

Constructing the World

Lecture 5: Hard Cases

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Discussion meeting: Thursdays 10:45-12:45, Ryle Room.

Background

Scrutability thesis: There is a compact class of truths C such that all truths are scrutable from truths in that class. [compact = small, nontrivializing]

S is **conditionally scrutable** from C iff it is knowable [by the speaker of S , on idealization] that if the sentences in C obtain, then S obtains.

S is **a priori scrutable** from C iff it is knowable a priori that if the sentences in C obtain, then S obtains.

So far: all ordinary truths (hard cases aside) are scrutable from PQTI.

PQTI (generous): truths of microphysics and macrophysics, phenomenal truths, secondary-quality truths, intentional truths, that's-all sentence, indexical truths.

PQTI- (stripped-down): microphysical truths, phenomenal truths, that's-all sentence, indexical truths.

Argument from knowability: If S is knowable, S is conditionally scrutable from PQTI.

Argument from reconditionalization: If S is conditionally scrutable from PQTI, S is a priori scrutable from PQTI.

Today

Hard cases: All truths (including hard cases) are scrutable from PQTI, or at least from some compact base.

Minimize the base: All truths are scrutable from PQTI- or some more minimal base.

Hard cases:

Unprovable mathematical truths (idealize)
Normative truths (scrutable if true)
Intentional truths (scrutable or build into base)
Metaphysical truths (scrutable if true, or build into base)

Modal truths (scrutable from nonmodal truths)
Vague truths (scrutable if determinately true)
Demonstrative truths (phenomenal demonstratives in base)
Social/metalinguistic/deferential/nominal truths (scrutable)

Minimizing the base:

Macrophysical truths (scrutable from microphysical truths [plus experience])
Counterfactual truths (scrutable from laws)
Microphysical truths (scrutable from Ramseyan truths)
Secondary-quality/mass truths (scrutable from phenomenal and causal truths)
That's-all truth (formulable in terms of fundamentality)

Leading candidates for base expressions:

Indexicals, logic/math, fundamentality
Spatiotemporal (depending on spatiotemporal primitivism)
Nomic (depending on Humean scrutability)
Phenomenal expressions (depending on phenomenal realism)
Quiddistic expressions (depending on quidditism)

My base:

Indexicals ('I', 'now', 'this experience')
Logic/math
Fundamentality (or in-virtue-of)
Phenomenal (or awareness plus qualities)
Nomic ('It is a law of nature that')