

On Williamson's Anti-Luminosity Argument

Brian T. Miller

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For reference:

A condition C is **luminous** =_{df} in every case α , if in α C obtains, then in α one is in a position to know that C obtains.

Steup – Are Mental States Luminous?

As discussed last time, TW's anti-luminosity argument derives a false conclusion from two premises, which Steup reproduces as:

(L) If (cold) in α_i , then K(cold) in α_i ¹

- this follows from Luminosity plus the fact that one continues to reflect on whether one feels cold

¹ this is equivalent to TW's (2_i)

(R) If K(cold) in α_i , then (cold) in α_{i+1} ²

- this is supposed to follow from TW's considerations about what's required in order to know that one feels cold

² this is equivalent to TW's (1_i)

The absurdity at the end of TW's anti-luminosity argument can be resolved by rejecting either (L) or (R). TW thinks we should reject (R), Steup argues we should reject (L) instead.

In Steup's reconstruction, TW motivates (R) as follows³:

Williamson motivates (R) by appeal to the plausible thought that knowledge requires reliability. According to Williamson, this requirement is to be understood as follows:

(PR1) If one knows that p in a given case, then p is true in every similar case in which one believes that p .^{4,5}

³ What follows is mostly a quote from the paper, with some simplification

Suppose:

(a) K(cold) in α_i

⁴ It would be much more perspicuous to say: (PR1*): (if one knows that p in α_i and one believes that p in α_{i+1}) then p is true in α_{i+1}

Since knowledge requires belief, we also have:

(b) B(cold) in α_i

⁵ No citation? Is this a quote or a paraphrase from TW? Anyone remember where (or if) TW says this?

What is going on one millisecond later in α_{i+1} ? NAC⁶ tells us that, even though in α_{i+1} one feels slightly less cold, one is not aware of this change. Hence, for any interval $\alpha_i - \alpha_{i+1}$ such that B(cold) in α_i , one will in α_{i+1} believe one is cold. So we have:

⁶ NAC: "one's feelings of heat and cold change so slowly during this process that one is not aware of any change in them over one millisecond". Much more on this below

(c) B(cold) in α_{i+1}

The step from (a) to (c) supplies Williamson with another premiss:

(PR2) If K(cold) in α_i then B(cold) in α_{i+1}

Since cases α_i and α_{i+1} are only one millisecond apart, and since one only feels only slightly less cold in α_{i+1} than one did in α_i , cases α_i and α_{i+1} are very similar. Given that the two cases are similar, (PR1) and (PR2) yield (R). (Steup 219)

Steup thinks that the flaw in TW's argument is found in the move from (b) to (c). In particular, he rejects the relevant version of the No-Awareness-Of-Change or NAC principle⁷

No-Awareness-Of-Change (NAC): Suppose that one's feelings of heat and cold change so slowly during this process that one is not aware of any change in them over one millisecond.⁸

BTM: (NAC) asserts that the rational basis for the belief that one is cold is the same in α_i and in α_{i+1} . Steup thinks that this important because it ensures that one *believes* that one is cold in α_{i+1} ⁹ But that's not obviously correct, because it's not clear that TW is really committed to (PR1) as the rational basis for accepting (R).

TW might just as easily argue from

PR1** If one knows that p in a given case, then p is true in every similar case¹⁰

together with the claim that α_i is very similar to α_{i+1} (which Steup concedes) to:

(R) If K(cold) in α_i , then (cold) in α_{i+1} ¹¹

BUT: while Steup isn't obviously correct about *the role* that (NAC) plays in TW's argument, he's certainly correct that it plays *some* crucial role

For now, let's proceed as if Steup's reconstruction of TW's argument for (R) is correct

(Back to Steup)

What (NAC) asserts that — at least in the case of feeling cold — there's a mismatch between the mental states we're in and our ability to discriminate between mental states: there can be a difference in state that we can't identify

⁷ The *principle* seems to be that the NAC *supposition* is possible. Let's just let this one pass...

