

Semantic Width, Privileged Access, and the Possibility of Dry Earth

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Externalists about content argue that in order for a subject to possess certain concepts specific environmental (or social) conditions must obtain in the subject's world.¹ This entails that possession of a concept does not (always) supervene on the internal or intrinsic properties of a subject, since it is possible that two intrinsic duplicates who are embedded in different environments possess different concepts. For example, if Oscar is on Earth and his intrinsic duplicate Toscar is on Twin Earth, (i.e. a world superficially indistinguishable from Earth except that the watery stuff there is not composed of H₂O), then it seems that the concept that Toscar possesses and expresses with his use of the expression 'water' is different from the concept that Oscar possess. Oscar's concept applies to all and only samples of H₂O, whereas Toscar's applies to all and only samples of something else.

There has been much debate over whether this theory about content is compatible with the thesis that we can know what we are thinking by introspection alone.² If what we are thinking depends on what the external world is like then it seems that we must go find out what the world is like in order to know what we are thinking. To use the vernacular of the current debate, it seems that an externalist theory of content is incompatible with the principle of *privileged access*.

Privileged Access (PA): A normal subject can know what they are thinking and what concepts they possess by introspection alone.

¹ See Burge (1979), (1982), and (1988) and Putman (1975).

² McKinsey (1991), Brueckner (1992), Boghossian (1997), Tye & McLaughlin (1998), Falvey (2000), etc.

It is in this fashion that McKinsey (1991) argues that externalism is incompatible with privileged access, since externalism runs afoul of what I will call McKinsey's Maxim.

McKinsey's Maxim: For any propositions E and P the following holds. If E cannot be known a priori and *theory X* is committed to it being an a priori truth that if one is thinking that P , then E , then either one cannot know a priori that one is thinking that P or *theory X* is false.³

In response to McKinsey-style arguments many externalists have insisted that nothing in their theory commits them to something as strong as *theory X* and therefore their theory is compatible with (PA).⁴

In this paper, I will evaluate the general structure of this response by employing some theoretical machinery that I think clarifies both what the argument against compatibilism is and what the response should be. In so doing, I will draw on Burge's example known as Dry Earth, since some critics of externalism take it to be the hardest case for the externalist to handle.⁵ I will show that although there is a reductio in the vicinity of the McKinsey-style arguments, there is no reason for an externalist, nor anyone else, to accept the key premise and therefore externalism need not and does not violate McKinsey's Maxim.

1. Dry Earth and the Standard Reductio

...let us imagine a planet just like ours in which, although it very much seems to its inhabitants that there is a clear, tasteless and colorless liquid flowing in their rivers and taps and to which they confidently take themselves to be applying the word 'water', these appearances are systematically false and constitute a sort of pervasive collective mirage. In point of actual fact, the lakes, rivers and taps on this particular Twin Earth run bone dry.⁶

³ (MM): $[\sim KE \wedge (X \rightarrow (KP \rightarrow KE))] \rightarrow [\sim KP \vee \sim X]$.

⁴ Brueckner (1992), Tye & McLaughlin (1998), Falvey (2000).

⁵ Burge (1982). Coined "Dry Earth" by Boghossian. See Boghossian (1997).

⁶ Boghossian (1997).

According to externalism these Dry Earthians do not possess our concept *water*.⁷ Even if we have intrinsic duplicates on Dry Earth whatever concept they have (if any) it is not our concept *water*. By this reasoning it seems to follow that if we have the concept *water*, then we are not Dry Earthians. Moreover, this reasoning seems to be available to us on purely a priori grounds. If this is what the externalist is committed to then this will violate McKinsey's Maxim, i.e.,

If whether or not I am a Dry Earthian cannot be known a priori and externalism is committed to it being an a priori truth that if one has the concept *water*, then they are not a Dry Earthian, then either one cannot know a priori that one has the concept *water* or externalism is false.

To put it in the form of a *reductio*, it seems that the externalist can know premises (1) and (2) a priori and can therefore know a priori that they are not a Dry Earthian, but surely we cannot know that from the armchair.

The Standard Reductio:

- (1) If I have the concept that is expressed by 'water', then I am not a Dry Earthian.
- (2) I have the concept that is expressed by 'water'.
- (3) Therefore, I am not a Dry Earthian.

