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**Justification, Reasons and Truth**

By

Ian Paul Schnee

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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in the

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Barry Stroud, Chair

Professor Niko Kolodny

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Abstract

Justification, Reasons and Truth

By

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Two natural ideas we have about justification are that we are justified by basing our beliefs on good reasons, rather than wishful thinking or blind prejudice, and that justification makes our beliefs objectively likely to be true. Despite their appeal, respecting both of these ideas is impossible if we think that one's reasons for belief are determined entirely by one's psychological states, such as one's beliefs and experiences, and not by how the world is around one. If one's reasons are isolated from the world, it seems that they could not make our beliefs likely to be true.

This is why the debate between epistemic internalists, who think that justification is determined just by states of the believer, and externalists, who deny this, seems so intractable. Internalists are motivated by the intuition that justification is determined by the subject's reasons for belief, whereas externalists are motivated by the intuition that justification makes our beliefs objectively likely to be true.

I argue that the key to resolving this dispute is to reject the view that one's reasons are determined entirely by one's psychological states in favor of the view that one's reasons are facts – including facts of the world around one. We can then accept both the idea that justification is a matter of the subject's reasons for belief and the idea that justification makes one's beliefs objectively likely to be true. On this view one's reasons (the facts of the world around us) *can* make one's beliefs likely to be true. The result is a theory of justification that captures the motivations both of traditional forms of internalism and traditional forms of externalism, while avoiding the characteristic problems those views face.

*For my parents*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

#### 1.1 Two intuitions about justification

Your neighbor has been away for the month with her pet cat, but she is due back any day.

**Scenario 1.** You look out your window and see the cat sitting on the fence, and you form the belief that your neighbor is back from vacation.

It is natural to think that your belief in this scenario is justified, for it satisfies two widely shared intuitions about justification.

One of those intuitions is that justification is a matter of having good reasons for belief.<sup>1</sup> We are justified in believing many of the things that we believe because we have good reasons for believing them. For example, your reason for believing that your neighbor is back from vacation is the fact that the cat is on the fence, and the fact that the cat is on the fence is a good reason for believing that she is back. Your belief is justified because you hold it for good reasons, rather than out of wishful thinking or blind prejudice. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine how your belief that she is back from vacation could be justified if you had no reason at all for holding it. Justification, at least for beliefs like that one, seems to require, and seems to be determined by, the belief's being based on good reasons.

A second intuition about justification that is widely shared is that justification is related to truth in a substantive way.<sup>2</sup> Justification is a means to truth: having

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<sup>1</sup> Philosophers who have advocated this idea relatively recently include Alston (1985, 1988), Audi (1993), BonJour (1985, 1999, 2003, 2004), Conee (1988), Conee and Feldman (2001, 2008), Feldman and Conee (1985), Firth (1978), Haack (1993, 1997), Klein (1999, 2005), Moser (1985, 1989), Russell (2001), Steup (1997, 2001a, 2001b), Swain (1981), and Williamson (2000, 2009). Of course the idea is much older: it can be found in Clifford (1879), Price (1969), Russell (1945), and Locke (1690): “*Faith* is nothing but a firm Assent of the Mind: which if it be regulated, as is our Duty, cannot be afforded to any thing, but upon good Reason; and so cannot be opposite it. He that believes, without having any Reason for believing, may be in love with his own Fancies; but neither seeks Truth as he ought, nor pays the Obedience due his Maker [...] For he governs his Assent right, and places it as he should, who in any Case or Matter whatsoever, believes and disbelieves, according as Reason directs him” (Locke 1690: IV, xvii, 24).

<sup>2</sup> Philosophers advocating this idea include Alston (1985, 1988, 1993), BonJour (1980, 1985, 1999, 2003, 2004), Cohen (1984), Comesaña (2002), Conee (1992),

justified beliefs is a means to having true beliefs. On a natural reading that means that justification makes one's beliefs objectively likely to be true.<sup>3</sup> For example, the justification you have for believing that your neighbor is back makes your belief objectively likely to be true: the fact that the cat is on the fence is an objective indication of your neighbor being back.<sup>4</sup> If your justification had nothing to do with the truth of the matter, if it were completely irrelevant to whether your neighbor is back, then it is hard to see how it could amount to justification at all.

If both the intuition about reasons and the intuition about truth inform our ordinary notion of justification, then they place twin demands on any non-revisionary theory of justification. The demands are (i) that the theory respects the sense in which justification is a matter of having good reasons for belief, and (ii) that the theory respects the sense in which justification makes our beliefs objectively likely to be true. I will call these the demand of reasons and the demand of truth, respectively.

Not only are reasons and truth both intuitive demands on a theory of justification, they are not independent of each other. It's not just that we need good reasons for belief in order to be justified and that, completely independently, our belief must happen to be likely to be true. Rather, it is our reasons that have to have a bearing on the truth of the belief. Our reasons justify us because *they* have a

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Fumerton (1995, 2002), Goldman (1979, 1980, 1986, 1992), Klein (2005), Lehrer and Cohen (1983), Plantinga (1993a, 1993b), Pryor (2005), Sosa (1985, 1991, 2003, 2009), Steup (2004), Swain (1981), Williams (1999, 2005), Williamson (2000), and many others.

<sup>3</sup> Note that I understand the requirement of objectively likelihood broadly, so that it encompasses not just views on which a justified belief is likely to be true in the actual world, but also views on which a justified belief would be objectively likely to be true in "normal worlds" (Goldman 1986) or in proper-functionally relevant worlds (Bergmann 2006) or in relation to our environment (Sosa 1991). Not all philosophers, however, who recognize a connection between justification and truth hold that it must be an objective one. E.g., Cohen (1984) and Lehrer and Cohen (1983) maintain the connection between justification and truth cannot be objective. Their view is discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>4</sup> I leave it at an intuitive level here (further discussion in Chapter 4) what it means to be objectively likely, or what an objective indication is. The kind of objective relation I have in mind is expressed in our judgments of this sort: the fact that the streets are wet makes it objectively likely that it rained; the fact that James is injured makes it objectively likely that the Cavaliers will lose; the fact that Joe bought one ticket in the state lottery makes it objectively likely that he didn't win. One might suppose that one can understand these claims as objective frequencies or objective chances of some sort, but both of those ideas face serious difficulty (Achinstein 2001).

bearing on the truth. Your belief that your neighbor is back is justified because your reason, the fact that the cat is on the fence, is a good reason, and its goodness consists in it having an objective bearing on the truth of your belief. So it's not just that a justified belief needs to be based on reasons and the justification one has for it is a means to truth. Our reasons are the means to truth. Such, anyway, is a very natural way of thinking about justification.

The problem is that the demand of reasons and the demand of truth can easily seem incompatible. Consider this slightly different scenario.

**Scenario 2.** You look out the window and seem to see your neighbor's cat sitting on the fence. In fact what you see is a realistic cardboard cat that was planted there by ornithologists studying how goldfinches vary their nesting patterns in response to perceived predators. It is a complete coincidence that they have planted the cardboard cat on your neighbor's fence, and a complete coincidence that it looks exactly like your neighbor's cat. Again you form the belief that your neighbor is back from vacation.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that in Scenario 2 your belief is also justified. After all, it seems to you as if the cat is on the fence in this scenario just as much as in Scenario 1, and you have no reason to doubt that what you see is the neighbor's cat. It is natural to suppose, then, that in Scenario 2 you have the exact same reason for belief as in Scenario 1.<sup>6</sup> Since in Scenario 2 the neighbor's cat isn't in fact there on the fence, and your reason is the same in the two cases, then the fact that it is there isn't your reason even in Scenario 1. Rather, what is common to the two cases, and thus what seems to be fixing your reasons in the two cases, is what your non-factive psychology<sup>7</sup> is like: in both cases you have an experience as of the cat's being there, and that gives you a reason for thinking that your neighbor is back. This line of thought makes very plausible the following.

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<sup>5</sup> We can also suppose that the way the cat looks to you in Scenario 1 is perfectly replicated by the way the cardboard cutout looks to you in Scenario 2 (the stimulation of your retinas is identical in the two cases).

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Conee and Feldman (2001).

<sup>7</sup> One's non-factive mental states are one's propositional attitudes that do not require true propositional contents. For example, belief is non-factive: one can believe that  $p$  even if  $p$  is false. Knowledge, by contrast, is factive: if one knows that  $p$  then necessarily  $p$  is true. Similarly, it's seeming to one that  $p$  is non-factive, but one's seeing that  $p$  is factive.

**Psychologism:** One's reasons are determined entirely by one's non-factive mental states.<sup>8</sup>

Psychologism would provide a simple explanation of why your justification is the same in the two cases: your reasons are the same, and your justification is determined by your reasons.

If Psychologism is true, however, the demand of reasons and the demand of truth are incompatible. Say that Psychologism is true and that justification is determined by one's reasons. Then whether your belief is justified is fixed by facts about your non-factive psychology. But you could be in the same non-factive psychological state even if the world around you were radically different. You could have the exact same reason for believing that your neighbor is back even if it is very *unlikely* that she is.<sup>9</sup> Your belief would be justified regardless of how things are in the world around you.

The problem is that whether your belief is justified is fixed by one set of facts (facts about your non-factive psychology), and whether your belief is likely to be true is fixed by a different set of facts (facts about the world around you). So it seems that whether your belief is justified and whether your belief is likely to be true are two independent matters. The result is a gap between justification, conceived of as determined by one's reasons, and likelihood of being true: the reasons and the likelihood of being true are determined by two independent sets of facts. If justification is determined by one's reasons, then it can't be a means to the truth.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, if justification is a means to truth, then it can't be determined by one's reasons – since your reasons can't ensure that your belief is likely to be true. If this line of thought is correct, then honoring the intuition that justification is determined by one's reasons is incompatible with honoring the intuition that justification is a means to truth.

This apparent gap between reasons and truth puts our concept of justification under considerable strain. If reasons and truth both place legitimate demands on our theory of justification, then our efforts at theorizing are bound to be frustrated. It begins to look like our concept of justification is either uninstantiated or simply incoherent. The project of this dissertation is to better

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<sup>8</sup> I borrow the term “Psychologism” from, and owe a debt to, Dancy (2000), who uses it to describe similar views about reasons for action. My use of the term, however, is not exactly parallel to his.