⁸ this is a quote from KAIL p. 97, though Steup cites p. 94. Something has gone horribly wrong with Steup's page citations (that happens sometimes in edited volumes with a shared bibliography). Also, when he cites 'Williamson 2000' he's sometimes referring to a book symposium with replies by TW in PPR V. 70 No. 2 2005 March

⁹ this is clearer looking at (PR1*) than at (PR1)

¹⁰ NB this doesn't require that those similar cases be such that one believes that p

¹¹ R = TW's (1_i)

How to understand this claim? Steup's Figure 13.1 (p. 221)

Define the *minimally discernible changes* as the minimum difference between mental states ϕ_1 and ϕ_2 required before an agent can distinguish between them¹²

TW's assumption underlying NAC is that '...in between each minimally discernible change of feeling ϕ , one undergoes a multitude of *indiscernible* changes of feeling ϕ .' (221)

NB: In figure 13.1 minimally discernible changes to the awareness of feeling ϕ are discreet while the changes in the feeling that ϕ are continuous. This is inessential: TW's argument would also work if the changes in the feeling that ϕ are discreet, as long as those discreet intervals are more fine-grained than the discreet intervals in the awareness of feeling ϕ .

In contrast, the defender of luminosity thinks that one feels ϕ iff one is aware of feeling ϕ : $F\phi$ iff $A(F\phi)$, and in particular that one feels *less* ϕ iff one is aware of feeling *less* ϕ : $F_L\phi$ iff $A(F_L\phi)$. They think along the lines of figure 13.2 (p. 222)

The important difference between figures 13.1 and 13.2 is that in the latter includes no *feeling* ϕ intervals that are more finely-distinguished than the *aware of feeling* ϕ intervals.

NB that the disagreement at this point is about what's metaphysically possible when it comes to the phenomenology of feeling cold. That means that the case TW describes in his argument is impossible, so the argument fails.

Claim: NAC is ambiguous, and the disambiguation that TW needs is controversial

Let's look more closely at NAC:

NAC: one's feelings of heat and cold change so slowly during this process that one is not aware of any change in them over one millisecond.

NB that NAC underdescribes the case because it doesn't say *why* one is not aware of a change in mental state. Disambiguations of NAC:

NAC*: In case α , there are no one-millisecond intervals of feeling less cold of which one is aware

NAC**: In case α , there are many one-millisecond changes of feeling

¹² Steup unhelpfully identifies minimally discernible changes with time intervals $t_1 - t_2$, but he really seems to mean the amount of change in the underlying mental states occurring in that interval. Presumably Steup is assuming a constant rate of change in the degree to which I feel ϕ , which together with an interval of time yields an absolute measure of change in that degree.

less cold than before such that one is not aware of them due to their being indiscernible.

Figure 13.1 represents α as described by NAC**

Figure 13.2 represents α as described by NAC*

TW's argument requires that there be some case α satisfying NAC**

Steup: but that's a controversial metaphysical principle, not a triviality.¹³

BTM: here again Steup explicitly claims that TW needs NAC in order to support

¹³ Unlike NAC*: everyone can accept that there could be an α as described by NAC*

(PR2) If K(cold) in α_i then B(cold) in α_{i+1}

which he thinks is needed in order to establish

(R) If K(cold) in α_i , then (cold) in α_{i+1}

It's unclear that that's really how TW's argument is supposed to work, but in any event it seems clear that TW needs to be assuming that α is as described by NAC**.

(Back to Steup)

Question: how fine-grained are the changes in the underlying feeling of being cold?

Steup assumes that they are not continuous, but proceed in discrete intervals.¹⁴

In that case it becomes important to ask: what is the minimum time required in order for one to become one unit of coldness (i.e. one discrete interval) less cold?

¹⁴ Is that a reasonable assumption to make? Doesn't figure 13.1 suggest that they're continuous?

