

# THE PROBLEM WITH TRUSTING UNFAMILIAR FACULTIES: ACCESSIBILISM DEFENDED

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**ABSTRACT:** According to accessibilism, there is an accessibility condition on justification. More specifically, accessibilism claims that facts about justification are *a priori* accessible—where *a priori* is used in the *traditional* sense that a condition is *a priori* just in case it doesn't depend on any of the sense modalities. The most prominent argument for accessibilism draws on Bonjour and Lehrer's unfamiliar faculty scenarios. Recently, however, several objections have been raised against it. In this article, I defend the argument against three prominent objections from the recent literature.

**KEYWORDS:** epistemic internalism, accessibilism, clairvoyance, justification, Bergmann's dilemma

## 1. Accessibilism

Epistemic internalists claim that facts about justification in some special sense depend upon one's internal states. Traditionally, there are two different ways in which this idea has been developed. On the one hand, some internalists support mentalism; i.e., the view that facts about justification supervene upon one's non-factive mental states.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, others support accessibilism or access internalism; i.e., the view that facts about justification always are *a priori* accessible (henceforth, I'll just use the term 'accessible')—where *a priori* is used in the traditional sense that a condition is *a priori* just in case it doesn't depend on any of

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<sup>1</sup> Proponents of mentalism include John Pollock & Joseph Cruz, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*, (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999); Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, "Internalism Defended," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 38, 1 (2001): 95-119; Ralph Wedgwood, "Internalism Explained," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 65, 2 (2002): 349-369; Declan Smithies, "Mentalism and Epistemic Transparency," *Australian Journal of Philosophy*, 90, 4 (2012): 723-741; Kevin McCain, *Evidentialism and Epistemic Justification* (Routledge, 2016); and Jonathan Egeland, "The Demon That Makes Us Go Mental: Mentalism Defended," *Philosophical Studies* 176, 12 (2019), 1-19.

the sense modalities.<sup>2,3</sup> This paper focuses on the latter of the two internalisms, namely accessibilism.

Accessibilism is often thought to receive support from intuitions about cases involving unfamiliar faculties, like clairvoyance. The general idea is that beliefs produced by unfamiliar faculties aren't justified, and that the best explanation for why that is so is that it must be possible for one to tell—at least in principle—what one's beliefs rationally have going for them, if they are justified. Recently, however, this kind of argument has come under heavy fire by proponents of epistemic externalism; i.e., the view that internalism is false. This paper will defend the argument above by responding to three different objections developed in the literature: one of which criticizes the internalist intuitions, and two that criticize the abductive inference that the argument employs. Doing this, the purpose of the paper is to demonstrate that the argument withstands recent externalist objections, and, consequently, that accessibilism remains as plausible as ever.

This is how the paper is structured. In section 2, I identify and answer core questions about what commitments the accessibilist should make, while also pointing to prominent, but implausible, versions of accessibilism in the literature. In section 3, I present a couple of well-known scenarios—Laurence Bonjour's clairvoyance case and Keith Lehrer's Truetemp case—and argue that the intuitions they elicit strongly support the accessibilist view endorsed in the previous section. In sections 4 to 6, I defend this argument against three objections recently developed in the literature. The first objection bites the bullet and says that the beliefs of the subjects in Bonjour and Lehrer's scenarios actually are justified; the second says that there are alternative, externalist explanations of the intuitions elicited by the aforementioned scenarios that are more plausible than the one offered by the accessibilist; and the third is Michael Bergmann's dilemma, which is

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<sup>2</sup> Thus, the modes of *a priori* accessibility include not only reflection and reasoning, but also introspection and other cognitive mechanisms with an experiential aspect. For more on the distinction between narrow and broad notions of the *a priori*, see Albert Casullo, *A Priori Justification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Proponents of accessibilism or access internalism include Laurence Bonjour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); Roderick Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge* (Prentice-Hall Inc., 1989); Richard Fumerton, *Metaepistemology and Skepticism* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1995); Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Matthias Steup, "A Defense of Internalism," in *The Theory of Knowledge, Classical and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Louis Pojman (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1999), 373-384; and Declan Smithies, "Moore's Paradox and the Accessibility of Justification," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 85, 2 (2012): 273-300.

a *reductio* against accessibilism. Having responded to these objections, I summarize and conclude in section 7.

## 2. What Kind of Accessibilist Should You Be?

Before I present and defend the main argument, I want to spend a few pages on what commitments the accessibilist should make. This is important, not just because many internalists have defended implausible versions of the view, but also because many of the objections levelled against it only undermine those implausible versions of it. Let's therefore begin by taking a closer look at what commitments the accessibilist should make. My discussion will revolve around three core questions, the first of which is:

### 2.1 What Kind of Justification Is Accessible?

It is common to draw a distinction between two kinds of justification.<sup>4</sup> First, you can have justification to believe a certain proposition, regardless of whether or not you actually believe it. For example, after listening to a history lecture you can have justification to believe that the Viking Leif Erikson was the first European to discover North America, but without actually believing it. Second, you can also have justifiably held beliefs (or other doxastic attitudes). For example, if you come to believe the proposition above in a way that is properly based on that which gives you justification to believe it, then your belief is justifiably held. Following Roderick Firth,<sup>5</sup> we can say that the first kind of justification is justification in the *propositional* sense, whereas the second kind of justification is justification in the *doxastic* sense.<sup>6</sup> Given the above characterization of the distinction, it is clear that propositional justification is necessary, but not sufficient, for doxastic justification.

Now, which of these kinds of justification is accessible? Although I don't know of any internalist who thinks that one always has a special sort of access to facts about doxastic justification, it's not hard to see how such a view would go.

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<sup>4</sup> Some even operate with three kinds of justification. See, e.g., Clayton Littlejohn, *Justification and the Truth-Connection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Roderick Firth, "Are Epistemic Concepts Reducible to Ethical Concepts?" in *Values and Morals*, eds. Alvin Goldman and Jaegwon Kim (Dordrecht: Kluwer), 215-229.

<sup>6</sup> Other epistemologists use different terminology to draw the same distinction. See, e.g., Alvin Goldman, "What Is Justified Belief," in *Justification and Knowledge*, ed. George Pappas (Boston: D. Reidel, 1979), 1-25; Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, "Evidentialism," *Philosophical Studies* 48, 1 (1985): 15-34; James Pryor, "There Is Immediate Justification," in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, eds. Matthias Steup, John Turri, and Ernest Sosa (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 202-222; and Declan Smithies, *The Epistemic Role of Consciousness*, (Oxford University Press, 2019).

The internalist who advocates this kind of view thinks that facts about which beliefs one now justifiably holds somehow are within the subject's cognitive grasp. The problem, however, is that, according to the analysis above, doxastic justification is propositional justification plus proper basing,<sup>7</sup> and it is highly doubtful that one always has access to whether one satisfies the basing requirement. In other words, one has a justifiably held belief just in case (i) one has justification for holding that belief, and (ii) one holds it by properly basing it on that which gives one justification to hold it; but it is implausible that whether one satisfies the second condition is something that is accessible to one.