<sup>9</sup> That is, your reason could fail to make your belief objectively likely to be true, since your having an experience as of your neighbor's cat on the fence may not “indicate” that your neighbor is back.

<sup>10</sup> I understand a “means to truth” as short for making one's beliefs objectively likely to be true in the sense explained in footnote 3.

understand and address this conflict between reasons and truth and to attempt to dissolve it.

## 1.2 Narrowing our focus

The tension between reasons and truth that I am interested in is most clearly evident in the justification we have for our beliefs about contingent features of the empirical world independent of our psychology: that your neighbor is back from vacation; that it is sunny outside; that I have two hands; that the outfield wall in Fenway Park is colored green. Beliefs in this class share two important features that are responsible for the particular tension we have been discussing.

The first feature concerns the demand of reasons: beliefs in this class are good candidates for the demand of reasons. *Prima facie*, our beliefs about contingent matters of the independent world would be mere guesses or instances of wishful thinking if we didn't have some good reason for holding them. If Bill believes that the outfield wall in Fenway Park is colored green, but he has either no reason at all or only very bad reasons for holding his belief, then it is unclear how his belief could possibly be justified. Furthermore, we have a relatively clear grasp of the source of our reasons for these beliefs: perceptual experience, in some way or other, plays a key role in the reasons we have for holding them. If Bill attended a baseball game at Fenway, or saw some highlights on *SportsCenter*, or if he simply heard about the color of the wall from a friend, then his experience would be a great source of reasons for believing that the wall is green.

The second feature concerns the demand of truth: the truth or likely truth of these beliefs is not fixed by facts about one's non-factive psychology. The subject matter of beliefs in this class has a certain kind of psychological independence that creates a gap between one's non-factive psychology and the beliefs' truth or likely truth. For example, consider my belief that it is sunny outside: whether this belief is true or false is fixed by facts about the weather; it isn't fixed by facts about my non-factive psychology.

It is true that a recent trend in philosophy has pointed to interdependencies between one's psychology and one's environment.<sup>11</sup> Content externalism, for example, is the view that some of the contents of our mental states are determined, at least in part, by the way the world is around us. To cite one well-known example, many philosophers hold that natural-kind concepts like gold would not be the concepts that they are, or be about the stuff in the world that they are about, unless we had been in some sort of contact with gold (that particular substance) in our environment. If such a view is correct, then it may be that for some of our beliefs about contingent features of the world around us, if we fix those beliefs we also fix the facts that make them true or likely to be true. E.g., if we fix my belief that there

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<sup>11</sup> See Putnam (1975) and Burge (1979).

is or has been gold in my environment, it may be that that belief is ensured to be true or likely to be true because it would not be the belief that it is (about gold) if there had never been gold in my environment. But even if content externalism is correct, the interdependencies between one's psychology and environment will be too loose to close the gap between all of our beliefs about contingent features of the world around us and the facts that make them true or likely to be true. Jane believes that the face mask of Tutankhamen is made of gold, but the conditions that make possible her thoughts about gold are simply too general to ensure that this belief is true or likely to be true.

In order to bring the tension between reasons and truth into as sharp a contrast as possible we can put to one side our beliefs ensured to be true or likely to be true by considerations of content externalism and just focus on beliefs like the belief about Tutankhamen's mask. Thus I will focus on the class of beliefs a subject holds about contingent features of the independent world, where by "independent" I mean beliefs whose truth or probable truth is not ensured by content externalism. That this class is not empty I hope is obvious, and it is true of beliefs in this class that they have our second feature responsible for the tension between reasons and truth: the truth or probable truth of them is not fixed by facts about our non-factive psychology. Thus for this class there is a gap between the facts that fix our non-factive psychology and the facts that fix the truth or probable truth of our beliefs.<sup>12</sup> We need reasons for holding beliefs of this kind, yet the truth of those beliefs will always be an independent matter from what non-factive psychological states we are in. So if our reasons are determined by our non-factive psychology, then those reasons cannot ensure that our beliefs are likely to be true. If a gap exists between

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<sup>12</sup> Some philosophers think that there is another type of content externalism, distinct from that just mentioned (e.g., McDowell 1986). This type concerns perceptual demonstratives like the belief that that [pointing to a cat] is a cat. Philosophers have held that thoughts of this sort are object dependent, such that we could not have the thoughts that we do unless those very objects are the ones we are demonstrating. If such a view is correct it would show that there is yet another way in which, if we fixed the facts about our non-factive psychology (e.g., non-factive beliefs with perceptual demonstratives), we could fix the truth or probable truth of some of our beliefs. But just as in the case with the sort of content externalism enjoyed by natural-kind (and perhaps other) concepts, object-dependent content externalism is not strong enough to ensure that when we fix our non-factive psychology all of our justified beliefs about contingent features of the world around us are likely to be true. We can thus take the claim in the text that by "independent" we mean beliefs whose truth or probable truth is not ensured by content externalism to cover object-dependent content externalism as well.

the facts that determine our reasons and the facts that determine whether our beliefs are likely to be true, then it seems that our reasons cannot be a means to truth.<sup>13</sup>

Focusing on the tension between reasons and truth generated for this class of beliefs is not gerrymandered or artificial. Rather, it is a class of beliefs that philosophers have found particularly important and epistemologically puzzling: it is the class of beliefs that forms the subject matter of a traditional form of skepticism about the “external world”. On at least one way of understanding the skeptic’s challenge, the skeptic challenges how good our reasons are for believing that we have two hands, that the sun is shining, that the outfield wall in Fenway Park is colored green. We would have the same reasons for belief even if we were dreaming or deceived by an evil demon or were mere brains in vats being fed stimulations by a scientist. If we would have just as good reasons no matter how radically deceived we are, how do those reasons support the ordinary beliefs that we think they do over beliefs about some bizarre science-fiction scenarios? According to the skeptic our reasons don’t support our ordinary beliefs any more than they do these other scenarios, and therefore they don’t justify us in holding the ordinary beliefs that we do. One way of understanding the skeptic’s claim here is that our reasons aren’t sufficiently connected to the truth of the ordinary beliefs that we hold and therefore those beliefs are unjustified. Rather than assuming an overly restrictive notion of justification<sup>14</sup>, this skeptic seems merely to capitalize on the two demands we have been discussing: we need good reasons for holding these beliefs, but we don’t (and couldn’t) have such reasons because of the gap between facts about our reasons and facts about the truth or probable truth of our beliefs. This tension between reasons and truth is no idle philosophical curiosity. It threatens the core of epistemology and makes skepticism a perennial threat.

### 1.3 Internalism and externalism

As the remarks above indicate, the tension between reasons and truth is related to certain forms of skepticism. There is, however, an even clearer place in the contemporary epistemological landscape where this tension is manifest – the

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<sup>13</sup> This tension is not generated for beliefs about one’s non-factive psychological states themselves. These beliefs lack one or both of the features that generate the tension. For example, some philosophers have held that certain beliefs about our own psychology are “self-evident” and require no reasons to be justifiably held (cf. Chisholm 1977: 25). Such beliefs then, would not invoke the demand of reasons. Even if we needed reasons for such beliefs, however, there would be no gap between our reasons and the facts that make the beliefs true or likely to be true – precisely because these beliefs concern how things stand with us psychologically.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Stroud 1984.

internalism-externalism debate.<sup>15</sup> Imagine someone who advocates Psychologism, and at the same time is convinced that reasons are needed for justification. Given that she feels the force of the demand of reasons, and on her view meeting that demand is incompatible with meeting the demand of truth, such a philosopher is bound to deny the force of the demand of truth and to reject views that honor that demand. From the vantage point of her philosophical commitments, the demand of truth must be fundamentally misguided, since it is at odds with a basic aspect of justification – the connection between justification and reasons.

Conversely, imagine someone who also advocates Psychologism yet sees that a connection to truth is needed for justification. Such a philosopher is bound to deny reasons the fundamental role his opponent accords them. Since being justified ensures that one's belief is likely to be true, and reasons can do no such thing, then whether one is justified can't be just a matter of one's reasons for belief. From this vantage point philosophers who hold that justification is determined entirely by one's reasons are fundamentally confused, since reasons simply cannot do what justification does – connect our belief to truth in a substantive way.

These two imaginary opponents are stuck in a standoff which neither can win. Each side is motivated by a compelling intuition about justification. Since its opponent cannot respect that intuition, it will have a supply of arguments against its opponent's view. Each side has a solid motivation and arguments that pinpoint a deficiency of the other side. But the arguments are impotent against each other, since arguments based on one of the demands cannot dispel the intuitive force of the other demand. Insofar as both demands are compelling, progress seems to be impossible.

This, I propose, is the unfortunate state of the internalism-externalism debate in contemporary epistemology. Many internalists are motivated by the demand of reasons, and many externalists are motivated by the demand of truth. Given, furthermore, that many philosophers from both camps share the view of reasons (Psychologism) that makes reasons and truth incompatible, the tension between reasons and truth will translate into a tension between internalist reasons-based theories and externalist truth-based theories.

It is common now to recognize two ways of characterizing internalism.<sup>16</sup> One way is “accessibilist” internalism, the view that justification is determined by

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<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately the terms “internalism” and “externalism” have been used in many senses even within epistemology. I am interested in the debate between internal and external theories of justification and, as explained below, by “internalism” I will mean theories that hold that justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states (externalism being simply the denial of internalism). Contemporary debate of this issue dates roughly from BonJour (1980) and Goldman (1979, 1980).

<sup>16</sup> Deriving from Conee and Feldman (2001).



considerations that subjects have reflective access to.<sup>17</sup> The other way is “mentalist” internalism, the view that justification is determined by the subject’s non-factive mental states.<sup>18</sup> At an abstract level, one could be an accessibilist without being a mentalist, and vice versa. That is, one could hold that one needs reflective access to what justifies one, but also admit that one can have such access to things other than one’s own non-factive mental states; and one could hold that one’s own non-factive mental states can justify one without one’s having reflective access to them. In point of fact, however, traditional accessibilist internalists have thought that one only has special access to one’s own non-factive mental states, and thus the common core to traditional forms of internalism is the idea that justification is determined by elements of the subject’s non-factive psychology. By “internalism”, then, I will mean views that subscribe to this common core: views on which justification is determined entirely by the subject’s non-factive mental states (and by “externalism” I will simply mean the denial of that view).