Why does this matter? What TW needs is for there to be changes in the underlying feeling of coldness that one is unaware of: the changes in the feeling of coldness are more fine-grained than the changes in awareness of that feeling. What the defender of luminosity wants is for there to be simultaneous one to one changes in feeling and in awareness of the feeling. It's unproblematic for the defender of luminosity to concede that one's awareness couldn't change every millisecond as long as they don't also concede that changes in the underlying feeling of coldness does change every millisecond. Steup is at this point conceding the former but pushing back on the latter:

Since one warms up only slowly, it is just not plausible to assume that in case α there are any one-second, let alone any one-millisecond, changes of feeling less cold than before. Indeed, since one's warming up is stretched out over several hours, it is not even plausible to assume that there are one-minute changes of feeling less cold than before. (225)

So should the defender of luminosity accept NAC**?¹⁵

No: the defender of luminosity thinks that $F_L \phi$ iff $A(F_L \phi)$. That's inconsistent with NAC**. So for TW to take NAC** as a premise in an argument against luminosity is question begging:

For Williamson's argument to be effective against a luminosity friend¹⁶... he would have to establish some common ground between [that luminosity friend] and himself. (227)

BTM: possible objection: Two ways to understand TW's argument.

Stronger way: he's trying to convince someone already convinced of luminosity to change their mind. Such a person would probably think that NAC** is question begging, so they won't be convinced.

Weaker way: he's trying to convince someone who doesn't yet have an opinion.¹⁷

Is the weaker argument question begging like Steup thinks the stronger argument is?

A dilemma for Williamson:¹⁸ Steup's reconstruction of the argument for (R) requires:

(PR₂) If K(cold) in α_i then B(cold) in α_{i+1}

TW think's that's plausible in the case described because:¹⁹ (i) α_i and α_{i+1} are separated by a very short time (one millisecond), (ii) the change from feeling warm to feeling cold happens very gradually. But if I know (and hence believe) that I feel cold in α_i , and if my feeling of coldness is subjectively indistinguishable in α_i and in α_{i+1} ,²⁰ then I'll believe that I feel cold in α_{i+1} .

Steup doesn't argue that one really can discriminate how cold one feels in α_i from how cold one feels in α_{i+1} . What he argues is that it's psychologically unrealistic to think that there could be changes in how cold one feel when (i) and (ii) obtain. To make the case realistic we need to either make the process of warming up happen much faster, or we need to make the time interval much longer.

¹⁵ at this point in the paper Steup speaks generally of NAC, but it seems clear that he's really interested in NAC**

¹⁶ in this context a luminosity friend is anyone who accepts that that $F_L \phi$ iff $A(F_L \phi)$

¹⁷ Science progresses one funeral at a time, etc

¹⁸ Here I'm presenting Steup's dilemma from §9. I find his presentation to be confusing, so while I think that I've captured what he has in mind, note that I've diverged from what he actually says.

¹⁹ again, this is how Steup reconstructs TW's argument; I'm not convinced that he's right

²⁰ as presumably it would be, given the extremely small change involved

The idea seems to be that the change from feeling cold to feeling warm isn't continuous, it happens in discrete units, and in order to make it from unit x to unit $x+1$, we need either a fast process for a short time or a slow process for a long time.

That sets up our dilemma: in order to be psychologically realistic, either the process of warming up is fast and the time short, in which case (i) obtains but not (ii), or the process is slow and the time long, in which case (ii) obtains but not (i).

Either way, how cold one feels at α_i is quite different from how cold one feels at α_{i+1} , so there's no reason to doubt our ability to discriminate how one feels at the two moments, so there's no reason to think that one's beliefs at the two moments will be the same.

So PR2 is false.

Now consider the condition of *being appeared to ϕ -ly* rather than *feeling ϕ* . Can one be wrong about how things appear?

Suppose that Jones has a clear and distinct experience E as of seeing 29 stars. On the basis of having E , Jones forms the belief that he is having an experience as of seeing 29 stars... However, for any natural number n between 20 and 40, when Jones has an experience as of seeing n stars, he usually forms a belief that he is having an experience as of seeing 29 stars. In most cases, this belief is false. The underlying psychological mechanism is the same for all those values of n . He makes no attempt to count but simply estimates the number from his general impression; forgotten events in his childhood caused a strong bias in favour of the number 29. (230 of Steup)²¹

Steup's distinguishes between being mismatches between visual appearances and how things are in the environment (type 1), and mismatches between how things appear introspectively and how things are with one's mental states (type 2):

Type-One Deception

Reality There are 30 stars in the sky.

Visual Appearance It visually seems to me that there are 29 stars in the sky.

Type-Two Deception

Reality It visually seems to me that there are 30 stars in the sky.