The common move is to argue that there is some implicit premise at work in (1) which cannot be known a priori. It is hard to see exactly what this hidden premise is since the reasoning is fairly straightforward: We know we have the concept *water* and we know Dry Earthians don't have our concept, so we know we aren't Dry Earthians. I think the implicit premise is presupposed in the claim that we know a priori that Dry Earthians do not have our concept. In order to make this premise explicit I will introduce some distinctions before evaluating the argument further.

⁷ Throughout I will use italics when talking about concepts and single quotes when talking about words.

2. Semantic Machinery: Sensitivity and Width

Before assessing the incompatibilist argument further I want to introduce some abstract distinctions between different expressions of a language. The first distinction comes from the intuitive idea that some expressions depend on the environment as to which concept they express while others do not. This distinction, which is borrowed from Bealer and also from Chalmers, will be useful when evaluating Twin Earth and Dry Earth scenarios.

Bealer introduces the distinction as follows.

An expression is semantically stable iff, necessarily, in any language group in an epistemic situation qualitatively identical to ours, the expression would mean the same thing. An expression is semantically unstable iff it is possible for it to mean something different in some language group whose epistemic situation is qualitatively identical to ours...[i.e.] an expression is semantically unstable iff the external environment makes some contribution to its meaning. Natural kind terms are paradigmatic - 'water', 'gold', 'heat', 'beech', 'elm', etc. Logical, mathematical, and a great many philosophical terms, by contrast, are semantically stable: the external environment makes no such contribution.⁸

Chalmers discusses a similar distinction in terms of semantic neutrality as follows:

...a semantically neutral expression is one whose extension in counterfactual worlds does not depend on how the actual world turns out (that is, on which epistemically possible scenario turns out to be actual). In this sense, it is clear that most names, natural kind terms, and indexicals are not semantically neutral [e.g. 'water' and 'Hesperus'], while numerous other terms [e.g. 'philosopher' and 'friend'] are semantically neutral.⁹

I will make use of this distinction for my own purposes in this paper abstracting away from certain idiosyncrasities and motivations of both Bealer and Chalmers. Let's define the relevant notions of semantic neutrality and semantic sensitivity as follows:

⁸ Bealer (1996), p. 134.

⁹ Chalmers (2006).

An expression T is *semantically neutral* iff which concept T expresses does not depend on how the actual world turns out.

An expression T is *semantically sensitive* iff which concept T expresses depends on how the actual world turns out.

In order to determine the semantic sensitivity of an expression T, we must determine whether or not the concept which T expresses depends on how the actual world turns out (i.e. Does T express the same concept in worlds w_1 - w_n (considered as actual)?). For example, which concept the expression ‘water’ expresses depends on which world is actual. If the H₂O-world is actual then ‘water’ expresses the concept *water*, which applies to all and only samples of H₂O. Alternatively, if the XYZ-world is actual then ‘water’ expresses the concept *twater* which applies to all and only samples of XYZ. In this way we can determine by purely a priori means that ‘water’ is semantically sensitive.

Other expressions are semantically neutral, for example, ‘food’ is a neutral expression, since no matter how the actual world turns out ‘food’ will express the concept *food*, which applies to all and only substances taken into a system to maintain life and nourishment. No matter what the world is like ‘food’ will express the concept *food* and accordingly all of our intrinsic-twins throughout metaphysical space will express the concept *food* when they use a token of the expression ‘food’.¹⁰ In fact, it seems that our intrinsic duplicates possess the same concept as we do, i.e. they possess the concept *food*. This brings out an interesting feature of semantically neutral expressions, namely, that if an expression T is semantically neutral, then our intrinsic duplicates express the same concept as us with their use of T. To put it in terms of possession; we could have still

¹⁰ I am ignoring issues about linguistic communities for ease of illustration but I think everything in this paper could be adapted to take those concerns into account. We could have Solipsistic Dry Earth and ask what concept is expressed by my intrinsic duplicate on Solipsistic Dry Earth, etc.

possessed the concept actually expressed by T had the world turned out differently. I will call expressions that have this feature *semantically narrow* and expressions that do not *semantically wide*.

An expression T is *semantically narrow* iff we could have still possessed the concept actually expressed by T had the world turned out differently.

An expression T is *semantically wide* iff we could not have possessed the concept actually expressed by T had the world turned out differently.

In order to determine the semantic width of an expression T, we must determine whether or not we could have possessed the concept that is actually expressed by T had the world turned out differently. This involves two questions:

- (i) What concept is actually expressed by T?
- (ii) Could we have possessed *that concept* had the world turned out differently?