If one advocates Psychologism, and one is also convinced of the demand of reasons (i.e., if one finds it intuitively compelling that justification is determined by one’s reasons for belief), then justification would be determined by the subject’s non-factive mental states and internalism would be true. A natural suggestion, then, is this: internalists have found Psychologism compelling, and they have therefore taken the demand of reasons to straightforwardly motivate internalism.<sup>19</sup>

If we look at the views advocated by influential versions of externalism, by contrast, we can see that one of the guiding insights of externalism is that one’s belief’s being justified is not just a matter of how things stand with one psychologically. Rather, it is partly a matter of how one’s belief is related to the world at large. Externalists have held, for example, that justification is essentially a matter of the causal history of the belief, or a matter of the reliability of the process that led to the belief, or a matter of how well one’s belief tracks the truth.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Internalism of this form is advocated, e.g., by Bonjour (1985), Ginet (1975) and Steup (1996, 1997). Reflective access is usually taken to mean that one is always in a position to know by reflection alone what justifies one. For example: “Every one of every set of facts about S’s position that minimally suffices to make S, at a given time, justified in being confident that *p* must be *directly recognizable* to S at that time. By ‘directly recognizable’ I mean this: if a certain fact obtains, then it is directly recognizable to S at a given time if and only if, provided that S at that time has the concept of that sort of fact, S needs at that time only to reflect clear-headedly on the question of whether or not that fact obtains in order to know that it does” (Ginet 1975: 34).

<sup>18</sup> Internalism of this form is advocated by Conee and Feldman (2001).

<sup>19</sup> A point I argue in Chapter 2.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., Armstrong (1973), Goldman (1967, 1979, 1980), and Nozick (1981). Often externalists argue for externalist theories of knowledge, and do not mention

Common to all these views is the idea that justification is not just a matter of the subject's non-factive psychology – justification relates one's beliefs to the world in a way that ensures that the beliefs are likely to be true. We might expect, then, that externalists have used the demand of truth to motivate the rejection of internalism.<sup>21</sup>

If these remarks are correct – that internalism is motivated by the demand of reasons and externalism is motivated by the demand of truth – then the tension between reasons and truth translates into a tension between internalism and externalism. The debate between internalists and externalists is partly a debate over the priority of reasons or truth. Insofar as reasons and truth both present genuine demands on our concept of justification, however, neither internalism nor externalism in their traditional forms will appear satisfactory to us.

The tension between reasons and truth also helps us understand what is unsatisfactory about one type of reaction to the internalism-externalism controversy: some philosophers have claimed that we simply have multiple distinct concepts of justification. They have attempted to dissolve the tension between internalism and externalism by saying that in a sense both sides are right – they are each right about their own notion of justification. Philosophers have claimed, e.g., that we have distinct “subjective” and “objective”, or “strong” and “weak”, or “internalist” and “externalist” concepts of justification, where the different notions of justification are each motivated by different intuitions we share.<sup>22</sup> If that is right then the internalism-externalism controversy is really a pseudo-controversy; internalists and externalists are talking past each other rather than disagreeing on a substantive issue. There is something unappealing about this solution to the internalism-externalism debate, however. Firstly, it has seemed to many of the disputants to the debate that they were trying to characterize a common notion of justification, and that they really were disagreeing over how to characterize it.<sup>23</sup> On a deeper level, however, once we see that the disagreement between internalists and externalists can be understood as a disagreement over the priority of the demand of reasons or the demand of truth, we can understand why it is unsatisfactory to hold that our intuitions about reasons and truth are satisfied by different concepts of justification. As we observed in Section 1.1, reasons and truth are not independent demands on our notion of justification. It's not that we think that we need some reasons for belief and,

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justification *per se*. I will follow Bergman (2006) in translating externalist theories of knowledge into externalist theories of justification, however, since internalists are traditionally concerned with an epistemic property that is necessary for knowledge. If justification plays an essential role in knowledge – as internalists have understood “justification” and as I will as well – then externalism about knowledge is *de facto* externalism about justification.

<sup>21</sup> A point I argue in Chapter 3.

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Goldman (1986, 1988) and Pollock (1979).

<sup>23</sup> This point is well argued by Bergman (2006).

independently, that justification connects our belief to the truth. Our reasons justify us because *they* connect our belief to the truth. It is therefore impossible to honor the two intuitions separately. Internalists and externalists aren't talking past each other because the intuitions that motivate each side are intimately connected. The controversy is genuine because both intuitions are compelling but, on a naturally appealing and commonly held view of reasons, they are incompatible.

#### 1.4 Reasons for belief

I remarked that the tension between reasons and truth arises on an appealing and widely held view of reasons. That view I called Psychologism: the view that one's reasons are determined entirely by one's non-factive mental states. Since the tension between reasons and truth is generated by this view of reasons, however, what we really have is a tension between reasons, truth and Psychologism. Once we view our problem as a sort of trilemma instead of a dilemma, however, a solution suggests itself. If Psychologism is false we could dissolve the tension between reasons and truth and honor the two demands together.

I will argue that this is the solution to our problem in the following way. Firstly, I argue on independent grounds for a view of reasons for belief that I call Factualism: the view that facts of the world around us can be our reasons for belief. Factualism, I claim, is supported by three considerations. One is linguistic evidence that our reasons can be facts of the world around us. The second is that there is a connection between a subject's reasons and deliberation, and in deliberation we deliberate about facts of the world around us. The third is that in perception we engage with, respond to, and base our beliefs on, the facts of the world around us. All three of these considerations, I argue, support Factualism, and if Factualism is true then Psychologism is false. If our reasons include facts of the world around us, then our reasons are not determined entirely by our non-factive mental states.

Secondly, I argue that Factualism can account for the considerations that motivated Psychologism in the first place. Recall Scenario 2, in which you see a cardboard cat on the fence. We said that your belief in this case seems to be justified, and that idea was taken to motivate the view that your reasons are the same in the two cases. I argue that Factualism can also account for the compelling idea that your belief is justified in this case, but it can do so without agreeing that your reasons are the same in the two cases. That maneuver allows us to account for compelling intuitions about subjects' justification in cases when they are mistaken about the facts, while simultaneously resisting the idea that a subject's reasons are determined entirely by her non-factive mental states.

If Factualism is correct, however, a different theory of justification is possible, one that makes justification both a matter of the subject's reasons for belief

and a matter of considerations that ensure that justified beliefs are likely to be true.<sup>24</sup> On a Factualist theory of justification there is no tension between reasons and truth because our reasons for belief are the very same facts that make our beliefs likely to be true. Factualism thus allows us to restore coherency to our notion of justification in a straightforward and intuitive way. A Factualist theory of reasons also allows us to capture the motivations for both internalism and externalism, resulting in a theory of justification that is better motivated than either of its rivals.

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<sup>24</sup> Theories of justification that have attempted to reconcile the demand of reasons and the demand of truth, and thus bear some similarities to Factualism, include Alston (1985, 1988), McDowell (1986, 1998, 2002, 2008), Swain (1981), and Williamson (1997, 2000, 2009). These views are discussed in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER TWO

### INTERNALISM AND REASONS

#### 2.1 Overview

In the preceding chapter I said that a compelling intuition about justification that many people share is that a justified belief is one that is held for good reasons, rather than out of wishful thinking or blind prejudice.<sup>25</sup> This intuition motivates the demand of reasons – the demand that a theory of justification account for the fact that justification is determined by the subject’s reasons for belief. There is a natural connection between this demand and internalism. If some consideration is a subject’s reason, then she needs to be related to it in some way – her reason must be playing a role in her cognitive economy so that she can base her belief on it. It is natural to say, then, that her reason must be within or “internal” to her perspective. That claim seems to legitimize arguing for internalism by arguing for the demand of reasons.

The first goal of this chapter is to show that several of the best-known arguments for internalism work precisely in this way, and thus the demand of reasons is an important motivation for internalism. Insofar as the connection between justification and reasons is intuitively compelling, then traditional externalist views that cannot respect that connection will be objectionable.

The second goal of the chapter, though, is to show that this form of internalist argument is only partially successful. Internalism, after all, isn’t just the vague idea that justification is determined by considerations “internal to the subject’s perspective.” That vague idea is compatible with permissive interpretations of what counts as “internal”, so that facts of the world around the subject could be her reasons.<sup>26</sup> The theories of justification advocated by internalists share the more specific thesis (which is how I am understanding “internalism”) that justification is determined entirely by the subject’s non-factive mental states. I argue, however, that the arguments internalists have given based on the demand of reasons fail to support that thesis. There is a gap between motivation (that justification is determined entirely by the subject’s reasons) and thesis (that justification is determined entirely by the subject’s non-factive mental states) that goes unacknowledged, and the result is that certain externalist views are just as well motivated by this form of argument as

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<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Alston (1985, 1988), Audi (1993), Bonjour (1985, 1999, 2003, 2004), Conee (1988), Conee and Feldman (2001, 2008), Feldman and Conee (1985), Firth (1978), Haack (1993, 1997), Klein (1999, 2005), Moser (1985, 1989), Russell (2001), Steup (1997, 2001a, 2001b), Swain (1981), and Williamson (2000, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> As long as she is suitably related to them; e.g., as long as she knows that they obtain.

internalism is (viz., externalist views (i) that make justification a matter of the subject's reasons but (ii) that count facts of the world around the subject as possible reasons for belief).

## 2.2 Conee and Feldman's evidentialism

There are many versions of internalism and many different kinds of argument that internalists have offered for their views. I am interested in just one of these kinds of argument, though one that is particularly important: we find it in the work of many different internalists, and we find it among the most well-regarded reasons for believing that internalism is true.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps the most straightforward use of this kind of argument is found in the work of Conee and Feldman. Conee and Feldman subscribe to a form of internalism they call evidentialism, the thesis that justification is determined just by the subject's evidence (or reasons<sup>28</sup>), evidence which consists in her non-factive mental states.<sup>29</sup> In their work Conee and Feldman offer a variety of arguments for this thesis. Almost all of them, though, conform to a general pattern. They present examples that elicit our judgments as to whether the subjects' beliefs in the examples are justified or unjustified. They then argue that these judgments show that evidentialism is true. Since these arguments are supposed to be arguments for their central theses (i) that justification is determined entirely by the subject's reasons, and (ii) that those reasons consist in the subjects' non-factive mental states, these arguments should support the internalist claim that justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states.