Introspective Appearance It introspectively seems to me that it visually seems to me that there are 29 stars in the sky.

²¹ This example comes from TW's response to Conee's 'The Comforts of Home'

Steup: why think type-2 deception is metaphysically possible? 'To acquire a reason to believe that what this assertion alleges to be possible is actually possible, we need to be given *details* that help us understand exactly *how* such a deception about one's own mental states [i.e. a type 1 deception] can come about.' (231) Moreover, the details must 'force us' to the conclusion that the deception is type 2, not type 1.

TW's details:

Forgotten events in my childhood have caused in me a strong bias in favour of the number 29. This bias kicks in whenever I perceive n objects, where n is a natural number between 20 and 40. (231)

But this doesn't *force* us to interpret the case as an instance of type 2 deception. TW wants us to interpret the case as one in which childhood events cause me to introspect 29 stars even when it visually appears to me that there are 30. But we could also say that the childhood events cause it to visually appear to me that there are 29. In which case the fact that I introspect 29 stars is a case of type 1 deception (I'm wrong about what the external world is like) but not type 2 deception (I'm no wrong about how things appear).

[§11 of Steup's paper has to do with Conee's 'The Comforts of Home', which we'll discuss in greater detail separately, so I'll skip this part for now']

It's independently interesting whether mental states are luminous, and it's also significant for other philosophical theories.

Consider (Internalist) Experiential Foundationalism

Foundationalism is the thesis that there exists a class of beliefs — the foundational beliefs — that are not justified due to their inferential relations to other beliefs²²

Foundationalists owe us an account of how there can be such a class of beliefs/ knowledge

One answer: foundational beliefs are justified by experiences of a certain sort

Example:

Phenomenal Conservatism: if it seems to S as if p , then, in the absence of defeaters, S has at least some reason to accept p

Here the idea is that there's a special type of contentful mental state,

²² Alternately, that some knowledge is not the product of inference from other knowledge

a seeming, and being in that state confers justification on a belief in the content of that state. Since seemings aren't themselves beliefs, any belief justified by a seeming is a candidate for being a foundational belief²³

Access Internalist Foundationalism is sometimes thought to lead to external world skepticism because (the argument goes) the only things that we have access to are our own mental states, so our foundational beliefs are about our own mental states (e.g. 'I've just had an experience as of my hands') those mental states are consistent with the external world being lots of different ways, so we're never in a position to infer our way from our evidence to facts about the world (e.g. 'I have hands')

Steup: Experiential Foundationalism is immune to this charge: your experience as of the external world provides justification for beliefs about the external world (e.g. 'I have hands') rather than justification for beliefs about my own experiences (e.g. 'I've had an experience as of my hands'), so by Moorean reasoning I can infer that I have hands and hence that I'm not a BIV.

Importantly this is an (access) internalist theory because the foundational beliefs are justified by something that we have access to: our experiences. And experiences are accessible because they're *luminous*.

So what does it mean for the theory if TW is right and experiences (like feeling cold) are not luminous?

Compare:

Unrestricted Experiential Foundationalism (UEF)

Whenever one has an experience as of p , one has internalist justification for believing that p .

Restricted Experiential Foundationalism (REF)

Whenever one has a discernible experience as of p , one has internalist justification for believing that p .

If UEF is true and Luminosity is false, then the resulting theory is not (access) internalist: in that case I could feel cold, which provides justification for the belief that I feel cold (by UEF) even though I don't have access to the fact that I feel cold (because Luminosity is false), so something inaccessible is providing justification.

So, if UEF is to be an (access) internalist theory, then Luminosity must be false.

If REF is true and Luminosity is false, then the resulting theory is consistent with access internalism (as long as we equate 'discernible' experience with accessible experience).

²³ the details get a little complicated, but the basic idea is straightforward

Steup: even if the Experiential Foundationalist becomes convinced that Luminosity is false, they can retreat from UEF to REF. Since counterexamples to Luminosity are rare, this is not big deal.