In order to illustrate why the basing requirement, which converts propositional justification into doxastic justification if satisfied, isn't accessible, consider Jonathan Schaffer's<sup>8</sup> debasing demon. A debasing demon can make the beliefs one holds unjustified in the doxastic sense by undetectably changing the basis on which they are held, while still having it seem to the victim as if his beliefs are held on their proper justificatory basis: "[The debasing demon] throws her victims into the belief state on an improper basis, while leaving them with the impression *as if* they had proceeded properly."<sup>9</sup> The debasing demon is conjured by acceptance of the following claims:

1. Knowledge [and doxastic justification] requires the production of belief, properly based on the evidence.
2. Any belief can be produced on an improper basis.
3. It is always possible, when a belief is produced on an improper basis, for it to seem later as if one had produced a belief properly based on the evidence.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, as Schaffer points out, there are strong reasons for accepting each of the claims. The first is accepted by almost all contemporary epistemologists; the second is motivated by the idea that any belief can be held in an evidentially insensitive manner on the basis of, say, wishful thinking, blind guesses, or random hunches; and the third is supported by the idea that our awareness of one's past mental processes is fallible. Taken together, it follows from these claims that the basing

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<sup>7</sup> John Turri, "On the Relationship between Propositional and Doxastic Justification," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 80, 2 (2010): 312-326, provides counterexamples to the analysis. Declan Smithies, "Ideal Rationality and Logical Omniscience," *Synthese* 192, 9 (2015), 2769-2793, responds that we simply can define proper basing as whatever turns propositional justification into doxastic justification. Thus, "immunity from counterexample may be gained at the cost of reduction." (*Ibid.*, footnote 19.)

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Schaffer, "The Debasing Demon," *Analysis* 70, 2 (2010): 228-237.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

relation isn't accessible: it is possible that there is a demon that debases one's beliefs, but while still having it seem as if they are properly based on one's evidence.<sup>11,12</sup> Hence, accessibilism should be formulated as a thesis about propositional justification, rather than doxastic justification.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2 What Does Having Access to Facts About Justification More Specifically Require?

Let's define the *justification facts* as the facts about which doxastic attitudes one now has propositional justification (to a certain degree) to hold. Plausibly, one has access to the justification facts only if one has access to (facts about) one's *justifiers*<sup>14</sup>; i.e., to whatever confers justification upon the doxastic attitudes one now has justification to hold. Indeed, it is (at least in part) in virtue of one's access

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<sup>11</sup> According to Patrick Bondy and Adam Carter, "The Basing Relation and the Impossibility of the Debasing Demon," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 55, 3 (forthcoming): 203-216, Schaffer's argument fails since the debasing scenario isn't possible. Beginning from the assumption that it is possible, they try to establish their conclusion by *reductio*. They do this by showing how the scenario is inconsistent with the most prominent analyses of the basing relation in the literature. However, a problem with their objection is that Schaffer's argument isn't committed to any of those analyses. Indeed, since all of them are subject to counterexamples (as Bondy and Carter rightfully point out), there are good reasons for why he shouldn't be committed to any of them. Instead, insofar as we have a good *intuitive* grasp of the basing relation, Schaffer can theorize about it without being committed to any particular analysis of the notion.

<sup>12</sup> Another worry about Schaffer's argument is that it doesn't apply to doxastic theories of the basing relation, according to which having a meta-belief B2 to the effect that that one has a reason *r* supporting one's belief B1 is sufficient for B1 to be based on *r* (see, e.g., Adam Leite, "Believing One's Reasons Are Good," *Synthese* 161, 3 (2008): 419-441). However, I do not think that this kind of doxastic theory about the basing relation is successful. For example, it appears to be possible to have the relevant meta-belief B2, but without the belief B1 satisfying the basing requirement. For a counterexample along these lines, see Keith Korb, "The Epistemic Basing Relation", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta (2015): <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/basing-epistemic/> [Downloaded: 12.01.2019.].

<sup>13</sup> Henceforth, I will therefore only focus on propositional justification (as does the argument that is presented in the next section). However, I suspect that it won't always be possible to clearly differentiate talk about the various types of justification without additional commentary.

<sup>14</sup> Whether accessibilism should be analyzed in terms of one's access to one's justifiers or in terms of one's access to true propositions/facts about one's justifiers (e.g., facts to the effect that one now is/isn't in possession of a certain justifier J) is an issue that I won't go further into here. So even though many of the formulations in this article appear to favor the first alternative, this is simply for the sake of convenience and shouldn't be seen as committal with respect to the issue at hand.

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to one's justifiers that the justification facts are accessible. This has led many epistemologists, internalists and externalists alike, to formulate accessibilism (or internalism more generally) as a thesis about one's access to one's justifiers. Here are a few examples:

The basic thrust of internalism in epistemology, therefore, is that the properties that confer warrant upon a belief are properties to which the believer has some special sort of epistemic access.<sup>15</sup>

What we shall call "accessibilism" holds that the epistemic justification of a person's belief is determined by things to which the person has some special sort of access.<sup>16</sup>

What all forms of internalism have in common is that they require, for a belief's justification, that the person holding the belief be aware (or at least potentially aware) of something contributing to its justification. . . I shall take the following to be the canonical formulation of this requirement: *The Awareness Requirement*: S's belief B is justified only if (i) there is something, X, that contributes to the justification of B—e.g., evidence for B or a truth-indicator for B or the satisfaction of some necessary condition of B's justification—and (ii) S is aware (or potentially aware) of X.<sup>17</sup>

However, a problem with these formulations is that having access to one's justifiers is only a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for having access to the justification facts. They therefore fail to capture the sort of accessibility that internalism requires. By way of illustration, consider someone—let's call him Johnny—who has justification for believing that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland. The reason Johnny has justification for believing that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland is that he has a memory belief to the effect that a trustworthy geography teacher told him so (this is his justifier). Moreover, let's say that Johnny has access to his memory belief, but not to the fact that it supports believing the proposition above. From Johnny's first person perspective, his memory belief that a trustworthy geography teacher told him that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland has no bearing whatsoever on the belief that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland. Now, it is clear that Johnny's access to his memory belief isn't sufficient for the kind of accessibility that internalism demands; i.e., access to the justification facts.<sup>18</sup> The reason is simply that, from his subjective perspective, there's nothing supporting

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<sup>15</sup> Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Conee & Feldman, *Internalism Defended*, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Bergmann, *Justification without Awareness* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>18</sup> Consequently, according to internalism, Johnny's doesn't have justification for believing that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland.

the proposition that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland (not even his memory belief does). Indeed, the weaker access requirement satisfied by Johnny and suggested in the formulations above is captured by William Alston's externalist position—which he calls *internalist externalism*—according to which one's justifiers are accessible, but the facts in virtue of which they confer justification (which Alston takes to be facts about reliability, understood in terms of objective probability) are not.<sup>19</sup>

In order to remedy this problem, we should instead say that the justification facts are accessible if and only if *both* one's justifiers *and* the facts about which doxastic attitudes they support (and the degree to which they support them) are accessible. This will rule out that someone like Johnny can have justification for holding a certain belief, but without being in a position to tell what that belief rationally has going for it. Thus, accessibilism can be formulated as the thesis that the justification facts are accessible, or, alternatively, as the thesis that one's justifiers and the facts about justificatory support (i.e., which doxastic attitudes one's justifiers support, and to what degree) are accessible.

### 2.3 How Are the Justification Facts Accessible?

Lastly, let's consider what kind of access we have to the justification facts. Generally speaking, there are two ways in which the accessibility in question has been understood. First, some internalists argue that the justification facts, in some special sense, are *psychologically* accessible. For example, according to BonJour<sup>20</sup>, one has justification to believe that *p* only if one has a (justified) higher-order belief to the effect that one has justification to believe that *p*. As he says in his argument against foundationalism, a belief *B* is justified only if there is an argument of the following form:

- (1) *B* has feature  $\Phi$ .
- (2) Beliefs having feature  $\Phi$  are highly likely to be true.
- (3) Therefore, *B* is highly likely to be true.