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<sup>27</sup> In Chapter 4 I discuss the force and relevance of other popular forms of internalist argument (such as causal arguments and "new evil demon" arguments) on our understanding of the subject's reasons for belief.

<sup>28</sup> Although Conee and Feldman use the term "evidence", they mean by it what I mean by "reasons": one's grounds for belief; the considerations one bases (or could base) one's beliefs on. They also routinely use "evidence" and "reasons" equivalently. See Conee and Feldman (2001: 63, 2008: 85-87), Conee (2004: 15), and Feldman and Conee (1985: 104); misleading counterevidence for treating "evidence" and "reasons" as equivalent can be found in Conee (1988: 50).

<sup>29</sup> As I am using the term "justification", subjects actually base their beliefs on the reasons or evidence that justifies them (a "doxastic" rather than a "propositional" notion of justification); Conee and Feldman do not incorporate this basing restriction on their use of "justification", and they reserve the term "well-founded" for what I mean by "justification" (Feldman and Conee 1985: 93). I am therefore discussing their theory of well-foundedness, and reading their examples accordingly as incorporating the basing of beliefs on the reasons (which is clearly how the examples are intended).

### 2.2.1 The argument from cases

Conee and Feldman consider their argument in “Internalism Defended”<sup>30</sup> to be the strongest consideration counting in favor of evidentialism.<sup>31</sup> This argument proceeds in two steps: (1) the presentation of two cases in which there is an epistemic difference between the subjects in the cases, and (2) the claim that evidentialism provides the best explanation of the epistemic difference.

Here is the first pair of cases they present:

*Example 1* Bob and Ray are sitting in an air-conditioned hotel lobby reading yesterday’s newspaper. Each has read that it will be very warm today and, on that basis, each believes that it is very warm today. Then Bob goes outside and feels the heat. They both continue to believe that it is very warm today. But at this point Bob’s belief is better justified.

*Comment:* Bob’s justification for the belief was enhanced by his experience of feeling the heat, and thus undergoing a mental change which so to speak “internalized” the actual temperature. Ray had just the forecast to rely on. (Conee and Feldman 2001: 59)

What is the correct explanation of the epistemic difference between Bob and Ray? At time  $t_1$  Bob and Ray both believe that it is warm outside by a sort of testimony (the newspaper). The fact that the newspaper says it will be warm outside gives them a good reason for believing that it is warm outside – so both subjects have justified beliefs. Then Bob goes outside and feels the heat – he feels that it is warm outside. At this new time,  $t_2$ , Bob’s belief is better justified than Ray’s. Commonsensically, now Bob has another reason (based on his direct experience) for his belief, while Ray just has the original testimony-based reason. It seems, then, that Conee and Feldman’s example is an illustration of how justification is determined by reasons; i.e., it is an example that provides intuitive support for the demand of reasons. Bob and Ray’s beliefs are justified because they are based on good reasons, and Bob’s belief at  $t_2$  is better justified because he has additional (and better) reasons for belief.

Conee and Feldman put weight on the fact that when a subject gets a reason for belief she “undergoes a mental change” which “internalizes” the reason. That idea seems right: some consideration can’t be a subject’s reason for belief unless she is related to it so that she can base her belief on it. I will call this the Access Condition.

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<sup>30</sup> Conee and Feldman 2001.

<sup>31</sup> In conjunction with its resistance to counterexamples (Conee and Feldman 2001: 64).

**Access Condition (AC):** Something can be a subject's reason for belief only if she is related to it in such a way that she can base her belief on it.

AC explains why Bob undergoes a mental change when he gets a new reason for his belief about the weather: gaining access to a new bit of information will involve some mental change. It is perfectly consistent with that fact, however, that Bob's reason is a fact of the world around him. Neither AC, nor the example in general, nor Conee and Feldman's commentary, suggests otherwise.

The basic point that emerges from this discussion, then, is that even if we grant everything Conee and Feldman say about this example, it only provides an argument for the demand of reasons and for AC. In order to argue for evidentialism and internalism as they purport to, however, it is not sufficient that Conee and Feldman present cases that just support the demand of reasons and AC. They need to present some grounds for thinking that the subject's reasons are her non-factive mental states, which this argument does not do.

The same problem applies to the rest of the cases Conee and Feldman present, so I will just examine one more. Here is the fifth pair of cases Conee and Feldman present.

*Example 5* Initially Smith has excellent reasons to believe that Jones, who works in his office, owns a Ford. Smith deduces that someone in the office owns a Ford. The latter belief is true, but the former belief is false. Smith's reasons derive from Jones' pretending to own a Ford. Someone else in the office, unknown to Smith, does own a Ford. The fact that Jones is merely simulating Ford ownership keeps Smith from knowing that someone in his office is a Ford owner, but it does not prevent Smith from being justified or diminish his justification. At a later time Smith gains ample reason to believe that Jones is pretending. At that point Smith is not justified in believing either that Jones owns a Ford or that someone in his office owns a Ford.

*Comment:* Again the epistemic change occurs when a suitable external fact—this time, the fact that what Smith has seen is Jones pretending to own a Ford—is brought into Smith's mind. The difference between Smith being justified in believing that Jones owns a Ford (and that someone in the office owns a Ford) in the one case and not in the other is an internal change in Smith. (Conee and Feldman 2001: 60; my underlining)

In their comment it seems that what Conee and Feldman are arguing is that a certain non-mental fact does not make an epistemic difference to Smith until Smith is aware of it. If probative this case would provide support for AC. Furthermore, the difference in justification in this example is well understood in terms of reasons. Smith gets a reason for believing that Jones is a fake Ford owner and that defeats any justification Smith might have had for believing that Jones owns a Ford. So the



example also provides intuitive support for the idea that justification is determined by the subject's reasons (e.g., whether one reason is undermined or defeated by other information one has). The example fails to support, however, the idea that the subject's reasons are determined entirely by her non-factive mental states (Psychologism) or the idea that justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states (internalism).

Readers might suppose that Conee and Feldman do not take their examples to support either of those stronger claims. In their analysis of the cases, however, they indeed shift from the demand of reasons and AC to stronger claims about evidentialism and internalism. They state:

In the first five of these examples, the location of a relevant item of information – in the mind of a subject or outside of it – makes the epistemic difference. [...] It is reasonable to generalize from these examples to the conclusion that every variety of change that brings about or enhances justification either internalizes an external factor or makes a purely internal difference. It appears that there is no need to appeal to anything extramental to explain any justificatory difference. (Conee and Feldman 2001: 61)

This quote contains an important ambiguity. When they say that “every variety of change that brings about or enhances justification either internalizes an external factor or makes a purely internal difference,” it seems that all they are arguing for is AC (external factors must be “internalized” to affect justification). When they continue “it appears that there is no need to appeal to anything extramental to explain any justificatory difference,” they may just mean by “extramental” anything that has not made a difference to the subject's cognitive economy. That would just be a reiteration of AC. But they seem to suggest by “extramental” something stronger: that nothing but the subject's (non-factive) mental states is making any justificatory difference. That would be to slide from AC to a stronger internalist claim that does not follow. That Conee and Feldman make this slide is apparent from the fact that they think these arguments actually support internalism, and also from how this passage continues:

These considerations argue for the general internalist thesis that these epistemic differences have an entirely mental origin. (Conee and Feldman 2001: 61)

The claim “entirely mental origin” suggests that their cases have shown what their thesis actually is: that justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> They do not include the qualification “non-factive”, but it is implicit in their view and made explicit in Conee and Feldman 2004: 81-82 and Conee 2004.

mental states. As we have seen, however, their cases really support only the demand of reasons and AC, and shifting to the stronger internalist claim here is unwarranted.

## 2.2.2 The argument from skepticism

In their essay “Making Sense of Skepticism”<sup>33</sup> Conee and Feldman present another argument for evidentialism. They argue that a problem posed by skepticism reveals that evidentialism is superior to non-evidentialist views. I will argue that this argument from skepticism fits exactly the pattern we have just established: it may offer some support for the demand of reasons and AC, but it does not further support evidentialism or internalism.

Conee and Feldman’s argument does not use skepticism in the traditional way philosophers have used it: that is, it does not purport to show that non-evidentialist views have objectionable skeptical consequences. Conee and Feldman grant that their opponents have the resources to combat skepticism. Rather, skepticism poses a different sort of problem for non-evidentialists. Skepticism, according to Conee and Feldman, poses an important and intelligible worry for any theory of justification. They maintain, however, that their non-evidentialist opponents cannot respect the importance and intelligibility of skepticism and their opponents’ views are therefore objectionable. Non-evidentialists’ resources for combating skepticism aren’t too weak but too strong: skepticism is too obviously false according to those views, and hence they cannot make sense of why philosophers have been concerned about it at all. Since evidentialism can make skepticism properly intelligible, it enjoys a relative advantage over its opponents.

Critical for my points below is the question: against whom is this argument supposed to be directed? On the one hand, Conee and Feldman cast this debate as one between evidentialists and non-evidentialists. Evidentialism, recall, holds (i) that justification is determined entirely by the subject’s reasons (the demand of reasons), and (ii) that those reasons consist in the subject’s non-factive mental states (a form of Psychologism<sup>34</sup>). Since they cast the debate as one between evidentialists and non-evidentialists, we would expect that any view that does not subscribe to both (i) and (ii) would be targeted. On the other hand, Conee and Feldman argue specifically against five non-evidentialist views and all five of them happen to be traditional versions of externalism: the causal theory, the tracking theory, process reliabilism, the proper function theory, and the virtue-safety theory. As Conee and Feldman present

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<sup>33</sup> Feldman and Conee 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Psychologism isn’t an ontological view about what one’s reasons are; it is the more general view that one’s reasons are determined entirely by one’s non-factive mental states. Psychologism, therefore, is compatible with holding that one’s reasons are one’s non-factive mental states themselves (as Conee and Feldman maintain) or that one’s reasons are the contents of one’s non-factive mental states (e.g., Audi 1986).

them, none of these views subscribes to *either* the demand of reasons *or* Psychologism. When those views are shown to be objectionable in a way that evidentialism is not, the critical question is what is doing the work: is the demand of reasons, Psychologism, or both the source of evidentialism's relative advantage? Once we examine the details of the argument it is clear that the problems that Conee and Feldman identify with these versions of externalism all concern the demand of reasons; Psychologism plays no role at all.