Williamson's reply to Steup

BTM: above I noted that Steup's reconstruction of the anti-luminosity argument is not obviously what TW has in mind. TW seems to agree:

[Steup's] replacement of the degrees of confidence used in the book by ungraded belief is not the mere 'terminological difference' he claims, for it involves the argument in a quite unnecessary sorites paradox for belief. That is, he attributes to my argument the assumption that, if one believes that one feels cold (B(cold)) in a case α_i , then one believes that one feels cold in the next case α_{i+1} , which of course implies by transitivity the obviously false conclusion that if one believes that one feels cold in the initial case α_0 then one believes that one feels cold in the final case α_n . The argument in the book works with degrees of confidence in order to avoid this problem. (370 fn 1)

Note, however, that TW's problem with Steup's reconstruction is that it saddles TW with an additional problem (the 'sorites paradox of belief') rather than that it somehow fails to accurately capture the force of the argument.

His real objection is that Steup has overlooked a scope ambiguity in the phrase 'feels less ϕ than before':

Feeling of change disambiguation: 'feels less ϕ than before' describes the content of the feeling, and change is in that content.

change of feeling disambiguation: 'feels less ϕ than before' describes more than the content of the feeling. The content is exhausted by a feeling of ϕ . It's also true that the present feeling of ϕ is less intense than the feeling of ϕ one millisecond before, but that part — the part about the relative strengths of the two feelings — are not in the content of the feeling.

Having overlooked this distinction, Steup equivocates between them.

In response to Steup's charge that TW begs the question against the defender of luminosity:

Defender of luminosity holds that the following is metaphysically necessary:

$F\phi$ iff $A(F\phi)$

On the feeling of change disambiguation we replace ϕ with 'less ϕ than before': $F(\text{less } \phi \text{ than before})$ iff $A(F(\text{less } \phi \text{ than before}))$

TW's argument would beg the question if the construction of the case described required him to presuppose that the biconditional is false.²⁴ But TW doesn't ever do that:

...it is fully within both the letter and the spirit of the original example that during the gradual process one never feels less cold than a moment before (in the feeling of change sense) and is correspondingly never aware of feeling less cold than a moment before (in that sense). On this reading, the biconditional on which the objection turns holds vacuously throughout the process, so Steup would have trivially failed to show that the initial description of the example begged the question against Lucy. (371)

²⁴ in that way he would demonstrate only that if can prove that luminosity is false from the supposition that luminosity is false

What about the change of feeling disambiguation, on which the defender of luminosity is claiming that:

as a matter of metaphysical necessity, one has a change of feeling over a brief period if and only if one is aware of having a change of feeling over that period. This claim is obviously false and I am aware of no defender of luminosity (with the possible exception of Steup) who makes it. On any reasonable view, it is metaphysically possible to forget or misremember exactly how one was feeling a moment before, and so to undergo a slight change of feeling without being aware that one has done so. On this reading, the initial description of the example has no need to respect [the luminosity defender's] silly view. (371-2)

BTM: Is that right? There are certainly obvious cases in which the way we feel has changed without our being aware of it: I'm busy working and I forget to eat, then all of a sudden I'm starving. Presumably I've been getting hungrier and hungrier as time passes and I didn't notice.

It would be silly to deny that this is possible. But in case motivating the anti-luminosity we're supposing that I've been paying attention to how I feel the whole time, and here that's just false.

As I understand Steup, he's working with a picture of mental states on which changes in how one feels proceeds in discrete increments (i.e. it's not continuous) and those discrete increments are perfectly sized to correlate with our ability to discriminate when the increment of coldness that I'm experiencing has changed *when I'm paying attention to it*. Is that picture obviously correct? No. Is it obviously incorrect? No.

What's going on? My guess: TW is presupposing that changes in how one feels are continuous (or extremely fine-grained) and Steup and TW are talking past one another on this point.

So what to make of Steup's charge of question-begging? Suppose that TW really is presupposing continuous changes to how one feels

and Steup is presupposing coarse-grained discrete increments. This seems like an independent question.

But here's the philosophically interesting point: how would you even go about answering this question? Suppose that our ability to discriminate between changes in feeling is coarse grained; then the question of interest becomes whether the changes in feeling themselves correlate with our coarse-grained ability to discriminate between them, or whether the feelings themselves are more fine-grained.

