

"The Evidence in Self-Deception"

Abstract: In previous work, I have argued that a version of the so-called *avowal view* of self-deception offers the best account of at least a particularly interesting subset of cases of self-deception, which I call *deep tension* cases. According to the avowal view (AV), the agent who is self-deceived that p has been led to form--automatically, on the basis of evidence--the belief that $\sim p$, and yet is sincere in asserting that p because the proposition that p is one that she is committed to believing. This account has strengths lacking in an account of self-deception that instead sees the self-deceived belief that p as itself being the product of (mistreated) evidence. Yet an obvious objection to the AV is that self-deceived agents *do* mistreat the evidence bearing on their self-deceived belief. What is the point of doing so, if not to produce the state of self-deception? I will argue in this paper that the biased mistreatment of evidence in deep tension cases *constitutes* rather than causes the agent to be self-deceived, though I will also argue that in many cases self-deception might not involve much consideration of evidence at all.