them, it would seem to follow that you shouldn't be required to be able to justify them to your friends.
- And that suggests that a broadly *dialectical* conception of rules would be mistaken.
- Good rules aren't always going to be rules that convince your friends.



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Against Rule Neutrality

- So although I support Evidence Neutrality, these reflections on Achilles and the Tortoise convince me that *Rule Neutrality* would be a bad thing.
- But note that once we ditch Rule Neutrality, we can respond to the extremists that Lewis and Williamson are worried about without sacrificing Evidence Neutrality.



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Against Dialethism

- Here's my evidence that dialethism is false: If dialethism is true, some contradiction is true.
- Taking that to be evidence doesn't violate Evidence Neutrality, because it's agreed on all sides.
- From that it follows, by a rule that I properly accept (i.e. reductio) that dialethism is false.
- This would be a bad argument if we were required to accept Rule Neutrality, but it doesn't violate Evidence Neutrality.



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Against the Reasons Sceptic

- It's a little trickier to respond to the reasons sceptic, but I think it can be done, especially if we think about induction.
- So imagine that I see a lot of Fs that are all Gs, and I see them in a lot of different places etc.
- I conclude, directly by employing an inductive rule, that I have good reason to believe the next F I see will be G.
- (I'm relying here on Bigelow and Pargetter's controversial views about induction.)
- So my frequent observation of green emeralds is sufficient evidence to conclude that I have a reason to believe something, and hence that reasons scepticism is false.



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For Evidence Neutrality

- Summing up, I think that Williamson here has run together two similar, but importantly distinct, principles: Evidence Neutrality and Rule Neutrality.
- I think he's right that if you accept both, you'll have thrown away all hope of a good response to certain positions to which there are good responses.
- So we shouldn't accept both of those principles.



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For Evidence Neutrality

- But if we accept that evidence is knowledge, as Williamson does, then we should think that all our evidence requires justification.
- And we shouldn't think that our rules do.
- Since the acceptability of our evidence/rules to our (rational) interlocutors is grounded in this need for justification, it seems that our reason to accept Evidence Neutrality is not a reason to accept Rule Neutrality.
- So Rule Neutrality must go.
- And when it does, the argument from extremism against Evidence Neutrality goes too.



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Intuitions are Reliable



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- 2 Four Forms of Evidence Neutrality
- 3 Objection 1: Evidence Neutrality is Unscientific
- 4 Objection 2: Evidence Neutrality \rightarrow Scepticism
- 5 Objection 3: Psychological Evidence Can't Ground Philosophical Knowledge
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Could Intuitions be Evidence?

- One might wonder whether the position I sketched in section 1 is really incompatible with Williamson's views.
- After all, I don't deny that evidence is sometimes non-psychological.
- And if we take evidence to be knowledge, then Williamson should agree that our intuitions are part of our evidence.
- After all, we often know that we have certain intuitions.



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Could Intuitions be Good Evidence?

- But I think some of the things Williamson says about psychological evidence suggest that if there is any such evidence, it must be quite poor evidence.
- And that's part of what I deny; I think Frank Jackson had quite good evidence in favour of dualism, even if there is ultimately better evidence in favour of materialism.



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Could Intuitions be Good Evidence?

- But I think some of the things Williamson says about psychological evidence suggest that if there is any such evidence, it must be quite poor evidence.
- And that's part of what I deny; I think Frank Jackson had quite good evidence in favour of dualism, even if there is ultimately better evidence in favour of materialism.



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Williamson on Psychological Evidence

For now I face the challenge of arguing from a psychological premise, that I believe or we are inclined to believe the Gettier proposition, to an epistemological conclusion, the Gettier proposition itself. That gap is not easily bridged.



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Williamson on Psychological Evidence

Since psychological evidence has no obvious bearing on many philosophical issues, judgment scepticism is also encouraged in ways that do not depend on the consequence fallacy.



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Williamson on Psychological Evidence

In explaining why we have intuitions, analytic philosophy has a preference for explanations that make those intuitions true over explanations that make them untrue, but the justification for that preference remains unclear.



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Psychological Evidence and Evidence Neutrality

- This is primarily an argument against taking psychological evidence to be a substantive part of philosophical evidence.
- But if it succeeds it turns quickly into an argument against Evidence Neutrality.
- That's because in a lot of cases the only evidence we can agree on is that something is intuitive.
- It better be possible to get from there to interesting philosophical conclusions if Evidence Neutrality is, as I claim, a good methodological norm.



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Reliability of Intuitions

- It's a mystery to me why Williamson thinks the gap between the psychological premise and the philosophical conclusion is so vast, and hard to gap.
- As long as we have evidence that intuitions are, broadly speaking, reliable, then we have a reason to (a) infer from p 's being intuitive to it being true, and (b) prefer explanations that make intuitions true.
- And we have plenty of such evidence.



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Intuitions in Business

- It's worth remembering here that it's not only philosophers who rely a lot on intuition.
- Any creative work (e.g., advertising) will rely a lot on the intuitions of the relevant experts.
- Even if the final product is empirically tested (e.g., run through a focus group), we need to rely on the intuitions of experts to know what is worth testing.
- These business intuitions clearly aren't pieces of *a priori* knowledge.
- And I don't claim that the relevant philosophical intuitions are *a priori* either.
- Rather, experts in both fields know a lot, and often the best method for coming to knowledge about particular cases is to ask reliable experts.



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Some Correct Intuitions

- If it had rained yesterday, 'water' would (still) refer to H_2O .
- If I walked up to someone in the audience and punched them in the nose for no reason, that would be wrong.
- If I waved my arms like a madman, and you were watching me, you would know I was waving my arms like a madman.

All of these are things that I intuited, and they are all correct.
These intuitions are, it seems, philosophically significant.



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There are indefinitely many more where they came from. If you like we could test them observationally, but I'd rather not punch anyone to make a philosophical point.



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Intuitions are Generally Correct

- It's true that in some borderline cases, intuition can go astray.
- And it's also true that some particular fields, such as probabilistic reasoning, intuition is very often unreliable.
- But that's no reason to be particularly suspicious of any one intuition, or to deny that a theory should make most of our intuitions come out true.



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Intuitions in Metaphysics

- This doesn't mean that intuitions are worthwhile everywhere.
- Indeed, it might be objected that in some areas, we have reason to believe that intuitions won't be reliable
- In particular, we don't have much reason to believe that they are reliable about, say, fundamental metaphysics.
- But, interestingly, the best philosophical work relies much less on intuition about fundamental matters, so it doesn't follow that there is any reason to think that our actual practice in using intuitions is misguided.



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Metaphysics and Lewisian Intuitions

- For instance, David Lewis was usually very happy to rely, quite extensively, on intuitions about causation, about convention, about knowledge, and about meaning.
- But most of his arguments about fundamental metaphysics do not rely nearly as directly on intuition.
- He relies on intuition, that is, just where we have reason to think that somewhat trained human intuition will be reliable.



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Lewisian Metaphysics without Intuition

- His argument for mereological universalism, the argument from indeterminacy, does not rely on anything that looks like an intuition; rather it relies on a theory about the nature of indeterminacy.
- His argument for temporal parts, the argument from temporary intrinsics, relies on theories about the nature of intrinsicness.
- And his argument for modal realism relies on the indispensability of concrete possible worlds to various theoretical activities.
- It seems to me that he is, quite properly, relying on intuition where we'd expect it to be reliable, and not where we'd expect it to be unreliable.



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