[And] in order for *B* to be justified for a particular person *A* (at a particular time), it is necessary, not merely that a justification along the above lines exist in the abstract, but also that *A* himself be in cognitive possession of that justification, that is, that he believe the appropriate premises of forms (1) and (2) and that these

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<sup>19</sup> William Alston, *Epistemic Justification* (Cornell University Press, 1989). Kathrin Glüer and Åsa Wikforss, "Reasons for Belief and Normativity," in *Oxford Handbook on Reasons and Normativity*, ed. Daniel Star (Oxford University Press, 2018), also endorse this view.

<sup>20</sup> BonJour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*.

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beliefs be justified for him.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, according to Roderick Chisholm,<sup>22</sup> one has justification to believe that *p* only if one is *able* to know, in virtue of reflection alone, that one has justification to believe that *p*. This is how he puts the point.

The internalist assumes that, merely by reflecting upon his own conscious state, he can formulate a set of epistemic principles that will enable him to find out, with respect to any possible belief he has, whether he is *justified* in having that belief.<sup>23</sup>

However, proponents of the psychological accessibility of justification face a couple of problems. First, they face a regress problem insofar as one has justification for a first-order belief only if one has (the ability to form) a second-order belief to the effect that one has justification for one's first-order belief, and one has justification for this second-order belief only if one has (the ability to form) a third-order belief to the effect that one has justification for one's second order belief, and so on *ad infinitum*. But since no human is able to have such and infinite stock of higher-order beliefs of ever-increasing complexity, it follows that no human has justification for their first-order beliefs, and this is clearly absurd.<sup>24</sup>

Second, they also face an over-intellectualization problem insofar as there are unreflective creatures (e.g., children, non-human animals, or the mentally disabled) who seem to have justification to hold certain beliefs, even though they don't have the reflective or conceptual abilities to form higher-order beliefs about which lower-order beliefs they have justification to hold. Thus, the view that the justification facts are psychologically accessible again has counterintuitive consequences.<sup>25</sup>

For these reasons, I think we should explore the other way in which the notion of "access" has been understood.<sup>26</sup> On this view, the accessibility in question

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>22</sup> Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>24</sup> Alston, *Epistemic Justification*, ch.8; Fumerton, *Metaepistemology and Skepticism*, ch. 3. Bergmann, *Justification without Awareness*, ch. 1; and Hilary Kornblith, *On Reflection* (Oxford University Press, 2012), ch.1, to mention just a few, argue that internalism faces regress problems.

<sup>25</sup> The over-intellectualization problem is raised by Alvin Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); Alston, *Epistemic Justification*; and Richard Feldman, "Respecting the Evidence," *Philosophical Perspectives* 19 (2005): 95-119.

<sup>26</sup> There are, of course, other internalists who define the relevant kind of accessibility in psychological terms, but who do so in a much weaker sense that avoids the problems above (see, e.g., Fumerton, "Respecting the Evidence"). However, a problem with views of this kind is that



is understood in *epistemic* terms, but in a way that doesn't presuppose anything about one's psychological abilities or states. For example, according to Declan Smithies,<sup>27</sup> one has justification to believe that  $p$  only if one has justification to believe that one has justification to believe that  $p$ . This idea is captured by the following iteration principle:

The JJ Principle:  $Jp \rightarrow JJp$ .<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, Maria Lasonen-Aarnio<sup>29</sup> claims that internalism (which she opposes) should be understood as the view that a necessary condition for having (first-order) justification to hold a certain doxastic attitude is that one has higher-order justification to believe that one does.

A natural way of putting more meat on these bones is as follows. Whenever you have (first-order) justification to hold a certain doxastic attitude—let's just say a belief—toward proposition  $p$ , you also have (higher-order) justification to believe that you do. This higher-order justification is provided by one's faculty of introspection and one's faculty of reflection. You thus have higher-order introspective and reflective justification to believe that you have the lower-order justification that you in fact do have. By way of example, let's say that you have a piece of evidence (e.g., a certain visual experience)  $e$  that gives you justification to believe that there is a chessboard in front of you. Now, according to the proposal at hand, a necessary condition for having any evidence is that you have introspective justification to believe that you do have that evidence:  $e \rightarrow Je$ . Moreover, another necessary condition on  $e$  is that you have reflective justification to believe that it supports the proposition(s)  $p$  it in fact does support:  $e_{sup} \rightarrow Je_{sup}$ . Also, having introspective justification to believe that you have evidence  $e$  and reflective justification to believe that  $e$  supports  $p$  is sufficient for having (higher-order)

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they aren't really supported by the considerations that motivate accessibilism in first place. For a larger discussion of this issue, see Bergmann, *Justification without Awareness*, ch. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Smithies, "Moore's Paradox and the Accessibility of Justification".

<sup>28</sup> Smithies calls it *The Positive Self-Intimation Thesis*. Moreover, he actually supports principles that are a lot stronger than this. More specifically, he thinks propositional justification has the following structure:

**"The Accessibility Thesis:**

**Positive:** one has justification to believe that  $p$  iff one has justification to believe that one has justification to believe that  $p$  ( $Jp \leftrightarrow JJp$ ).

**Negative:** one lacks justification to believe that  $p$  iff one has justification to believe that one lacks justification to believe that  $p$  ( $\sim Jp \leftrightarrow J\sim Jp$ )." (Smithies, "Moore's Paradox and the Accessibility of Justification", 273.)

<sup>29</sup> Maria Lasonen-Aarnio, "Higher-Order Evidence and the Limits of Defeat," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 88, 2 (2014): 314-345.

justification to believe that you have (first-order) justification to believe that  $p$ :  $(J_e \wedge J_{sup}p) \rightarrow JJp$ . Thus, if you have (first-order) justification to believe that there is a chessboard in front of you, then you have (higher-order) introspective and reflective justification to believe that you do.<sup>30, 31</sup>

Now, notice how this kind of view doesn't tell us anything about our psychology. For example, in order to have justification to believe a certain proposition, it doesn't require that we actually believe (or have any other attitude or mental state toward the fact) that we do. Thus, the vicious regress problem<sup>32</sup> and the over-intellectualization problem are avoided. This way, proponents of the epistemic accessibility of justification have a way of conceptualizing the relevant kind of accessibility, but without falling prey to common externalist objections. Moreover, I do not doubt that there are other plausible ways for the proponent of this kind of position to understand the accessibility in question. However, for present purposes, when it comes to how the justification facts are accessible, I will take the accessibilist to be committed to something like the JJ principle.

In sum, these are the core commitments that the accessibilist should make. First, he should claim that facts about propositional, and not doxastic, justification

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<sup>30</sup> There are of course other ways of fleshing out the JJ principle, but I think this is a plausible first proposal. A similar suggestion is hinted at (but not endorsed) by Nico Silins, "The Evil Demon Inside," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (forthcoming), and developed and argued for in great detail by Smithies, *The Epistemic Role of Consciousness*.