For obvious reasons, we can't answer the question by simply reflecting on whether changes in feeling occur more rapidly than our ability to detect that changes in feeling have occurred: we'd never be able to detect a positive result.

But as TW himself has argued in KAIL §4.7, we also couldn't do some sort of a test (e.g. fMRI) for whether a physiological variable associated with feeling ϕ is correlated with our ability to discriminate between changes of feeling ϕ : that would require that we first establish the association between ϕ and the change in feeling; the problem reiterates.

My read: neither party is begging the question: each is proceeding from its own plausible picture of changes in how one feels, and at this point we're given no reason to prefer one picture over the other.

In response to Steup's charge that '...there is no reason to believe that for a sufficiently slow process there are sufficiently short episodes of feeling less cold than before'. (372)

On the feeling of change disambiguation: the example doesn't require that there are any episodes in which one feels the change in the content of an feeling. But the case described in the anti-luminosity argument doesn't require any, so this is irrelevant.

On the change of feeling reading:

...there is a quite straightforward reason to believe that, however slow the process and however short the episodes, some of them involve feeling less cold than before. Let C be the relation that holds between times t and t^* if and only the degree to which at t^* one feels cold is as great as the degree to which at t one feels cold.²⁵ C is transitive, since being as great as is a transitive relation between degrees. Now let t_0, t_1, \dots, t_n be the times in the anti-luminosity argument. If t_i has C to t_{i+1} for each i from 0 to $n-1$ then by transitivity t_0 has C to t_n . But t_0 certainly does not have C to t_n , since at t_0 one feels very cold and at t_n one feels very warm. Thus, for some i , t_i does not have C to t_{i+1} : the degree to which at t_{i+1} one feels cold is less than the degree to which at t_i one feels cold, as required... This refutes the claim that there is no

²⁵ Presumably TW means 'exactly as great' rather than 'at least as great'

change in those feelings over any of the short periods. (372)

BTM: How is this a problem for Steup's picture of coarse-grained changes in how one feels? What this establishes is that for any interval of time n , there must be a pair of times t_i and t_{i+n} to which one feels ϕ to different degrees in the two times. But this is perfectly consistent with (what I'm supposing to be) Steup's picture of coarse-grained changes in the degree to which one feels ϕ ; t_i and t_{i+n} will be taken to be the moments on either side of one of those shifts from one coarsely-individuated degree of feeling ϕ to another.

What TW needs to establish is that **for any sufficiently short interval of time n** , there could be a difference between how ϕ one feels at t_i and how ϕ one feels at t_{i+n} , and his argument doesn't do that.²⁶

In response to Steup's charge that the falsity of Luminosity isn't that much of a problem for internalists:

Steup suggests that the move from

UEF Whenever one has an experience as of p , one has internalist justification for believing that p .

to

REF Whenever one has a discernible experience as of p , one has internalist justification for believing that p

isn't a big deal, since most of the time we are in a position to know what mental states we're in.

TW: But if instead of emphasizing *whether one has an experience* we emphasize *whether one is in a position to know that one has had an experience*, then

...why do not other things one is in a position to know contribute in a similar way to justification? Once the access to justification comes through being in a position to know rather than through mere experiencing, the restriction of the content of the potential knowledge to propositions about experience looks ad hoc. The danger for internalists is that they will not find a well-motivated way to prevent the slide from *UEF* to *REF* taking them all the way to the view that one's total evidence is the total content of what one is in a position to know. (373-4)

This sort of view is discussed in KAIL §9.6. The basic objection: the view at the end of that slippery slope is externalist in nature and it's not importantly different from the E=K view that TW defends.

²⁶ That's actually a bit too strong: what TW needs to do is to establish that there is at least some pair of times t_i and t_{i+n} such that the degree to which one feels ϕ differs between them but one is not aware of the difference. But presumably TW will do that by arguing that: for any sufficiently short interval of time n , there could be a difference between how ϕ one feels at t_i and how ϕ one feels at t_{i+n} . And this is the very point that Steup is pushing back against.

*Conee – The Comforts of Home***Conee's criticism of the anti-luminosity argument:**

The argument requires:

Premise 1. If at some time during the sequence Smith knows herself to feel cold, then one millisecond later Smith feels cold (445)

TW: Premise 1 is true due to reliability constraints on knowing.