What I noted above is made apparent here, i.e. that any neutral expression will be a narrow expression. This is because for any neutral expression T the answer to (i) will be the same no matter which world is actual and therefore the answer to (ii) will always be positive since it does not matter if the world turned out differently. With a semantically sensitive expression T, however, the answer to (i) will vary depending on which world is actual and therefore different answers to (ii) may result. For example, the answer to the question “What concept is actually expressed by ‘water’?” depends on which world is actual. This requires empirical investigation, but let’s assume that the scientists are right and that ‘water’ expresses the concept that applies to all and only samples of H₂O, i.e. the concept *water*. Now could we have possessed *that concept* had the world turned out differently? No. If the world had been a non-H₂O-world, say the XYZ-world, then we

could not have possessed the concept *water*. This is another way of saying that our duplicates on Twin Earth do not possess our concept *water*.

This raises the following question: are all semantically sensitive expressions wide expressions? I will argue that they are not. Consider the expression ‘air’. Is it semantically sensitive? What if in the actual world all the samples of air turn out to be uniformly composed of some undiscovered chemical compound Z_4 ? The scientists have been mistaken and now the truth comes out that air is actually composed of Z_4 . Anaximander was closer to the truth than we thought; air is a natural kind after all! I think that if this is how the actual world turns out then ‘air’ would express the concept *zair* which applies to all and only samples of Z_4 . Furthermore, our intrinsic duplicates on Twin Earth, where all the breathable transparent, inodorous, and tasteless gaseous substance which envelopes the planet is composed of A_4 , do not express the same concept as us with their uses of the expression ‘air’. Instead their use of ‘air’ expresses the concept *twair* which applies to all and only samples of A_4 .

It is often noted that water might turn out to not be a natural kind, e.g. Falvey observes that it “is epistemically possible that water might turn out to be a disjunction of two different substances, as has turned out to be the case with jade”¹¹ and McLaughlin and Tye note that it “is a very familiar point that it is *epistemically* possible that water might have turned out to be like air, or like jade.”¹² I think it is very important to notice that it is also epistemically possible that air and jade might have turned out to be like water. In the case that I am imagining air turns out to be uniformly composed of Z_4 and

¹¹ Falvey (2000), p. 139.

¹² McLaughlin & Tye (1998).

the concept *zair* turns out to be like the our concept *water*, in that our intrinsic duplicates on Twin Earth do not and cannot possess our concept *zair*. In other words, our expression ‘air’ might turn out to be a wide expression.

We have determined that ‘air’ could be a wide expression but could it be narrow? Given current empirical data, I think ‘air’ is narrow. Forget about Z_4 and assume that everything the scientists have told us about air is right, e.g. it is a gaseous substance composed of mostly nitrogen, oxygen and carbon dioxide, which is breathable, transparent, inodorous, tasteless and envelopes the planet, etc. If this is what air actually is, such that our expression ‘air’ applies to all and only samples of a gaseous substance which is breathable, transparent, inodorous, tasteless and envelopes the planet, then it seems that our intrinsic duplicates can possess our concept *air*. No matter what the gaseous substance is, as long as it is breathable, transparent, inodorous, tasteless and envelopes the planet, then it is air.¹³ Our duplicates on A_4 -world possess the concept *twair* but there is no reason why they cannot also possess our narrow concept *air*; just as there is no reason why we cannot possess a concept *watery-stuff* which applies to all and only clear, drinkable, tasteless liquid, which falls as rain, etc.

The upshot of all this is that while all neutral expressions are narrow, sensitive expression can be either narrow or wide depending on how the world turns out. Given

¹³ Notice that our intuitions about jade may be different. Assuming that current scientific data is correct it seems that in order to be jade something must either be composed of nephrite ($\text{Ca}_2(\text{Mg,Fe})_5\text{Si}_8\text{O}_{22}(\text{OH})_2$) or jadeite ($\text{NaAlSi}_2\text{O}_6$), i.e. it is not enough to be a beautiful, tough, emerald green ornamental gem (i.e. the *jadey stuff*). No matter what we decide, I don’t think we need to say the same thing about air as we do about jade (even if they have analogous chemical make-ups). However, if one thinks that air is a disjunctive kind such that something is air only if it is composed of nitrogen or oxygen or etc. (or some combination thereof), then to make my point I only need to exaggerate the empirical story. What if air is actually composed different combinations of one million different chemicals? It seems to me that anything that plays the “air-role” would be air.

current empirical information we think ‘air’ is narrow and ‘water’ is wide but if that empirical information turns out to be wrong ‘air’ might be wide and ‘water’ might be narrow. It is very unlikely that that will happen but the point is that it is not ruled out a priori.