In order to see why, let's examine the skeptical reasoning that Conee and Feldman think evidentialism alone provides the right kind of response to. They consider four skeptical arguments, but I will focus on the most revealing. This skeptical argument, the Alternative Hypotheses Argument, goes as follows.

### **The Alternative Hypotheses Argument**

1. The experiences people have provide no better reason to believe ordinary external world propositions than rival skeptical hypotheses, such as dreaming, brain-in-a-vat, or evil demon hypotheses.
2. If experiences do not provide better reason to believe one external world hypothesis than to believe another, then people are not justified in believing the one.

Thus,

3. People are not justified (and thus do not know) ordinary external world propositions. (Feldman and Conee 2004: 280)

The key difference Conee and Feldman identify between evidentialists and non-evidentialists concerns which premise of this argument they would reject: evidentialists would reject the first; non-evidentialists would reject the second. Their argument, most basically, is that rejecting the first premise leaves the threat of skepticism intelligible, but rejecting the second premise does not. Let's take the second of these claims first.

The problem faced by all the externalist, non-evidentialist theories is that in rejecting the second premise they divorce justification and knowledge from the idea of having reasons for belief. After all, what the second premise asserts is a certain relation between reasons and justification and knowledge. Denying the second premise is simply denying reasons this role. What Conee and Feldman claim is that if it is simply false that in order to be justified (or know) one needs better reasons for our ordinary beliefs over skeptical hypotheses, then it is unclear how one could find this argument the least bit compelling. Rejecting the second premise seems to be an all or nothing affair: since on the externalist views it is simply false that reasons are fundamentally the determinants of justification and knowledge, one could only be taken in by this kind of skeptical argument if one were fundamentally confused about the nature of justification and knowledge. For the externalist, therefore, there is no intuitively compelling and intelligible worry embodied by this argument. The

sufficient conditions for justification or knowledge according to the non-evidentialist theories (such as causal relations, truth tracking, reliable belief formation, proper function, and safety) can be met regardless of one's reasons for belief. If "the comparative strength of one's reasons for accepting ordinary propositions about the world is given no relevance," then there is no way one could be tempted to think that the second premise is true (Feldman and Conee 2004: 287).

Evidentialists, Conee and Feldman hold, don't have this problem. Even if one rejects the first premise, then there is still an intelligible worry that the premise expresses. Conee and Feldman claim that even if one thinks that experience gives us better reason for believing our ordinary beliefs than skeptical hypotheses, it is still intelligible why someone might be tempted to think otherwise. For example, since things would seem the same to us if we were in a skeptical scenario, how do our experiences (even in non-skeptical scenarios) better support ordinary beliefs over skeptical beliefs? The evidentialist can make sense of skepticism and skepticism's appeal because the evidentialist agrees with the skeptic that (a) in order to have justification or knowledge we must have sufficiently strong reasons, and (b) skeptical arguments seem to threaten the strength of our reasons. The benefit of evidentialism is that the role it accords to reasons makes skeptical worries intelligible: "knowledge requires good enough supporting evidence, and skeptical considerations at least cast doubt on whether the evidence we have is good enough" (Feldman and Conee 2004: 293).

Let's put to one side the question of how good of an argument this is<sup>35</sup>; our concern, rather, is with how evidentialism is securing its advantage over non-evidentialist views. Since the basic distinction being drawn is between those theories that reject the first premise and those theories that reject the second premise, it seems that any view that agrees with evidentialism that the first premise is false and the second premise is true would get the same advantage. But the second premise concerns the role of reasons in justification and knowledge. Any non-skeptic who holds that justification is determined by the subject's reasons for belief (i.e., the demand of reasons) would agree that the second premise is true and the first premise is false. Conee and Feldman's particular conception of what reasons are never even gets mentioned. This argument therefore gives no support to Psychologism; if persuasive it only gives support to the demand of reasons.

That the demand of reasons is motivating this argument is even clearer if we consider two other points that Conee and Feldman make. One is their claim that evidence's role in justification can be understood by analogy with the legal notion of "proof beyond a reasonable doubt" (Feldman and Conee 2004: 296). Specifically, they extract three elements from this analogy: (1) evidence must provide one with

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<sup>35</sup> One obvious worry about the argument's strength is that the externalist could reply that the skeptic's argument can seem compelling, though mistaken, because internalism (and thereby premise 2) can seem compelling, though mistaken.

“strong” reason to believe; (2) there must be no undefeated reasons to doubt; (3) and there must be no undefeated reasons for thinking that the evidence is unreliable (Feldman and Conee 2004: 297). This is the most detailed and substantive role for evidence that we learn of, and nothing in this account has anything to do with Psychologism. The second point concerns the specific example that they use to support the rejection of the first premise. They explain that experience really is a source of good reasons for our ordinary beliefs:

It surely seems that a typical full-blown experience of a warm summer day has to turn out somehow to give one better reason to believe that one is actually experiencing a warm summer day than to believe that one is a brain in a vat being fed warm summer day experiences. (Feldman and Conee 2004: 303)

Any non-skeptic who respects the demand of reasons will hold that experience, such as a “full-blown experience” of a warm summer day, is a source of good reasons for belief and thus a source of justified beliefs. Conee and Feldman’s specific view about what our reasons are – our non-factive mental states – gets no mention at all and is even obscured by their reference to a typical “full-blown experience”.<sup>36</sup>

Conee and Feldman’s evidentialism combines two ideas: that justification is determined by the subject’s reasons, and that the subject’s reasons consist in her non-factive mental states. In a sense, then, their view is the demand of reasons plus a particular Psychologistic view of what reasons are. It’s not surprising, therefore, that we find arguments for the demand of reasons in their work. What is surprising, however, is that we find no argument at all for their Psychologistic view of reasons. Readers might be tempted to think that the arguments that we have been examining are only part of Conee and Feldman’s case for evidentialism; that these arguments are supplemented by other arguments for Psychologism. But this is not so: these are all the arguments Conee and Feldman provide for thinking that their view is correct.<sup>37</sup> The arguments for evidentialism just discussed are the primary support

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<sup>36</sup> To argue that our non-factive mental states entirely determine our justification, what they actually need to appeal to is a very different kind of case: one which is not a typical full-blown experience but that nonetheless justifies us just as much as a full-blown experience would. Conee and Feldman simply don’t discuss this sort of case; I will consider the force of such cases in Chapter 4.

<sup>37</sup> Another argument for evidentialism can be found in Conee (1988: 46-52), but the remarks made in Section 2.2.1 apply to it as well. There is also an argument for evidentialism in Feldman (2000), but, in contrast to the arguments discussed above, the internal-external divide plays no role at all in the Feldman 2000 argument, and it is quite clear that the considerations offered there do not specifically support

Conee and Feldman provide for their view. None of them, however, argues specifically for evidentialism, internalism, or Psychologism. All that they support is the demand of reasons and AC. The demand of reasons is therefore a key motivation for their view. But there is a gap between the demand of reasons, on the one hand, and evidentialism and internalism, on the other, that Conee and Feldman fail to acknowledge. Why they do so I explore at the end of this chapter.

### 2.3 BonJour and Lehrer's arguments

I claimed in Chapter 1 that the demand of reasons is an important motivation for internalism. So far we have found at least one team of internalists of whom this is true. There is an important reason, however, that we should not be too quick to generalize from Conee and Feldman's case to the thought that all versions of internalism are motivated by the demand of reasons. I claimed that evidentialism, in a sense, is the demand of reasons plus a version of Psychologism. There is therefore an obvious connection between the demand of reasons and their view, and we should not be at all surprised that their arguments support the demand of reasons (even if it is surprising that their arguments do not support Psychologism). Since the demand of reasons and evidentialism are so clearly linked, it is possible that the demand of reasons is simply an idiosyncrasy of Conee and Feldman's motivation for internalism, and that the demand of reasons does not lie behind any other, or many other, versions of internalism.

In light of this problem I have chosen arguments from two other internalists who hold importantly different views from Conee and Feldman. One of the arguments is BonJour's clairvoyant argument, and the other is Lehrer's Mr. Truetemp argument. For several reasons BonJour and Lehrer's arguments will help counterbalance any bias toward the demand of reasons in Conee and Feldman's internalism. Firstly, the particular internalist views that BonJour and Lehrer defend are on the opposite end of the internalist spectrum from Conee and Feldman. BonJour and Lehrer both hold coherentist views of justification<sup>38</sup>, in contrast with Conee and Feldman's foundationalism, and BonJour identifies himself as an accessibilist internalist rather than a mentalist internalist like Conee and Feldman. Secondly, and more importantly, BonJour and Lehrer's arguments are some of the

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evidentialism, internalism, or Psychologism any more than the arguments discussed above.

<sup>38</sup> This is true, at least, when BonJour made this argument in BonJour 1985. BonJour has subsequently become a classical foundationalist, but he again makes this argument in BonJour 2003. This argument, then, is clearly a key motivation for BonJour's internalism.

most well-known and well-regarded arguments against externalism.<sup>39</sup> So if we find that what these arguments really motivate is the demand of reasons rather than some specific internalist thesis, then we have good grounds for generalizing our claim about Conee and Feldman: the demand of reasons really is a key motivation for internalism. In order to see whether this is true, however, we must turn to the arguments themselves.

### 2.3.1 BonJour's Norman

BonJour's general form of argument is this. He presents an example of a subject who meets certain externalist criteria for justification but who still is not justified in holding the belief that he does. The conclusion is that those externalist criteria are not sufficient for justification. BonJour then argues that the problem is not accidental: externalism is inherently objectionable because it simply cannot give sufficient conditions for justification. By seeing what is fundamentally misguided about externalism, we ought to be able to learn what is fundamentally well guided about internalism, and thus to be able to learn what motivates internalism according to BonJour.

Here is BonJour's most revealing case: Norman the reliable clairvoyant.

*Case 4.* 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. (BonJour 1985: 41)<sup>40</sup>

The externalist criteria that Norman meets are those of process reliabilism, but we can imagine that he meets other common externalist criteria as well: his clairvoyant belief tracks the truth; it is caused in the right way; etc. BonJour claims that Norman's belief is unjustified, and this is an intuition that many people share: after all, as BonJour carefully constructs the case, Norman has no reason at all for his belief that the President is in New York. So BonJour's argument works by appealing to our intuition that having a good reason for belief is a necessary condition on being justified. The first stage of BonJour's argument, which shows that certain externalist

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<sup>39</sup> A similar form of argument can be found in Fumerton (1995: 116), Moser (1985: 129), and Vogel (2000: 612-613) as well.