Conee: Even granting those constraints, P1 doesn't follow:

Whenever Smith experiences a thermal phenomenal quality in the cold range, she is in a position to base her confidence that she feels cold on the specific cold feeling. This is an entailing basis for that belief. Nothing could be a more reliable basis than that.²⁷ Yet this basis, the chilly feeling of the moment, implies nothing about how Smith feels in the next millisecond. Any phenomenal classification can immediately cease to apply. To cite only the grimmest possibility, sudden death can intrude. Hence, the requirement of a reliable basis implies nothing that supports the Premise 1 claim that Smith knows she feels cold a time during the interval only if she feels cold later too. (447)

NB: in his response to Conee, TW claims that Premise 1 isn't supposed to be a general principle that applies to all cases, just a fact about the case that he describes. In that case Smith does not in fact die, and nothing weird happens: she just continues to get slightly warmer each millisecond. So this objection is off base.²⁸

Conee's anti-luminosity argument

In place of TW's reliability as a condition of knowing, Conee's anti-luminosity argument proceeds from a principle about justified belief:

D1. If someone has evidence against X that is strong enough to defeat whatever grounds the person has for believing that X is true, then the person is insufficiently justified to know that X is true. (448)

Evidence against X might come from lots of different places. Supposing that X is the belief that one feels cold, evidence against X might include: testimony from an expert, the results of a scientific test (?), etc.

Two questions:

1. The grounds for believing that one feels cold are a feeling of coldness. What does it mean to have evidence against a feeling? What kind of defeat are we talking about here?

²⁷ here Conee seems to be taking reliability to be determined by the relationship between the fact known and the evidence on which that fact is believed, with the degree of reliability being determined to the probability of the fact known given the evidence. Since in this case the evidence *entails* the belief, we have a case of the highest degree of reliability

²⁸ That seems fair. On my reading, the point of the example is just to establish a pair of cases in which the basis of belief is extremely similar, and Conee's objection does nothing to undermine that interpretation of the cases described.

- Can't be *opposing* defeat: feelings aren't propositions, so they can't be false, so they can't be opposed
 - Can't be *undermining* defeat: feeling cold at t entails the truth of 'I feel cold' at t , and entailment relations can't be undermined
 - Perhaps what's being defeated is your memorial justification for the 'I feel cold' at moments subsequent to t ?
2. Is it really possible to obtain evidence that defeats your justification for believing that you feel cold? Steup thinks not (232-4): he thinks that any evidence to that effect will itself be defeated by your evidence (the feeling), so we should instead reject the testimony or the scientific test or whatever the defeating evidence was supposed to be.

Conee's further claim:

TW's anti-luminosity doesn't refute certain luminosity claims, like:

Super Cold. Necessarily, if S feels super cold, then S is in a position to know that S feels cold.

In TW's case of warming up slowly, although one might go from feeling super cold to not feeling super cold in a millisecond, it takes much longer to go from feeling super cold to not even feeling cold at all. Hence there will be no pair of times separated by one millisecond s.t. one feels super-cold in one and not even cold in the other. Hence feelings of being super-cold are reliable in TW's sense, so the argument fails.

Conee generalizes this observation into the principle of *Central Luminosity*:

Central Luminosity. If S is in an exemplary case of C, then S is in a position that S is in C. (450)

But, although TW's argument fails against Central Luminosity, Conee's succeeds, since Conee's argument doesn't turn on considerations around vagueness.

Conee's 'Wider Perspective':

Suppose that luminosity is false. Is cognitive homelessness an important limitation?

Well, what is a home? A home of any sort is a familiar place that serves as a shelter and a base of operations. Fortunately, conscious

qualities still give us epistemic versions of all of that... [E]ven when we are not in a position to know some fact about the conscious character of an experience, the character itself continues to provide a familiar and protective basis for inquiry. Nothing in the arguments that we have considered jeopardizes the fact that **phenomenal qualities are always available to be known to us by acquaintance**. Likewise, the arguments do not jeopardize the fact that conscious characteristics are always among our ultimate evidential resources. (450, emphasis added)