Before moving on to the incompatibilist arguments I will briefly note one additional possibility. In addition to wide and narrow expressions I think there is the notion of a semantically void expression.

An expression T is *semantically void* iff T does not actually express a concept. Perhaps some examples of void expressions are ‘mimsy’, ‘borogrove’, and ‘toves’, although they probably should not count since they are not really expressions of a language. Some may think that an expression like ‘phlogiston’ is void, since as it turns out there is no such thing as phlogiston. I will return to this in section 3.1 in determining what concept the Dry Earthian ‘water’ expresses. With these distinctions in place, I will now turn to evaluation of the incompatibility arguments.

3. How to Construct a Reductio of Content Externalism?

Using the distinctions above, I will assume that the thesis of content externalism is minimally committed to the following.

Content Externalism (CE): Some of our semantically sensitive expressions are (or may be) semantically wide (e.g. natural kind terms, names, etc.)

If we employ the distinctions made in the preceding section how could the standard reductio be adapted to be a reductio of (CE)? It seems that there are a few different ways to get the reductio going. One option is to start from the a priori truth that ‘water’ is semantically sensitive and try to get an absurd conclusion as follows:

Argument Alpha:

- (1 α) 'water' is semantically sensitive.
- (2 α) If 'water' is semantically sensitive, then if I have the concept that is expressed by 'water', then I am not a Dry Earthian.
- (3 α) I have the concept that is expressed by 'water'.
- (4 α) Therefore, I am not a Dry Earthian.

While this argument is valid it is certainly unsound, since (2 α) is false. As may be clear from the discussion of 'air', possession of a concept expressed by a sensitive expression does not necessarily entail anything about the environment of the subject. The failure of this reductio is very apparent if we let the actual world be Dry Earth. If the actual world is Dry Earth 'water' is still semantically sensitive and we still possess the concept expressed by 'water' but we are (*ex hypothesi*) Dry Earthians, and therefore (2 α) is false. We cannot get from the a priori truth that we possess a semantically sensitive expression to some conclusion about our environment.

Perhaps this was too quick: how am I so sure that we could have possessed the concept that is expressed by 'water' if the actual world is Dry Earth. What concept is expressed by 'water' if the actual world is Dry Earth? Is externalism committed to something that does not allow them to make the move that I have on their behalf?

3.1 What concept does 'water' express if the actual world is Dry Earth?

...the point isn't to describe a genuine possibility. Rather, it is to inquire how a particular semantical theory proposes to treat cases of reference failure and whether it is committed to treating such cases in a particular way. What *concept*, if any, should [an externalist] say would be expressed by tokens of the word 'water' on Dry Earth?¹⁴

I propose to answer two questions: what concept is expressed by the word 'water' if the actual world is Dry Earth and if the actual world is Dry Earth, could we have possessed

¹⁴ Boghossian (1997).

the concept that is expressed by ‘water’ had the world turned out differently. This will not only shed light on what concept is expressed on Dry Earth but will also reveal the semantic width of ‘water’ on Dry Earth.

- (i) What concept is actually expressed by ‘water’ (assuming the actual world is Dry Earth)?

I think there are three options.¹⁵ The options are: ‘water’ may express a concept that applies to all and only watery stuff, it may express an empty concept or it may not express a concept at all.

- A. $dwater_A$ = watery-stuff concept
- B. $dwater_B$ = empty concept; a concept which necessarily applies to nothing.
- C. $dwater_C$ = no concept

I think option A is the intuitive position since it seems to be just a more extreme version of what happened with ‘air’. If water turned out to be significantly non-uniform at the chemical level, then it would express a concept which applies to all and only watery stuff, no matter what its chemical composition is (just like ‘air’). In the case where water is illusory, I think ‘water’ would express the same concept it would express if water turned out to be significantly non-uniform, namely a concept that applies to all and only watery stuff. One reason is this: Assume that the actual world is Dry Earth and that we discover this. If on a mission to mars our astronauts found a watery substance, I think it would be correct to say that they found real water and it would be water no matter what it was

¹⁵ Actually there is a fourth option: ‘water’ expresses a concept which applies to a mythical kind. This concept will also be narrow in that our intrinsic duplicates could possess it. Nothing about the environment bars our intrinsic duplicates from possessing our concept of unicorn, even if there are one horned horses there. I leave this option out because I don’t think it is all that different from option A as far as possession conditions go (of course there will be issues about the myths of the linguistic communities etc. but I am ignoring these issues in this paper).

composed of as long as it was *watery stuff*, i.e. the astronaut who says “There is water on mars” says something true. Boghossian agrees that this is the intuitive view.