<sup>31</sup> Having discussed the JJ principle with colleagues, I have found that some of them feel that it somehow is too weak to capture the kind of accessibility that the internalist is (or should be) interested in. In response to this kind of worry, I simply want to point out that there isn't any general agreement among internalists about what the relevant kind of access involves. Rather, the idea is that reflection on certain kinds of cases (what I'm in this paper calling unfamiliar faculty cases) supports the idea that facts about justification are *a priori* accessible in some sense or other, and that the internalist should figure out how to spell out this access condition. That being said, the JJ principle seems like a perfectly fine proposal.

<sup>32</sup> It still generates an infinite regress insofar as having first-order justification to hold a certain doxastic attitude ultimately requires an infinite regress of higher-order justifications to believe that one has the lower-order justifications. However, as Smithies, "Moore's Paradox and the Accessibility of Justification," 277, points out, since this is a regress *propositional* justifications—in order to have first-order justification for a doxastic attitude it is not required that one actually believe any of these higher-order propositions—it is benign. Indeed, having such a stock of infinite (higher-order) justifications doesn't seem any more problematic than it is for someone who has justification to believe that  $p$  to also have justification to believe that  $p \vee q$ , justification to believe that  $p \vee r$ , and so on. Moreover, neither case of infinite justifications seems to require that the agent must be *able* to form the relevant beliefs. After all, the disjunctive propositions just mentioned may be too many or too large for any finite mind with finite computational capacity to believe.

are accessible. Second, he should claim that the justification facts are accessible just in case both one's justifiers *and* the facts about justificatory support are accessible. Third, he should claim that the justification facts are epistemically, and not psychologically, accessible. Taken together, this enables us to formulate the following plausible position, which avoids many of the traditional problems that have plagued the internalist:

*Accessibilism*: necessarily, one always has propositional justification to believe the justification facts (or, alternatively, what one's justifiers are and how they support the doxastic attitudes they do).

### 3. The Argument from Unfamiliar Faculties

According to simple process reliabilism, like that of the early Alvin Goldman,<sup>33</sup> the justification facts are a function of the reliability of one's doxastic dispositions. However, by now, many counterexamples to this analysis are on the table. The counterexamples usually either demonstrate that reliability isn't necessary for justification or that it isn't sufficient for justification.<sup>34</sup> One of the most famous counterexamples to the sufficiency claim is provided by Bonjour and goes as follows:

#### *Clairvoyance*

Norman, under certain conditions which usually obtain, is a completely reliable clairvoyant with respect to certain kinds of subject matter. He possesses no evidence or reasons of any kind for or against the general possibility of such a cognitive power or for or against the thesis that he possesses it. One day Norman comes to believe that the President is in New York City, though he has no evidence either for or against this belief. In fact the belief is true and results from his clairvoyant power under circumstances in which it is completely reliable.<sup>35</sup>

Now, according to simple process reliabilism, since Norman's belief about the President's whereabouts is reliably produced (and there are no undefeated defeaters), it is justified. However, intuitively, the reliabilist verdict is clearly wrong; Norman's belief doesn't seem any more justified than a random hunch. Hence, simple process reliabilism is wrong.

Consider now another counterexample provided by Lehrer:

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<sup>33</sup> Alvin Goldman, "What is Justified Belief," In *Justification and Knowledge*, ed. George Pappas (Boston: D. Reidel, 1979), 1-25.

<sup>34</sup> The most famous counterexample to the necessity claim is provided by Keith Lehrer and Stewart Cohen, "Justification, Truth, and Coherence," *Synthese* 55, 2 (1983): 191-207.

<sup>35</sup> Bonjour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, 41; Cf. Laurence Bonjour, "Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5, 1 (1980): 53-73.

*Truetemp*

Suppose a person, whom we shall call Mr. Truetemp, undergoes brain surgery by an experimental surgeon who invents a small device which is both a very accurate thermometer and a computational device capable of generating thoughts. The device, call it tempucomp, is implanted in Truetemp's head... and acts as a sensor to transmit information about the temperature to the computational system in his brain... Assume that the tempucomp is very reliable, and so his thoughts are correct temperature thoughts... Now imagine, finally, that he... accepts [these thoughts] unreflectively, another effect of the tempucomp. Thus, he thinks and accepts that the temperature is 104 degrees. It is.<sup>36</sup>

Once again, simple process reliabilism tells us that Truetemp's belief about the temperature is justified, since it is reliably produced (and there are no undefeated defeaters). However, just as with Norman, this seems to be the wrong verdict: intuitively, Truetemp's belief is clearly not justified. Hence, simple process reliabilism is wrong.

Moreover, when diagnosing where exactly simple process reliabilism goes wrong, BonJour and Lehrer provide the resources necessary for formulating an argument, based on the intuitions elicited by the scenarios above, for accessibilism. The argument makes use of the fact that the beliefs of the subjects in the scenarios above are produced by what we may call an *unfamiliar faculty*,<sup>37</sup> i.e., a faculty for belief production which a subject has, but without any awareness of the fact that he has it or of why beliefs produced by that faculty should be true. Consider the following passage, where BonJour offers his diagnosis:

One reason why externalism may seem initially plausible is that if the external relation in question genuinely obtains [i.e., the reliable relation between one's belief and the truth], then Norman will in fact not go wrong in accepting the belief, and it is, *in a sense*, not an accident that this is so: it would not be an accident from the standpoint of our hypothetical observer who knows all the relevant facts and laws. But how is this supposed to justify Norman's belief? From his subjective perspective it is an accident that the belief is true. And the suggestion here is that the rationality of justifiability of Norman's belief should be judged from Norman's own perspective rather than from one which is unavailable to him.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Keith Lehrer, *Theory of Knowledge* (Routledge, 1990), 163-164.

<sup>37</sup> The term is borrowed from Andrew Moon, "How to Use Cognitive Faculties You Never Knew You Had," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 99, 1 (2018): 251-275.

<sup>38</sup> BonJour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, 43-44; Cf. Laurence BonJour and Ernest Sosa, *Epistemic Justification: Internalism vs. Externalism, Foundations vs. Virtues* (Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 32: '[Norman is] being epistemically irrational and irresponsible in accepting beliefs whose provenance [can only be a total mystery to [him], whose status is as far as [he] can

Similarly, Lehrer writes:

Though he [i.e., Truetemp] records the information because of the operations of the tempucomp, he is ignorant of the facts about the tempucomp and about his temperature telling reliability. Yet, the sort of causal, nomological, statistical, or counterfactual relationships required by externalism may all be present. Does he know [or have justification to believe] that the temperature is 104 degrees when the thought occurs to him while strolling in Pima Canyon? He has no idea why the thought occurred to him or that such thoughts are almost always correct. He does not, consequently, know [or have justification to believe] that the temperature is 104 degrees when that thought occurs to him.<sup>39</sup>

What BonJour and Lehrer here tell us is that simple process reliabilism (and other forms of externalism) cannot be correct since it counts reliably produced beliefs that are wholly arbitrary or unsupported from the subject's first person perspective as justified. However, as the Clairvoyance and Truetemp scenarios above indicate, a subject can only have justification for a certain belief if it *isn't* an accident from his perspective why that belief should be true. In other words, beliefs produced by unfamiliar faculties cannot be justified since the truth of those beliefs would be completely accidental to the subject who has them. Indeed, according to the internalist, the most plausible explanation for the intuitions elicited by the cases above—namely, that Norman and Truetemp's beliefs are unjustified—is that one must always have a special sort of access to the justificatory status of one's doxastic attitudes, if they are justified.<sup>40</sup> By abductive reasoning, we can therefore conclude from these intuitions that accessibilism is true.