<sup>40</sup> Also see BonJour 2003: 24-33.

criteria are not sufficient for justification, relies on nothing more than the demand of reasons.

Not only does the demand of reasons underwrite the intuitions that Bonjour is relying on here; Bonjour himself is quite clear that reasons for belief are the issue. In his analysis of this case he claims that not only is Norman's belief about the President unjustified, but if Norman in this case were to hold the belief that he has the powers of clairvoyance that belief would also be unjustified. Why? Because he has no reason for believing so:

But is it not obviously irrational, from an epistemic standpoint, for Norman to hold such a belief [that he has the powers of clairvoyance] when he has no reasons at all for thinking that it is true or even for thinking that such a power is possible? (Bonjour 1985: 42)

Here Bonjour makes clear that the intuitions he is relying on in this objection to externalism are intuitions concerning reasons for belief: only if Norman had good reasons for that belief could he be justified in holding it. The externalist criteria in this example are not sufficient for justification because the subject can meet them even though he has no reason at all for his belief.

This conclusion is additionally supported once we turn to the second stage of Bonjour's argument, where he diagnoses the problem with externalism in general. The problem with externalism in general, it turns out, is that external criteria by their very nature cannot guarantee that subjects have good reasons for their beliefs.

But these cases and the modifications made in response to them also suggest an important moral which leads to a basic intuitive objection to externalism: external or objective reliability is not enough to offset subjective irrationality. If the acceptance of a belief is seriously unreasonable or unwarranted from the believer's own standpoint, then the mere fact that unbeknownst to him its existence in those circumstances lawfully guarantees its truth will not suffice to render the belief epistemically justified and thereby an instance of knowledge. (Bonjour 1985: 41)<sup>41</sup>

Notice that here Bonjour uses the phrase "unreasonable or unwarranted from the believer's own standpoint." This phrase is supposed to express the key idea about justification that externalism, by definition, misses out on. Now basing a belief on

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Bonjour 2003: 26: "In the absence of such an awareness, that person will also in general be aware of no reason of any sort for thinking that the belief is true. It is the insistence that the cognitive availability of such a reason is unnecessary for epistemic justification that is the distinctive – and problematic – feature of externalism."



good reasons is something that the believer does from his own “standpoint” which would render his belief “reasonable”. If one is persuaded by the demand of reasons, then basing a belief on good reasons is what renders the belief justified. So it seems that what Bonjour is arguing here is that externalism defines justification in terms “external” to the subject’s own standpoint and thus not in terms of the subject’s reasons for belief. But since having good reasons for belief is necessary for justification, externalist criteria can never be correct.

If that is right, then the general objection Bonjour makes to all versions of externalism concerns the demand of reasons. As Bonjour construes it, in claiming that externalist criteria can be sufficient for justification, externalism violates the demand of reasons. Since it is wrong to violate the demand of reasons, externalism is false. That this is the right way of reading Bonjour’s argument can be seen by how Bonjour puts the point in another place in his book:

[...] being justified simpliciter requires having a reason to think that one’s belief is true. The defense offered for this claim [...] is basically the idea that my belief cannot be rational or epistemically responsible in virtue of a reason which I have no inkling of [...]. (Bonjour 1985: 235)

Here Bonjour makes explicit that he understands justification in terms of the subject’s reasons for belief (and that a subject’s reasons must meet AC). If we agree with his argument, then we are agreeing that being justified requires having good reasons for belief. Externalism is objectionable insofar as it doesn’t meet that requirement.

If we attend carefully to Bonjour’s argument it seems that the argument is simply based on the demand of reasons. There is a reason, however, that that is an uncomfortable conclusion. For the use to which Bonjour puts this argument is to show that externalism as such is false (and thus internalism is true). If he is right in that further claim, then internalism should simply be the demand of reasons, and externalism should be the denial of the demand of reasons. But that is wrong. As we saw in Chapter 1, the common core of internalism, shared by its accessibilist and mentalist versions, is a specific claim about the determinants of justification that goes beyond the demand of reasons: internalism holds that justification is determined just by the subject’s non-factive mental states. One can therefore be an externalist and respect the demand of reasons (e.g., if one holds that our reasons can be facts of the world around us). Bonjour therefore misconstrues the force of his own argument. Bonjour is right that it is a good argument against all versions of externalism that deny the demand of reasons (such as process reliabilism). But that does not make it an argument against externalism in general or an argument for internalism as such.

The fact that Bonjour’s argument for internalism is really an argument for the demand of reasons shows that the demand of reasons is a key motivation for internalism. But the disconnect between the demand of reasons and internalism

shows that for some reason BonJour misuses his own argument – just as Conee and Feldman did. What we would like to know is why that is so – why did BonJour take an argument for the demand of reasons to be an argument against externalism as such?

### 2.3.2 Lehrer's Mr. Truetemp

Keith Lehrer is another philosopher who thinks that externalism is fundamentally misguided. Although his argument against externalism that we will consider from *Theory of Knowledge*<sup>42</sup> is made as an argument against externalist theories of knowledge, we can understand it in terms of justification as well. Our goal is to find out exactly what Lehrer's argument would show as an argument against externalist views of justification.

Lehrer's form of argument is structurally similar to BonJour's: Lehrer presents a case where a subject meets externalist criteria for justification (and knowledge), but we are supposed to have the intuition that the subject is not justified. He then diagnoses what has gone wrong. Here is Lehrer's specific argument about Mr. Truetemp.

Suppose a person, whom we shall name 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 a tempucomp, is implanted in Truetemp's head so that the very tip of the device, no larger than the head of a pin, sits unnoticed on his scalp and acts as a sensor to transmit information about the temperature to the computational system in his brain. This device, in turn, sends a message to his brain causing him to think of the temperature recorded by the external sensor. Assume that the tempucomp is very reliable, and so his thoughts are correct temperature thoughts. All told, this is a reliable belief-forming process. Now imagine, finally, that he has no idea that the tempucomp has been inserted in his brain, is only slightly puzzled about why he thinks so obsessively about the temperature, but never checks a thermometer to determine whether these thoughts about the temperature are correct. (Lehrer 1990: 163)

Mr. Truetemp forms a specific belief about the temperature – that it is 104 degrees – and that belief meets traditional externalist criteria (e.g., it is reliably caused). What we would like to know is whether his belief is justified. Lehrer argues that it is not:

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<sup>42</sup> Lehrer 1990.

Though he 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 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. (Lehrer 1990: 164)

Lehrer claims that Truetemp's belief is not justified. What is important for our purposes is why Lehrer thinks this.

As Lehrer presents the case, Truetemp "has no idea why the thought occurred to him," so it sounds like Lehrer is saying that Truetemp has no reason at all for believing that the temperature is 104 degrees. This interpretation is supported by other comments Lehrer makes about this case:

Had he taken time to consider evidence, he would have discovered that his thoughts about the temperature are correct, but he did not consider any evidence concerning the matter, and that is why he does not know that his thoughts about the temperature are correct. (Lehrer 1990: 165)

Here Lehrer claims that Truetemp's belief is not based on any evidence at all. If that is right – that we are supposed to think of Truetemp as having no reason for his belief – then anyone who advocates the demand of reasons will agree that Truetemp's belief is unjustified. Lehrer's argument therefore is an argument against views that do not respect the demand of reasons.

Lehrer maintains, however, that Truetemp provides an argument against externalism as such. He seems to think that Truetemp could meet any externalist criteria and still be unjustified. If what is doing the work in soliciting our intuition that Truetemp is not justified is the fact that he has no reason for his belief, that would suggest that Lehrer thinks that externalism intrinsically denies the demand of reasons. But that is false: one can reject the idea that justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states and still maintain that justification is a matter of good reasons for belief (e.g., one can maintain that one's reasons are facts of the world around us). Truetemp is an argument for the demand of reasons, not internalism; and he is an argument against externalist views that deny the demand of reasons, not against externalism as such.

## **2.4 Internalism, externalism and reasons**

So far we have primarily been concerned with understanding these arguments for internalism rather than with evaluating them. I have argued that if we

attend carefully to the arguments, we can see that they really are arguments for the demand of reasons. As Conee, Feldman, Bonjour, and Lehrer present them, intuitions about reasons are supposed to show that internalism is true, and thus the demand of reasons is a key motivation for internalism.

If that is correct, though, these arguments do not support the stronger claims their authors have made about them. One worry the reader might have, then, is that perhaps Conee, Feldman, Bonjour, and Lehrer simply don't understand internalism as I understand it. I have claimed that the core of internalism is the strong claim that justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states. Since their arguments do not support that strong claim, shouldn't charity force us to think that by internalism they simply don't mean that strong claim? After all, if all they meant by internalism is the claim that justification is determined by the subject's reasons, then their arguments would be good ones.

That interpretation, however, is simply inconsistent with the use these authors make of the arguments and the positions that these authors defend on the basis of these arguments. Conee and Feldman, for example, maintain that two individuals in the same total non-factive mental state must have identical justification (Conee and Feldman 2001: 56), and that "contingent factors external to the mind" cannot make any epistemic difference to one's justification (Conee and Feldman 2001: 57). And Bonjour uses his argument against externalism to show that either classical foundationalism or coherentism must be true (Bonjour 1985, 2003). On both classical foundationalism or coherentism, justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states, so Bonjour's use of the objection to externalism depends on the objection's ruling out views that do not make justification a matter of just the subject's non-factive mental states.

A better explanation of the gap between what these arguments show and what their authors have taken them to show is that the authors have assumed that Psychologism is a compelling and obligatory view of reasons for belief. If Psychologism is a suppressed premise of the arguments, then the arguments have the valid form:

- (1) Reasons & Psychologism  $\Rightarrow$  Internalism.<sup>43</sup>

Bringing out this suppressed premise makes it understandable why Conee, Feldman, Bonjour, and Lehrer argued in the way that they did, but it also highlights a critical limitation of the arguments that the authors do not emphasize. Viz., arguments for

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<sup>43</sup> Using " $\Rightarrow$ " as shorthand for logical entailment, and "Reasons" as shorthand for the claim that justification is determined entirely by the subject's reasons for belief. "Psychologism" is still the claim that the subject's reasons are determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states, and "Internalism" is still the claim that justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states.