Intuitively, this seems to me to be a plausible view of the matter. When I think of a group of people just like us, applying the word ‘water’ confidently to something that appears to them to be a clear, colorless, tasteless liquid in their environment, when in fact there is no such liquid in their environment, I feel tempted by the sort of error theory of their linguistic behavior that the present proposal delivers. It seem plausible to me to say that what these people mean by the word ‘water’ is this clear, colorless, tasteless liquid etc., which, however and unfortunately, is not to be found in their environment.¹⁶

Yet, I think many people would rather go for option B. The idea motivating option B is that if the actual world is Dry Earth then ‘water’ would turn out to be like ‘phlogiston’ or ‘unicorn’. These theorists have a view about ‘phlogiston’ and think that they should give a similar story with respect to ‘water’. For example they think that even if in a counterfactual world it is true that there is some stuff, i.e. *terra pinguis*, which all combustible bodies possess and release in the process of combustion, that stuff, these theorist contend, is not phlogiston. Likewise, even if in a counterfactual world there are animals running around with the body of a horse and a single horn projecting from their foreheads, those things, they say, are not unicorns. Accordingly, theorists of this persuasion could say that if the actual world is Dry Earth then ‘water’ expresses a concept which is necessarily vacuous; i.e. even in a counterfactual world where there is a clear, drinkable, tasteless liquid, which fills lakes and falls as rain, that stuff isn’t water.

Although this debate over which concept is expressed when there is reference failure is interesting and important, I think neither option would present a problem for the content externalist (specifically with respect to compatibilism). I will explain how this

¹⁶ Boghossian (1997). Also see Korman (manuscript) for a defense of this view.

bears on the incompatibility arguments below but for now it is important to notice that whether ‘water’ expresses $dwater_A$ or $dwater_B$ on Dry Earth, ‘water’ is a narrow expression, such that we could have possessed either concept had the world turned out differently.

Before going through those arguments we must consider option C. According to this option if the actual world turns out to be Dry Earth ‘water’ does not express a concept at all. Whereas a word that expresses an empty concept expresses a concept that just happens to (necessarily) not apply to anything, an expression that is void turns out to not express a concept at all. Perhaps some may think this is what we should say about the expressions ‘phlogiston’ or ‘ether’. I find this the least plausible option and, in fact, I will argue later that it is open to a *reductio*.

In order to determine the semantic width of the concepts expressed by options A-C we must settle the following question.

- (ii) Could we have possessed *that concept* had the world turned out differently?
- A. Yes (i.e. narrow)
 - B. Yes (i.e. narrow)
 - C. No (i.e. wide/void)

According to option A if the actual world is Dry Earth, then ‘water’ expresses the concept $dwater_A$, a concept which applies to all and only watery stuff. This is a concept we could have possessed even if the world turned out differently. Our intrinsic duplicates can possess the concept $dwater_A$ no matter what the watery stuff is composed of in their world.¹⁷ Thus, in this scenario ‘water’ is semantically narrow.

¹⁷ Just as the duplicates on Twin Earth, where the airy-stuff is composed of A_4 , can possess our concept *air* even though they currently only possess the concept *twair*.

According to option B if the actual world is Dry Earth, then ‘water’ expresses the concept *dwater_B*, an empty concept which necessarily applies to nothing. This too is a concept we could have possessed even if the world turned out differently. It seems trivially true that our intrinsic duplicates can possess a concept that applies to nothing no matter what world they are in. For example, they could theorize about Dry Earth (that is our world) and come to possess our concept just by theorizing. I see no metaphysical constraint that blocks such concept possession.¹⁸ Again this results in ‘water’ being semantically narrow.

According to option C if the actual world is Dry Earth ‘water’ does not express a concept at all and we do not possess a concept and so trivially we could not have possessed the concept actually expressed by ‘water’ even if the world turned out differently (there is no concept to speak of).

3.1.1 The Reductio of (V)

As promised option C is open to a reductio. Let’s assume for reductio that:

(V) If I am a Dry Earthian, then ‘water’ is semantically void.

