

# God and the Problem of Evidential Ambiguity

Max Baker-Hytch

Published by Cambridge University Press as part of  
the Cambridge Elements series *The Problems of God*  
(<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009269841>)

## Abstract

When it comes to what many of us think of as the deepest questions of existence, the answers can seem difficult to make out. This difficulty, or ambiguity, is the topic of this book. The book begins by offering a general account of what evidential ambiguity consists in and uses it to try to make sense of the idea that our world is religiously ambiguous in some sense. It goes on to consider the questions of how we ought to investigate the nature of ultimate reality and whether evidential ambiguity is itself a significant piece of evidence in the quest.

# Table of Contents

## **Chapter 1: What is the Problem of Evidential Ambiguity?**

- 1.1 Ultimate Reality and Worldview
- 1.2 A Cluster of Problems

## **Chapter 2: The Nature and Sources of Evidential Ambiguity**

- 2.1 Two Conceptions of Evidence
- 2.2 Ambiguity as a Property of the World Itself?
- 2.3 The Public Evidence: A Shared Frame of Reference
- 2.4 The Threefold Sources of Evidential Ambiguity
- 2.5 Reasoning Counterfactually about Evidential Ambiguity

## **Chapter 3: Five Ways to Be Ambiguous**

- 3.1 Characterisation #1: The Public Evidence is Evenly Balanced
- 3.2 Characterisation #2: A Comparison with Moorean Beliefs and Cartesian Beliefs
- 3.3 Characterisation #3: The Public Evidence Can Reasonably Be Interpreted in Mutually Incompatible Ways
- 3.4 Characterisation #4: The Body of Facts that Comprises the Public Evidence is Very Large and Complex
- 3.5 Characterisation #5: The Public Evidence is Mixed
- 3.6 An Interesting and Worldview-Neutral Characterisation

## **Chapter 4: Seeking Truth Amidst Ambiguity**

- 4.1 Some Varieties of the Involved Approach
- 4.2 The Conditional Importance of the Involved Approach
- 4.3 Challenges to the Involved Approach: Which Worldview to Step Inside?
- 4.4 Some Varieties of the Detached Approach
- 4.5 Challenges to the Detached Approach: Not So Detached After All?
- 4.6 Holistic Judgments and the Weighing of the Total Evidence

## **Chapter 5: Evidential Ambiguity as Evidence in Its Own Right**

- 5.1 Evidential Ambiguity as Disambiguating
- 5.2 What are the Evidential Ambiguity Facts?

- 5.3 Isolating the Evidential Contribution of Evidential Ambiguity
- 5.4 Why Evidential Ambiguity is Likely Given Naturalism-Plus-the-Primary-Facts
- 5.5 Why Evidential Ambiguity is Likely Given Theism-Plus-the-Primary-Facts
- 5.6 Concluding Thoughts