Reasons (the demand of reasons) are not automatically arguments for internalism. The definition of externalism and (1) entail:

(2) Externalism  $\Rightarrow$  not-Reasons or not-Psychologism.

This formula reveals that there are three distinct ways of being an externalist.

**Externalism #1:** not-Reasons and Psychologism.

**Externalism #2:** not-Reasons and not-Psychologism.

**Externalism #3:** Reasons and not-Psychologism.

The arguments we have been examining would indeed show that externalism #1 and externalism #2 are problematic (because both deny the demand of reasons) – and it is precisely those forms of externalism that Conee, Feldman, Bonjour, and Lehrer focus on.<sup>44</sup> The arguments therefore accomplish part of the purpose that internalists have used them for. But the arguments would carry no force at all against externalism #3. Only arguments for Psychologism would do so. A view that combines the demand of reasons with a Factualist view of reasons (according to which facts of the world around us can be our reasons for belief), then, would be just as well motivated by these arguments as internalism is.<sup>45</sup>

I also want to make one final point concerning the evaluation of these arguments, if we just consider them as arguments for the demand of reasons. Arguments for the demand of reasons that rely on our intuitions about cases will never be conclusive, since one's opponent might fail to share the intuitions or simply accept the cost of violating the intuitions. But such arguments can serve the dialectical purpose of highlighting the substantial cost of denying the demand of reasons. It is certainly true that paradigm cases of justified beliefs are beliefs based on good reasons, and paradigm cases of unjustified beliefs are beliefs not based on good reasons. Sense experience and testimony, e.g., are sources of good reasons for belief, while self-deception, wishful thinking, and blind prejudice are not. Reflection on these arguments, however, helps us see something even stronger: that no matter how we construct a case, if the subject has no reason for belief then her belief is bound to seem like a hunch or mere guess, and consequently it will strike us as unjustified. Not only are paradigmatically justified beliefs based on good reasons; it simply seems like a contradiction to say that a subject's belief is justified yet she has no reason at all for holding it.

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<sup>44</sup> For example, recall that Bonjour and Lehrer focus on process reliabilism (which subscribes to not-Reasons), and all five of the forms of non-evidentialism that Conee and Feldman focus on in their argument from skepticism subscribe to not-Reasons.

<sup>45</sup> Reasons & Factualism  $\Rightarrow$  Externalism #3.

Two other considerations suggest a similarly close relation between justification and reasons. First, when we engage in third-person evaluation of a person's belief, in order to determine whether it is justified, it seems that what we do is evaluate her reasons for holding it. Second, when we engage in first-person deliberation about whether to believe that  $p$ , it seems that what we do is try to figure out what grounds there are that count for or against believing that  $p$ . Whether our belief is justified seems to be a matter of whether this process is a success: whether we properly base our belief about  $p$  on good grounds or reasons.

Granted, this sort of reflection is far from a conclusive argument for the idea that justification is simply a matter of belief held for good reasons. The key claim of this chapter is that even if all of these points are true, the following are perfectly compatible: (i) prioritizing the role of reasons in a theory of justification, and (ii) holding that one's reasons, and hence one's justification, is not determined just by one's non-factive mental states. For example, it is compatible with these points that when I deliberate about whether to believe that it will rain tomorrow I deliberate on facts of the world around me that I have access to.

We are then left with an important question. If the demand of reasons is intuitively compelling, what is the best way to honor it? Psychologism offers one way, Factualism another. We cannot settle on the correct theory of justification without addressing this question, and thus without addressing the question of what reasons for belief really are. That question will be taken up explicitly in Chapter 4. Before doing so, however, we turn next to some well-known arguments for externalism.

## CHAPTER THREE EXTERNALISM AND TRUTH

### 3.1 Overview

In Chapter 1 I claimed that a compelling intuition about justification that many people share is that justification makes one's beliefs objectively likely to be true.<sup>46</sup> This intuition motivates the demand of truth – the demand that a theory of justification accounts for this relationship between justification and truth. There is a natural connection between this demand and externalism. The basic idea of externalism is that justification is determined not just by the non-factive states of the subject but also by the relation between the subject and the world around her. Contingent facts about the causal history of a belief, or the reliability of the process that lead to the belief, or how well the belief tracks the truth, can affect the belief's justificatory status. The demand that a theory of justification account for the objective connection between justification and truth seems to motivate the idea that justification is partly determined by a relation between the subject and the world around her, and different forms of externalism seem to be different attempts to characterize that relation.

The first goal of this chapter is to show that several arguments for externalism indeed use the connection between justification and truth to motivate their positions. Externalism as a philosophical project has seemed compelling to so many people, even though there is no consensus on what sort of externalist view is correct, because this basic intuition behind it is so strong: justification is a means to truth.

Externalists have often thought, however, that the connection between justification and truth does more than just show that internalism is false. They have thought that it motivates analyses of justification that give no fundamental role to the subject's reasons for belief. Thus, in our terminology, they have taken the demand of truth to motivate theories that violate the demand of reasons. The second goal of the chapter is to argue that this further conclusion is unwarranted by the arguments externalists have given. The result is that there is a gap between the motivation for externalism (that justification makes our beliefs objectively likely to be true) and this further thesis (that justification is not determined by the subject's reasons) that goes unacknowledged, and the final task of the chapter is to understand why that is so.

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<sup>46</sup> For example, Alston (1985, 1988, 1993), Bonjour (1980, 1985, 1999, 2003, 2004), Comesaña (2002), Fumerton (1995, 2002), Goldman (1979, 1980, 1986, 1992), Plantinga (1993a, 1993b), Sosa (1985, 1991, 2003, 2009), Swain (1981), Williams (1999, 2005), and Williamson (2000).

### 3.2 Arguments for externalism

Many internalists and externalists alike give voice to the intuition that justification is substantively connected to truth: a justified belief is objectively likely to be true.

One is justified in believing that  $p$  only if that belief was formed in such a way as to make it at least very likely that the belief is true, or, as is sometimes said, only if it was formed in a ‘truth-conducive’ way. (Alston 1988: 285)

If epistemic justification were not conducive to truth in this way, if finding epistemic justification did not substantially increase the likelihood of finding true ones, then epistemic justification would be irrelevant to our main goal and of dubious worth. (BonJour 1985: 8)

Which species of belief-forming (or belief-sustaining) processes are intuitively justification-conferring? They include standard perceptual processes, remembering, good reasoning and introspection. What these processes seem to have in common is reliability: the beliefs they produce are generally true. (Goldman 1979: 10)

Can we find a way of characterizing epistemic justification that is relatively neutral with respect to opposing analyses of the concept? As a first stab we might suggest that whatever else epistemic justification for believing some proposition is, it must make probable the truth of the proposition believed. (Fumerton 2002: 205)

Cognitive justification is the sort of justification which distinguishes true belief that is knowledge from true belief that is little more than a lucky guess. This being so, such justification could not possibly turn out to be a property that a belief might possess in complete independence of the truth of its object. (Sosa 1985: 13)

A coherence theorist who understands truth ‘realistically’, as some kind of ‘correspondence’ to an ‘independent’ reality, faces the difficult, perhaps insuperable, problem of explaining why satisfying the criteria of coherence makes our beliefs likely to be true (hence why coherentist ‘justification’ deserves to be thought of as justification at all). (Williams 1999: 64, fn. 11)

Although many internalists share this intuition about justification, it plays a fundamental role in motivating externalism. The basic idea of externalism is that justification is partly a matter of the subject’s relation to contingent features of her



environment (and thus not just a matter of the subject's non-factive mental states). Not just any features of the environment, though, are epistemically relevant to justification. Those that are relevant, intuitively, are features that concern the probable truth of one's belief. In a sense traditional externalist theories of justification represent different attempts at characterizing exactly which features these are and how they are to be understood. For example, process reliabilism (in its basic form) is the view that justification is determined by the reliability of the process that led to the belief, where reliability is analyzed in terms of objective frequencies (Goldman 1979). If a belief is justified, according to this theory, then that belief is objectively likely to be true in the sense that the belief is an instance of a process that yields a greater number of true beliefs than false ones. Process reliabilism, then, provides one specific account of the sense in which a justified belief is objectively likely to be true.

Although process reliabilism is the clearest such case, other traditional forms of externalism equally offer a characterization of how a justified belief is related to contingent features of the environment that bear on its probable truth. Tracking theories, for example, analyze justification in terms of counterfactuals that concern whether one's belief would be true and whether one would hold it in nearby worlds. How well one's belief "tracks" the truth, then, provides another understanding of what it means to be objectively likely to be true. In order to make even clearer the way that the demand of truth has motivated externalism, though, I won't focus on either process reliabilism or tracking theories. I will consider arguments for two other forms of externalism, Alvin Plantinga's proper function theory and D. M. Armstrong's causal theory, and I will argue that both are motivated by the demand of truth.<sup>47</sup>

### 3.2.1 Plantinga's counterexamples

Plantinga uses a form of argument by counterexample to reveal the problems with various types of internalism.<sup>48</sup> He argues, specifically, that any internalist notion

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<sup>47</sup> Also see Alston (1985: 95) for an explicit argument that deontological theories of justification are wrong because they cannot ensure that justified beliefs are objectively likely to be true.

<sup>48</sup> Plantinga objects not just to internalist views of justification; he objects to the term "justification" itself. He thinks that it has objectionable deontological overtones, and so even though he theorizes about an epistemic concept similar to, or perhaps identical to, what other philosophers have called justification, he prefers to call it "warrant" (Plantinga 1993a: 3-5). Plantinga's notion of warrant by definition is the epistemic property that turns true belief into knowledge. Since I do not share his reservations about the term "justification" I will continue to call his view of warrant an externalist theory of justification.

of non-Gettiered justification<sup>49</sup> faces counterexamples in which a subject meets the internalist conditions but still lacks knowledge, and he concludes that no form of internalism could be correct (taking for granted that internalists hold that justification is necessary for knowledge). Since Plantinga deploys the same form of argument against many internalists, I will focus just on the most revealing one: his arguments against Chisholm.