An argument similar to the original McKinsey reductio can be constructed by starting with the contrapositive of (V), which according to option C we can know a priori, and proceed to the undesirable conclusion that we know a priori that we aren’t Dry Earthians.

Argument Gamma:

- (1 γ) If ‘water’ is not semantically void, then I am not a Dry Earthian.
- (2 γ) If I have the concept that is expressed by ‘water’, then ‘water’ is not semantically void.

¹⁸ See Sawyer (2003) and (2004) for a possible metaphysical constraint. While I agree that our duplicates *do not* possess our narrow concept *water* I don’t know why they couldn’t possess it. I think we can possess a concept *watery-stuff* even if we are on the H₂O-world, in fact I think I do.

- (3 γ) I have the concept that is expressed by ‘water’.
 (4 γ) Therefore, I am not a Dry Earthian.

All the premises in argument gamma can be known a priori (assuming they are true) and there is no implicit *a posteriori* premise. (1 γ) is the contrapositive of (V). (2 γ) is obvious since if ‘water’ is semantically void, then ‘water’ does not express a concept and therefore there is no concept to be possessed. (3 γ) is gained by (PA). Certainly, (1 γ) is the problem; so any theorist who accepts (V) cannot at the same time accept (PA). Here we have an incompatibilist argument related to (CE), but it demonstrates the incompatibility of (V) and (PA). The content externalist, however, should not and need not accept (V).¹⁹

3.2 Argument Beta: From Width to Water

From the above we can conclude that we know a priori that on Dry Earth ‘water’ is a narrow expression. This suggests the following *reductio*:

Argument Beta:

- (1 β) ‘water’ is semantically wide.
 (2 β) If ‘water’ is semantically wide, then if I have the concept that is expressed by ‘water’, then I am not a Dry Earthian.
 (3 β) I have the concept that is expressed by ‘water’.
 (4 β) Therefore, I am not a Dry Earthian.

I think this most closely mirrors the McKinsey-style arguments in the literature (where (1 β) is the implicit premise). However, the argument is unsound because, as is clear from above, (1 β) cannot be known a priori.²⁰ All that can be known a priori is that ‘water’ is

¹⁹ A theorist who finds (V) plausible can reject (PA), of course, but in this paper I am assuming that the theorist who is forced to give up (PA) is defeated.

²⁰ It will not help to replace (1 β) with (1 α) and add (0 β) to Argument Beta.

(0 β) If ‘water’ is semantically sensitive, then ‘water’ is semantically wide.

semantically sensitive and that on Dry Earth ‘water’ is narrow. What we cannot know a priori is that we are not on Dry Earth! Hence, we cannot know a priori that ‘water’ is wide. Twin Earth examples alone only show that the expression ‘water’ is semantically sensitive not that it is semantically wide. We can also determine by a priori means certain conditionals about semantic width, such as, if the actual world is so-and-so, then T is semantically wide.²¹ But in order to know that the antecedent of these conditionals are true requires empirical investigation and therefore so does the knowledge that T is wide. Consequently, there is no possible argument that starts from the sensitivity or width of an expression and proceeds via privileged access to an absurd conclusion.

5. Conclusion

I have evaluated the standard response to the McKinsey-style reductios by employing some theoretical semantic machinery. By applying these distinctions to the Dry Earth scenario we can see that although there is an argument against the compatibility of (PA) and (V) there is no argument against the compatibility of (PA) and an intuitive content externalism that rejects (V). The attempted reductios of (CE) either contain the false premise that all semantically sensitive expressions are wide or they assume that we can know a priori that a certain expression is wide. This, then, unveils the implicit premise in the standard reductios of (CE).²² I see no reason for an externalist to be committed to either the view that all sensitive expressions are wide nor the view that we can know a priori which expressions are wide. Dry Earth brings this point into focus. Externalists

The resulting argument would be valid but still unsound since (0β) is false for the same reason that argument alpha failed, i.e. let the actual world be Dry Earth.

²¹ See Schroeter (manuscript) for a worry about the apriority of such conditionals.

²² This point has been made numerous times in different ways. See Brueckner (1992), Tye & McLaughlin (1998), Falvey (2000), Haukioja (forthcoming).

should not be fearful of the possibility of Dry Earth, instead they should immerse themselves in the Dry Earth scenario, since it dissolves the illusion of plausibility in the incompatibilist arguments.

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