Recently, the argument from unfamiliar faculties for accessibilism has been heavily criticized. In the next three sections, I will respond to three different ways in which the argument above has been challenged. Doing this, the goal is to demonstrate that the argument withstands recent externalist objections, and that its conclusion remains as plausible as ever.

#### 4. The Bullet-Biting Response

Some externalists have responded to the argument above by arguing that the intuitions elicited by cases involving unfamiliar faculties actually support externalism. For example, Sven Bernecker claims that the argument from

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tell no different from that of a stray hunch or arbitrary conviction.'

<sup>39</sup> Lehrer, *Theory of Knowledge*, 164.

<sup>40</sup> Internalists take it to be the best explanation because it is the explanation that is most virtuous. For example, it is very *simple*, and it provides a *unified* explanation that accounts for both BonJour and Lehrer's scenarios, but with the *power* to generalize to other similar cases as well.

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unfamiliar faculties somehow is biased against reliabilism by assuming that those kinds of faculties aren't really reliable, and that if we properly acknowledge the fact that they are (in the relevant scenarios), then we will also realize that the beliefs they produce are justified. Focusing on Bonjour's clairvoyance case, this is how he puts it:

I think it is questionable whether the clairvoyance example poses a threat to externalist reliabilism. The intuitive plausibility of the thought experiment hinges on the presumption that clairvoyance is *not* reliable. Yet if a clairvoyant faculty actually existed, then either it would prove itself reliable or not. If it proved itself reliable, then intuitively there would be no reason to deny clairvoyants justification and knowledge. Bonjour's internalist interpretation of the thought experiment presupposes a bias against clairvoyance.<sup>41</sup>

Here, Bernecker is making the point that (presumably) there aren't any reliable clairvoyants in the actual world, and that if there are reliable clairvoyants in the possible world that Norman finds himself in and he happens to be one of them, then we should have intuitions to the effect that his belief about the President's whereabouts is justified.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, if I understand Bernecker correctly, the reason most of us don't have those intuitions is that we let certain facts about our world (that there aren't any reliable clairvoyants or temperature-tellers) skew our judgments about certain facts (the justificatory status of Norman or Truetemp's beliefs) in other possible worlds.

However, in response, I will make two points against Bernecker. First, claiming that if clairvoyance (or the tempucomp) really is reliable, then "there would be no reason to deny clairvoyants justification and knowledge" is simply wrong. The majority of philosophers appear to be swayed by internalist intuitions when it comes to cases involving unfamiliar faculties (at least judging by the current state of the literature), and that does provide us with good reason to deny that beliefs produced by unfamiliar faculties are justified.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the internalist also has a good—indeed, I've argued, the best—explanation for why so many who reflect on the clairvoyance and Truetemp scenarios deny that the

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<sup>41</sup> Sven Bernecker, "Agent Reliabilism and the Problem of Clairvoyance," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 76, 1 (2008): 166.

<sup>42</sup> Jack Lyons, *Perception and Basic Beliefs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 119, seems to make an analogous point with his Nyrmoon case.

<sup>43</sup> Here I'm not making the claim that most philosophers have internalist *opinions*, but that they have internalist *intuitions* about unfamiliar faculty cases. When looking at the literature that has developed around these kinds of cases, it seems that externalists generally tend to share the internalist intuitions, but rather give more weight to other theoretical considerations that speak against them.

subjects in those cases have justification: namely, one must always have a special sort of access to the justificatory status of one's doxastic attitudes, if they are justified.

Second, Bernecker's alternative explanation of internalist intuitions about the clairvoyance case—namely, that they are biased or skewed due to the fact that the faculty in question (i.e., clairvoyance) doesn't really exist—is problematic. To see why that is so, we must ask ourselves whether it is only the intuitions elicited by the clairvoyance case that are biased in the way Bernecker suggests? If so, then the Truetemp case still supports accessibilism and Bernecker's response fails. If, however, it isn't only the intuitions elicited by the clairvoyance case that are biased, then he needs to say something about which kinds of cases are likely to give rise to biased intuitions. If he thinks this is the case when it comes to *all* scenarios involving unfamiliar faculties (which I suspect he does), then, unless he is able to provide some principled motivation for this view, it is clearly *ad hoc*. After all, why should intuitions about reliable clairvoyants or temperature-tellers be less trustworthy than intuitions about, say, Gettier-cases, brains-in-vats, demon's victims, epistemic akrasia or belief in Moorean conjunctions? A possible response hinted at in the passage quoted above is that our intuitions are trustworthy only insofar as they are about cases involving phenomena that exist in the actual world—which reliable clairvoyants and temperature tellers don't.

However, there are a couple of problems with this view. First, it is committed to denying the commonly accepted position that modal or counterfactual intuitions can teach us about things that are merely possible.<sup>44</sup> For example, it seems that modal intuitions about, say, Sherlock Holmes and his extraordinary abilities can teach us that such a man possibly *could have existed*, but, according to the view at hand, they cannot. Second, it is hard to see what kind of considerations could motivate the view, especially since Bernecker doesn't provide any. It does of course save the reliabilist from having to give counterintuitive judgments about various cases, but that is of course a completely *ad hoc* reason for the view when the plausibility of reliabilism itself is in question. For these reasons I think that Bernecker's response ultimately fails.

## 5. The Alternative Explanations Response

On balance, most philosophers appear to agree that Norman and Truetemp don't have justification for their beliefs. According to accessibilism, the best explanation

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<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., George Bealer, "Modal Epistemology and the Rationalist Renaissance," in *Conceivability and Possibility*, eds. Tamar Gendler and John Hawthorne (Oxford University Press, 2002); and Colin McGinn, *Mindsight* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

for this intuitive datum is that the justification facts always are epistemically accessible. However, this is not the only plausible explanation. Indeed, many externalists have offered their own explanations for the intuitive datum that Norman and Truetemp don't have justification for their beliefs. For example, Bergmann<sup>45</sup> and Graham<sup>46</sup> claim that the reason they don't have justification is that their beliefs aren't produced by properly functioning cognitive faculties; Breyer and Greco<sup>47</sup> claim that the faculties responsible for their beliefs aren't properly integrated with their cognitive character; Lyons<sup>48</sup> claims that their beliefs lack the appropriate etiology; and Comesaña<sup>49</sup> claims that they aren't supported by reliabilist evidence. In a recent paper, however, Harmen Ghijsen<sup>50</sup> has plausibly argued that all of these alternative explanations ultimately fail.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, in order to remedy their shortcomings, Ghijsen offers his own externalist explanation of why neither Norman nor Truetemp has justification for their belief. In this section, I will take a closer look at Ghijsen's explanation and argue that it too ultimately fails.

According to Ghijsen,<sup>52</sup> we (as cognitively sophisticated agents) have certain largely unconscious *monitoring mechanisms* that detect and respond to the origins of the information we receive and its coherence with other information we possess. If, for example, these monitoring mechanisms detect information that comes from an unreliable source or information that doesn't cohere with certain other beliefs or experiences, then they reject it. Drawing on the work of Alvin Plantinga<sup>53</sup> and Peter Graham,<sup>54</sup> Ghijsen claims that, taken together, these monitoring mechanisms make up one's *defeater system*; i.e., a system whose proper

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<sup>45</sup> Bergmann, *Justification without Awareness*.

