

## Kelly - Evidence: fundamental concepts and the Phenomenal Conception

Essential function of evidence:

- \*maybe\* some propositions can be known/ justifiably believed without any evidence at all
  - Math/ logic propositions? Propositions about our own experiences?
- But at least some propositions can't be known this way
- Role of evidence: in some sense, it facilitates epistemic access to non-transparent truths

2 desiderata for a theory of evidence:

1. It reliably indicates the truth of whatever propositions it supports
2. It's easy to grasp or recognize; ideally, it's transparent in the way described above

These 2 desiderata can pull in different directions

**Phenomenal conception of evidence:** what evidence one has supervenes on one's non-factive mental states: perceptual experiences, introspection, apparent memories, etc(?)

- Some version of this view dominated epistemology between Descartes and 1980's
  - Often paired with the *metaphysical thesis* that the immediate objects of experience are mental: ideas, sense data, i.e. indirect realism
    - (nb: this is optional - questions about metaphysical indirect realism and the immediacy of experience needn't be answered the same way)

Advantages of this view:

1. Makes it really easy to obtain evidence, and to know what your evidence is: just pay attention to your conscious experience
  1. I.e., does really well on desiderata (2) from above
2. Gets the right answer in NED cases
3. Support for metaphysical thesis: argument from hallucination

Potential problems for the view:

1. Skeptical worries: Why think there's any particular relationship between *non-factive* mental states and facts about the world?
  1. Potential responses:
    1. Enumerative induction
    2. Abduction
  2. NB: this purports to show that the phenomenal conception fails vis a vis desiderata 1
2. Anti-luminosity worries (purporting to show that our access to our own mental states isn't so easy as we thought)
  1. NB: this is supposed to show the phenomenal conception isn't as strong on desiderata 2 as we thought
3. Private nature of evidence inconsistent with actual practice of science, on which lots of people try to figure things out on the basis of a shared body of evidence
  1. Mental states aren't shared.

**Alternative picture:**

**Direct realism:** 'in standard cases of perception, one directly perceives that things are thus and so in the external world. That is, in paradigmatic cases, the primary objects of perception are not mental entities, but rather external objects such as tables and chairs and the states of affairs in which they participate.' (22)

Kelly here seems to be mixing metaphysical theses and epistemic theses. Unfortunate.

For our purposes, important contrast is the family of views on which a necessary condition on x's being evidence is that x is true (if a proposition) or accurate (if an experience). Call this kind of evidence *factive*

Big advantage of the view:

1. Factive evidence is a more reliable indicator of truth/ better response to skeptical worries, i.e. better on desideratum (1)
  1. analogy: valid arguments are more likely to produce true conclusions from *true* premises than false ones

Potential problems:

1. Potentially harder to obtain evidence
  1. NB: if anti-luminosity argument is accepted, this harm is mitigated
2. Wrong answer in NED case
3. Pushed towards some form of disjunctivism (maybe)