<sup>46</sup> Peter Graham, "Functions, Warrant, History," in *Naturalizing Epistemic Virtue*, eds. Abrol Fairweather and Owen Flanagan (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 15-35; Peter Graham, "Against Inferential Reliabilism: Making Origins Matter More," *Philosophical Analysis: The Journal for the Korean Society for Analytic Philosophy* 15 (2014): 87-122.

<sup>47</sup> Benjamin Breyer and John Greco, "Cognitive Integration and the Ownership of Belief: Response to Bernecker," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Review* 76, 1 (2008): 173-184.

<sup>48</sup> Lyons, *Perception and Basic Beliefs*.

<sup>49</sup> Juan Comesaña, "Evidentialist Reliabilism," *Nous* 44, 4 (2010): 571-600.

<sup>50</sup> Harmen Ghijsen, "Norman and Truetemp Revisited Reliabilistically: a Proper Functionalist Account of Clairvoyance," *Episteme* 13, 1 (2016): 15-34.

<sup>51</sup> Although I don't have the space to go deeper into the issue here, let me just note that I think Ghijsen's criticisms are successful. Moreover, I'm not alone in doing so: see, e.g., Moon, "How To Use Cognitive Faculties You Never Knew You Had."

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>53</sup> Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>54</sup> Graham, "Functions, Warrant, History."



function is the reliable prevention of forming or maintaining false beliefs. This is why he says that there is a "Proper Functionalist Defeat (PFD)" condition on justification, which he formulates as follows:

**PFD** *S*s belief in *p* at *t* is justified only if *S* does not have a defeater system *D* such that, had *D* been working properly, it would have resulted in *S*s not believing *p* at *t*.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, according to Ghijzen, PFD plausibly explains why Norman and Truetemp's beliefs are unjustified. Since their defeater systems would have rejected their beliefs if they had been functioning properly, they cannot be justified:

[T]he information presented by their special senses is not corroborated by any of their other senses, nor does the information stem from a recognizable trustworthy source. This should give their monitoring mechanisms sufficient cause to prevent the information from rising to the status of belief.<sup>56</sup>

Now we have two plausible, but competing, explanations of the Clairvoyance and Truetemp scenarios. On the one hand, the accessibilist says that the reason Norman and Truetemp's beliefs are unjustified is that they have been produced by unfamiliar faculties and, as a result, their truth is completely arbitrary or accidental from their subjective point of view. On the other hand, Ghijzen says that the reason their beliefs are unjustified is that their defeater systems aren't functioning properly, since they would have prevented the formation of those beliefs if they had. How are we to decide between these explanations? In light of the scenarios presented above in section 3, this is rather difficult since both of them respect the intuition that Norman and Truetemp's beliefs are unjustified. In order to decide between them, we therefore need another scenario where they yield different verdicts. Continuing, I will present a scenario offered by Ghijzen himself (in response to Graham) and develop a slightly modified version of it where accessibilism and PFD disagree about how it should be interpreted.

Consider the following variation on Bonjour's original clairvoyance case:

*Norbert*

Norbert is the son of a mother and father who both have reliable clairvoyant abilities and have been able to reproduce because of the benefit these clairvoyant abilities have provided for them. However, there are not (yet) many people who have these clairvoyant abilities, and their existence is kept secret. The abilities are due to specialized internal organs that pick up on special energy waves in the environment, and then output brief visual images which represent that such-and-

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<sup>55</sup> Ghijzen, "Norman and Truetemp Revisited Reliabilistically," 106.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

so is currently the case at some distant place. Furthermore, the abilities usually become active quite suddenly some time after puberty. Norbert's parents have decided not to tell him about the existence of his clairvoyant abilities, and Norbert has no evidence for or against their existence in general or his own having them. Some time after puberty, Norbert suddenly experiences a brief visual image of the President being in New York City and on that basis believes that the president is in New York City.<sup>57</sup>

Ghijsen tells us that, intuitively, Norbert's belief is unjustified despite being reliably formed—and with this the accessibilist agrees. The explanations that Ghijsen and the accessibilist offer are of course different, but the intuition elicited by the example is called into question by neither.<sup>58</sup> However, the case can easily be modified—or perhaps I should say expanded upon – so that it yields another result. Consider the following case, which I call Norbert Jr.

*Norbert Jr.*

Hundreds of years after Norbert developed his clairvoyant abilities, clairvoyance has become a widespread phenomenon with the majority of people now developing clairvoyant abilities, but *without* any associated visual imagery, shortly after puberty. The reason is that clairvoyants have an enormous evolutionary advantage; their chances of surviving and reproducing are far greater than those of people without clairvoyant abilities. Moreover, clairvoyance has now become such an integrated part of most people's cognitive lives that the people who have that ability also have defeater systems whose proper function no longer is to prevent the formation or maintenance of clairvoyant beliefs.<sup>59</sup> Norbert Jr. is one of Norbert's descendants. The community in which he lives (including his friends and family) has decided not to tell him about the

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>58</sup> This is somewhat of a simplification. Personally I have conflicting intuitions about the case due to the fact that Norbert's clairvoyant faculty is stipulated to output visual images that are (presumably) internally accessible. For this reason, the clairvoyant faculty might appear to function more or less as a quasi-visuoperceptual faculty, differing mainly insofar as it is able to provide the subject with visual representations of things that are happening at a far greater distance than regular perception. Thus, Norbert's clairvoyant belief might appear to be justified in more or less the same way and to more or less the same degree as regular visual beliefs. For this reason, I will stipulate in the scenario below that the subject (Norbert Jr.) doesn't have the kind of clairvoyance induced visual experiences that Norbert does. Doing this, the case is presented in such a way that Ghijsen and the accessibilist will offer different verdicts, but without relying on unnecessary elements (visual imagery) that only serves to complicate the scenario and our intuitions about it.

<sup>59</sup> The clairvoyant beliefs might thus perhaps be a bit like spontaneous beliefs about the dangerousness of snakes for us. For more on snake-beliefs and proper function, see Moon, "How To Use Cognitive Faculties You Never Knew You Had."

clairvoyant abilities of his species, and Norbert Jr. has no evidence for or against their existence in general or his own having them. Some time after puberty, Norbert spontaneously forms the clairvoyant belief that the President is in New York City.

Intuitively, Norbert Jr.'s belief is unjustified. After all, his epistemic position appears to be no better than that of Norbert. And according to the accessibilist, that is correct. Indeed, accessibilism tells us that the best explanation for why Norbert Jr.'s belief is unjustified is that it has been produced by an unfamiliar faculty and, as a result, its truth is completely arbitrary or accidental from his first person perspective. However, according to Ghijsen this cannot be correct. Since Norbert Jr.'s defeater system is functioning properly, his belief about the President's whereabouts should be justified. But this just does not seem plausible. Of course, Ghijsen can always insist that Norbert Jr.'s belief is unjustified, but that the right explanation for why that is so should be sought somewhere else; after all, PFD is only a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for justification. However, this would be a very problematic move: not only does it undermine the motivation for PFD (i.e., its ability to plausibly explain the intuitions elicited by clairvoyance-style cases), but it also puts Ghijsen in a position where he has to come up with another explanation for the Norbert Jr. case—and why not accessibilism? Hence, in light of the Norbert Jr. case, Ghijsen's PFD either gives what clearly appears to be the wrong verdict, or it loses its motivation.

## 6. Bergmann's Dilemma

The third objection I want to consider is offered by Bergmann. According to Bergmann, accessibilism is motivated by its ability to avoid what he calls 'The Subject's Perspective Objection (SPO):'

*The Subject's Perspective Objection:*<sup>60</sup> If the subject holding a belief isn't aware of what that belief has going for it, then she isn't aware of how its status is any different from a stray hunch or an arbitrary conviction. From that we may conclude that from her perspective it is an accident that her belief is true. And that implies that it isn't a justified belief.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The SPO encapsulates why beliefs produced by unfamiliar faculties intuitively cannot be justified; the reason is that their truth is completely accidental or unsupported from one's subjective perspective.

<sup>61</sup> Bergmann, *Justification without Awareness*, 12.

However, as he sees it, accessibilism faces a dilemma, thus making it unfit to explain the intuitions elicited by unfamiliar faculty cases. The dilemma he presents is as follows:<sup>62</sup>

*A Dilemma for Internalism*

- 1) An essential feature of internalism is that it makes a subject's actual or potential awareness of some justification-contributor a necessary condition for the justification of any belief held by that subject.
- 2) The awareness required by internalism is either strong or weak awareness.
- 3) If the awareness required by internalism is strong awareness, then internalism has vicious regress problems leading to radical skepticism.
- 4) If the awareness required by internalism is weak awareness, then internalism is vulnerable to the SPO, in which case internalism loses its main motivation for imposing the awareness requirement.
- 5) If internalism either leads to radical skepticism or loses its main motivation for imposing the awareness requirement (i.e., avoiding the SPO), then we should not endorse internalism.
- 6) Therefore, we should not endorse internalism.<sup>63</sup>

In order to get a better grip on how the dilemma actually goes, we need to say a little bit about what Bergmann means by "weak" and "strong" accessibility/awareness. Strong awareness, more specifically, involves "*conceiving of* the justifier that is the object of awareness as being in some way relevant to the justification or truth of the belief" it supports,<sup>64</sup> i.e., it requires that one somehow conceptualizes the justifier as supporting the belief in question. Weak awareness, on the other hand, doesn't require this sort of conceptualization. So Bergmann's dilemma tells us that proponents of accessibilism either support weak or strong accessibilism. If they support strong accessibilism, then they face vicious regress problems that lead to radical skepticism. But if they support weak accessibilism, then they become vulnerable to the SPO. In either case, accessibilism fails.

In the literature, both premise 3 and premise 4 have been challenged. For example, Thomas Crisp<sup>65</sup> and Rogers and Matheson<sup>66</sup> argue that premise 3 is false

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<sup>62</sup> An early and somewhat underdeveloped version of the dilemma was first presented by Fumerton, *Metaepistemology and Skepticism*, 63-65.

<sup>63</sup> Bergmann, *Justification without Awareness*, 13-14.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Crisp, "A Dilemma for Internalism," *Synthese* 174 (2009): 355-366.

<sup>66</sup> Jason Rogers and Jonathan Matheson, "Bergmann's Dilemma: Exit Strategies for Internalists," *Philosophical Studies* 152 (2011): 60-61.

by presenting a version of strong accessibilism that doesn't face vicious regress problems. However, since I have some reservations about their argument, I will focus on premise 4 instead.

When it comes to premise 4, Bergmann tells us that weak accessibility/awareness of a justifier isn't sufficient to make the truth of the doxastic attitude it supports non-accidental from the subject's perspective and therefore not sufficient to justify said attitude (i.e., it is vulnerable to the SPO). This is the case, according to Bergmann, for both *conceptual* and *nonconceptual* versions of weak accessibilism. According to nonconceptual versions of weak accessibilism, there is a weak accessibility condition on justification that doesn't require the subject to conceive of the justifier in any way. However, as Bergmann sees it, such conceptualization is necessary in order to avoid the SPO:

[S]ince the awareness required is nonconceptual, a person can have the required awareness of [the justifier] without conceiving of [it] in any way—without categorizing it according to any classificatory scheme. But then [a subject] can be nonconceptually aware of [the justifier] without conceiving of [it] as relevant at all to the appropriateness of his belief. According to the SPO, if [the subject] does not conceive of [the justifier] as something relevant to the appropriateness of his belief, it is an accident from [his] perspective that his belief is true. Clearly this supposed problem is not solved by requiring [the subject] to be *non*conceptually aware of [the justifier].<sup>67</sup>

Similarly, according to Bergmann, conceptual versions of weak accessibilism also face the SPO. According to conceptual versions of weak accessibilism, there is a weak accessibility condition on justification that *does* require the subject to conceive of the justifier, but *not* in any way that makes it relevant to the appropriateness of the belief (or other doxastic attitude) it supports. However, once again, conceiving of the justifier *as supporting the belief it in fact does support* is necessary in order to avoid the SPO:

Would it help if we added instead the requirement that [a subject] has a *conceptual* weak awareness of [the justifier]? Here again the answer is 'no'. For [the subject] could satisfy this sort of requirement simply by being aware of [the justifier] and applying some concept or other to it. . . And that means that [the subject] can have a conceptual weak awareness of [the justifier] without conceiving of [it] as relevant in any way to the appropriateness of his belief B. But then, according to the SPO, even if this added requirement were satisfied, it would still be an accident from [the subject's] perspective that B is true. For although [the subject] applies a concept to [the justifier], he doesn't apply the *right sort* of concept to it. He doesn't apply a concept that involves his conceiving

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<sup>67</sup> Bergmann, *Justification without Awareness*, 20.

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of [the justifier] as contributing in some way to B's justification (or as indicating that B is likely to be true or some such thing). The only way to guarantee that he *does* apply such a concept to [the justifier] is to have B satisfy a strong awareness requirement. Thus, we are forced to concede that by imposing only a conceptual weak awareness requirement, the internalist is vulnerable to the SPO.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, the upshot for Bergmann is that weak accessibilism—whether it is of a conceptual or non-conceptual version—becomes unmotivated since it is vulnerable to the SPO.

In response, Rogers and Matheson<sup>69</sup> have argued that versions of weak accessibilism that appeal to "seemings" as justifiers—including Michael Huemer's *phenomenal conservatism*<sup>70</sup>—provide counterexamples to premise 4. As they see it, seemings, defined as inclinations to form certain beliefs,<sup>71</sup> can satisfy the weak accessibility/ awareness condition:

[T]he seeming may result for the subject as a result of merely *weak* awareness of some object of first-order awareness. This being the case, an individual can be in a state wherein he hosts the seeming that some proposition is true while remaining in a state of weak—or even nonconceptual—awareness of that seeming, or while having no higher-order *awareness* of the seeming at all, and all while remaining in a state of weak awareness concerning the object of first-order awareness that gives rise to that seeming.<sup>72</sup>

Moreover, not only can such justifying seemings satisfy weak awareness, they also escape the SPO. Absent any relevant defeaters, if it seems to one that *p*, then *p*'s truth *isn't* accidental from one's subjective perspective. This appears to be correct. If a certain proposition—for example that I'm currently reading a philosophy paper, or that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland—seems true, then the truth of that proposition isn't accidental or surprising from one's first-person perspective. Referring back to BonJour's Clairvoyance scenario, Rogers and Matheson put the point as follows:

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>69</sup> Rogers & Matheson, "Bergmann's Dilemma."

<sup>70</sup> See Michael Huemer, *Skepticism and the Veil of Ignorance* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Michael Huemer, "Compassionate Phenomenal Conservatism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 74 (2007): 30-55.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Richard Swinburne, *Epistemic Justification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 141-142; and Earl Conee, "First Things First," in *Evidentialism: Essays in Epistemology*, eds. Earl Conee and Richard Feldman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 15, who also claim that seemings are inclinations to believe. However, not everyone agrees. Huemer, "Compassionate Phenomenal Conservatism," for example, argues rather plausibly that seemings and inclinations to believe are conceptually distinct and therefore can come apart.

<sup>72</sup> Rogers & Matheson, "Bergmann's Dilemma," 60-61.

## The Problem with Trusting Unfamiliar Faculties: Accessibilism Defended

There is a clear subjective difference, for example, between the belief that inexplicably (from his own perspective) pops into Norman the clairvoyant's head as a result of the operation of his clairvoyant powers, on the one hand, and a subject's belief in some proposition as a result of the proposition's actually *seeming true* to him upon his understandingly considering it and being weakly aware of some object of awareness (e.g., conceptual inclusion relationships), on the other. After all, in the latter case, the proposition *seems true* to the subject—to use the language of Plantinga, the subject feels 'pushed' or 'impelled' toward believing it.<sup>73</sup>

Moreover, even though I think the authors mentioned above are correct insofar as versions of weak accessibilism that appeal to seemings as justifiers do provide genuine counterexamples to Bergmann's fourth premise,<sup>74</sup> I want to argue that the version of accessibilism that has been the focus of this paper—something

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>74</sup> Michael Bergmann, "Phenomenal Conservatism and the Dilemma for Internalism," in *Seemings and Justification: New Essays on Dogmatism and Phenomenal Conservatism*, ed. Chris Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 170-171, objects by presenting a couple of scenarios with the purpose of making it intuitive that it is possible to have a conscious seeming that *p* (that satisfies the weak accessibility condition), but that it is an accident from one's perspective that *p* is true. The scenarios he presents have the same structure: there is an epistemic agent who has the relevant kind of seeming and who holds the corresponding belief, but who is *incapable* (due to severe cognitive failings or malfunctions) to conceive of the seeming as relevant to the truth of the corresponding belief. Instead, the agent simply holds the belief for silly or irrational motives, and not because of the seeming itself. As a result, according to Bergmann, it is intuitive that the truth of the agent's belief is completely accidental from his first person perspective; in which case Rogers and Matheson's proposal falls prey to the SPO. However, Luca Moretti and Tommaso Piazza, "Phenomenal Conservatism and Bergmann's Dilemma," *Erkenntnis* 80 (2015): 1271-1290, have plausibly responded by arguing that Bergmann's scenarios fail to show that beliefs properly based on, or justified by, seemings fall prey to the SPO, since the agents in the scenarios hold the relevant beliefs in an irrational manner that *isn't* properly based on the seemings. This is how they put it: "It [i.e., Bergmann's example] only teaches us that if a subject *S* is just weakly aware of a seeming that *P*, believes that *P* but bases her belief that *P* on neither her seeming that *P* nor on any other source of epistemic justification, then it is an accident from *S*'s perspective that her belief that *P* is true (if the belief is true at all). Thus Bergmann's example gives us no reason for claiming that *S*'s weak awareness of her seeming that *P* cannot prevent *S*'s belief that *P* from being accidentally true from *S*'s own perspective when *S*'s belief that *P* is based on her seeming that *P*." (*Ibid.*, 1279.)

Moreover, another problem with Bergmann's scenarios is that since the agents suffer from severe cognitive failings or malfunctions that make them unable to conceive of the seemings as relevant to the truth of the beliefs they hold, they might not actually have any genuine seemings after all. If it "seems" to one that *p*, but one doesn't have the cognitive capacity to recognize it as in any way relevant to the truth the belief that *p*, then the "seeming" might not be a proper seeming after all.

akin to the JJ principle of section 2.3—also provides a counterexample to it. Consider again the JJ principle. It says that one has justification to believe (or, alternatively, withhold/disbelieve) that  $p$ , only if one has higher-order justification to believe that one has justification to believe (or, alternatively, withhold/disbelieve) that  $p$ . By way of example, the principle says that if you have justification to believe, say, that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland, then you have (higher-order) justification to believe that you have justification to believe that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland. Now, there are two things to notice here. First, the JJ principle satisfies the weak awareness condition. It tells us that the justification facts are accessible in the sense that they are accompanied by higher-order justifications that enable the subject to believe with doxastic justification what those facts are, *if* he can take advantage of his epistemic position.<sup>75</sup> So, in other words, the subject need not be *psychologically* capable of believing the justification facts or even to have conceptualized the justifier as in any way relevant to the belief in question.

Second, the JJ principle isn't vulnerable to the SPO. If one has higher-order justification to believe that one has justification to believe that  $p$  whenever one does have justification to believe that  $p$ , then  $p$  isn't accidental or unsupported from one's first person perspective; after all, by taking advantage of one's epistemic position and believing in accordance with one's higher-order justification, the subject will know what the justification facts are. Sure, the subject may not *consciously* recognize what the belief in question has going for it, but it doesn't follow from this that its truth would be accidental from his perspective. Consider the proposition about the capital of Iceland above. Let's say that you have justification to believe that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland and higher-order introspective and reflective justification to believe that you do. Let's also stipulate that you aren't *consciously* aware of your justification for belief in the proposition about the capital of Iceland above. It may, for example, be that your justifier is a memory belief to the effect that a trustworthy person told you that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland and that you're either unable to recall that memory at this

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<sup>75</sup> Another way of cashing out this point is by using Declan Smithies', "Why Justification Matters," in *Epistemic Evaluation: Purposeful Epistemology*, eds. David Henderson and John Greco (Oxford University Press, 2015), 224-244, notion of an *ideally rational counterpart*. An ideally rational counterpart is someone who is identical to you in every relevant way (e.g., you have the same (relevant) justifiers/reasons/evidence), but who always takes advantage of their epistemic position by believing what they have justification to believe—at least as long as they hold any doxastic attitude about the matter. We can then say that the justification facts are accessible in the sense that your ideally rational counterpart always believes them with doxastic justification (as long as they hold any attitude toward them).



particular moment or that you haven't even bothered trying. Still, it doesn't seem that the truth of the proposition that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland is accidental from your subjective perspective. After all, you have introspective justification to believe that you have the aforementioned memory belief, and you have reflective justification to believe that it supports the proposition that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland. And since you're already in *possession* of justifiers that enable to you *consciously* recognize and know that you have justification to believe that Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland, provided that you can exercise your introspective and reflective faculties in a sufficiently virtuous manner, there is indeed something that strongly speaks in favor of holding that belief from your subjective perspective. Hence, the JJ principle avoids the second of horn of Bergmann's dilemma and *can* figure as a plausible explanation of our intuitions about unfamiliar faculty cases.

## 7. Conclusion

According to accessibilism, justification is in some special sense accessible to the subject who has it. Accessibilism is mainly motivated by intuitions elicited by unfamiliar faculty cases. Recently, however, the view has come under heavy fire from a variety of positions. In light of this, the purpose of this paper has been twofold. First, I have clarified what commitments the accessibilist should make. Doing this, I have shown why the most prominent versions of accessibilism are vulnerable to objections that the version endorsed in this paper avoids. Second, I have defended the main argument (from unfamiliar faculty cases) for accessibilism against three prominent objections levelled against it. The upshot of my discussion is that accessibilism, as understood in this paper, remains the best explanation for our intuitive judgments about unfamiliar faculty cases: one must always have a special sort of access to the justificatory status of one's doxastic attitudes, if they are justified.