Chisholm holds that a subject's belief about contingent features of the world around her is justified by her evidence base, which Chisholm identifies with the "purely" psychological properties exemplified by the subject. According to Chisholm, then, justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, Chisholm's fix for Gettier cases is that one's evidence base must not make any false proposition evident for one. Using evidence or reasons as the fundamental epistemic notion<sup>51</sup>, Chisholm purports to present us with a theory of non-Gettiered justification that, when added to true belief, is sufficient for knowledge.

Plantinga argues that, even with Chisholm's fix for Gettier cases, justification is determined by more than just the subject's non-factive mental states. As he puts it:

Given that I hold a belief *B*, it is not the case that whether *B* has warrant for me depends solely on the purely psychological properties I display; purely psychological properties are not the only thing relevant. (Plantinga 1993a: 63)

Plantinga argues for this claim by counterexample. He constructs a case in which an evil demon randomly gives a subject the phenomenology of a squirrel running up a tree when in fact the squirrel she's been looking at is running up a tree. According to

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<sup>49</sup> "Non-Gettiered justification" means one's justification is not affected by circumstances that would constitute a Gettier case – a case in which one's grounds for belief only have an accidental connection to the truth of one's belief. An example of a classic Gettier case can be found in Conee and Feldman's fifth example quoted in Section 2.2.1 above. See Gettier 1963.

<sup>50</sup> Being a "purely" psychological property in Chisholm's sense at least entails it's being non-factive, so I will use the more familiar and less committal notion (non-factive).

<sup>51</sup> More strictly, Chisholm uses "being evident" as the fundamental notion, according to which beliefs about one's own psychological states can be "self-evident" in a way that doesn't require evidence normally understood. But for beliefs in the class in which I am interested, those about contingent features of the world independent of us, it can be said that the relevant understanding of "being evident" is having evidence or reasons (see Chisholm 1977: 17, 21, 73).

Chisholm's view the subject should be justified by her non-factive psychological evidence base (the phenomenology), and since (according to Plantinga) the subject also meets Chisholm's anti-Gettier conditions the subject should have knowledge. Plantinga claims, however, that the subject does not really have knowledge, and thus Chisholm's criteria for non-Gettiered justified true belief are not sufficient for knowledge.

Whether this criticism of Chisholm is successful isn't our concern.<sup>52</sup> What is important is how Plantinga understands his own argument. He claims:

What we have seen is that what determines the warrant a belief has for me on a given occasion is not simply the evidence-base, the purely psychological properties I exemplify then. (Plantinga 1993a: 64)

Views like Chisholm's neglect the fact that the subject's "cognitive environment" plays a critical role in determining justification – and, as Plantinga later elaborates, part of the role one's cognitive environment plays is that it makes one's justified belief objectively likely to be true (Plantinga 1993a, 1993b). Internalism, according to Plantinga, cannot accommodate that fact and is therefore objectionable.

There are two separable claims, however, made by Plantinga in the quote above. One is that justification is not determined just by the subject's non-factive psychology. The other is that justification is not determined by the subject's evidence or reasons for belief. For Chisholm the subject's non-factive psychology and her reasons cannot come apart, because Chisholm ascribes to a version of Psychologism. As a criticism of Chisholm, there is nothing out of order about Plantinga's claim. The fact that the subject's "cognitive environment" plays a role in determining justification would show that justification is neither determined just by the subject's non-factive psychology nor by the subject's reasons *as Chisholm conceives of reasons*.

Plantinga doesn't just conclude, however, justification is not determined by the subject's reasons as Chisholm conceives of the subject's reasons – he thinks that his argument shows that justification is not determined by the subject's reasons (period). To see why, we must first understand Plantinga's own externalist account of justification<sup>53</sup>. Plantinga holds that in order for a subject to be justified the subject's cognitive faculties must be working in a proper way that makes the subject's beliefs objectively likely to be true. And he thinks that the form of argument he uses against Chisholm supports that view because counterexamples like the ones used against Chisholm can always be found unless justification meets Plantinga's

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<sup>52</sup> Since Plantinga is arguing against Chisholm's view of non-Gettiered justification, it is open to Chisholm to reply that Plantinga's argument does not impugn Chisholm's theory of justification – it's just the anti-Gettier condition that needs fixing.

<sup>53</sup> I.e., "warrant."

specifications. What Plantinga is relying on is the fact that we will agree with his intuitive judgments that the subjects in his counterexamples will lack knowledge and justification – and if we examine enough counterexamples we will see that our intuitions are being guided by the fact that justification is determined by the subject’s relation to the world (a relation analyzed with the notions of proper function, design plan, cognitive environment, etc.) such that her justified beliefs are likely to be true.

There is an important difference, however, between (i) our intuitions being guided by the fact that justification is determined by the subject’s relation to the world such that her justified beliefs are likely to be true, and (ii) our intuitions being guided by such a relation as analyzed by Plantinga with the notions of proper function, design plan, and cognitive environment. The difference lies in the fact that Plantinga’s analysis of justification provides the subject’s reasons for belief with no fundamental role. One can be justified on Plantinga’s view with no reasons for belief at all. Thus he uses arguments like the one deployed against Chisholm as grounds for rejecting the idea that justification is fundamentally a matter of the subject’s reasons for belief (i.e., the demand of reasons).<sup>54</sup> The truth of (i) would mean that our intuitions are being guided by the demand of truth, while the truth of (ii) would mean that our intuitions are being guided by the demand of truth in a way that is incompatible with the demand of reasons. There is a gap between (i) and (ii), however, which Plantinga fails to acknowledge. Why that is so I explore at the end of this chapter.

### 3.2.2 Armstrong’s regress argument

Armstrong developed an externalist theory of knowledge of particular matters of fact, according to which one’s believing that  $p$  is nomically connected to the fact that  $p$ , and Armstrong says of his view that one can have knowledge on it without being “justified” in the traditional sense (Armstrong 1973: 137, 183, 192). What Armstrong means by the traditional sense of justification is the internalist one, so Armstrong’s point is that we can know, according to him, without meeting internalist conditions on justification. That means that we can have knowledge without being justified, however, only if we stipulate that internalism about justification is true. I will make no such stipulation and therefore I will take, as in

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<sup>54</sup> I do not mean to claim that Plantinga cannot make any sense of a belief justified on the basis of reasons. Believing on the basis of reasons is an example of proper functioning in Plantinga’s sense. The point is that not all justified beliefs are beliefs held for good reasons, so Plantinga does not respect the demand of reasons (see Plantinga 1993a: 98).

the case of Plantinga, Armstrong's externalist view of what connects true belief to knowledge to be an externalist view of justification.<sup>55</sup>

Armstrong's argument against internalism is based on a familiar regress problem. He claims that a subject's belief that *p* can be justified by her belief that *q* only if her belief that *q* is in turn somehow justified. The belief that *q* will face the same condition: it can be justified by the belief that *r* only if the belief that *r* is justified. Thus, if we have some justified belief, we face a potential regress of justification. What Armstrong argues is that only externalism can properly solve this regress.<sup>56</sup> In particular he argues against three general categories of internalist view: (1) those that try to solve the potential regress by letting the chain of justification turn back on itself (coherence theories), (2) those that try to solve it by letting the chain terminate in self-evident beliefs (classical foundational theories), and (3) those that try to solve it by letting the chain terminate in "initially credible" beliefs (modern foundational theories).<sup>57</sup> Armstrong argues that no form of internalism can make sense of how chains of justification can properly terminate: the resources available to them, *qua* forms of internalism, are simply inadequate.<sup>58</sup> The result is that only externalism is capable of explaining the justification we have in cases of basic or non-inferential knowledge. Externalism claims that justification is constituted by a relation between the subject and the world that ensures that the belief is true or likely to be true – it is that relationship that grounds the subject's belief in such cases. Such an externalist relationship can explain how chains of justification properly terminate (Armstrong 1973: 158-159).

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<sup>55</sup> I will therefore take some liberties in translating claims of knowledge into claims of justification in Armstrong's argument against internalism. Since Armstrong himself might resist this use of his view the reader can treat my attribution to "Armstrong" as an expository device, though I will drop the scare quotes. Note that Armstrong himself is at least committed to an externalist view of knowledge-level justification, if we agree with internalists that justification is necessary for knowledge.

<sup>56</sup> Armstrong's primary purpose in introducing this regress is to lay out the conceptual space – delineated by the various ways of responding to the potential regress. The regress then functions as an argument against internalism only secondarily: Armstrong claims that all the internalist ways of responding to the regress are inherently problematic, but he doesn't pretend to have conclusively demonstrated the point. Since his form of reasoning here is particularly valuable as a yardstick for the advantages of externalism, I focus on the argumentative use of the regress.

<sup>57</sup> He also addresses the infinitist and skeptical reactions to the regress.

<sup>58</sup> Coherentism is problematic because coherence is too easy to come by; classical foundationalism is problematic because the restricted base of self-evident truths is too small; and modern foundationalism is problematic because it will always face counterexamples (Armstrong 1973: 155-157).

Note that if any of the internalist alternatives as Armstrong presents them were acceptable, then justification would be determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states. On coherence theories, the justification of an arbitrary belief that  $p$  is determined by the set of beliefs with which it properly coheres. On classical foundational theories, the justification of an arbitrary belief that  $p$  is determined either by the belief that  $q$  or by the belief that  $p$  itself (if it is one of the terminating self-evident beliefs).<sup>59</sup> On modern foundational theories, the justification of an arbitrary belief that  $p$  is determined either by the belief that  $q$  or by one's non-factive experiences making the belief that  $p$  "initially credible", without the need of another belief to justify it. In all three cases justification is determined just by the subject's non-factive mental states.

The problem, as Armstrong sees it, is that that consequence unduly limits internalists' resources for dealing with the regress. We have no way of making sense of how chains of justification terminate and ground the structure of our beliefs if all we have to offer, as the determinants of justification, are the subject's non-factive psychological states. What externalism provides is a story about the relationship between the subject and the world, in particular a relation between the subject's belief and facts that bear on the probable truth of the belief. Only if justification can be partly determined by such a relationship can we make sense of how our beliefs are ultimately justified. Armstrong claims that justification in such cases is determined by

some natural relation which holds between the belief-state,  $B_{ap}$ , and the situation which makes the belief true. It is a matter of a certain relation holding between the believer and the world. (Armstrong 1973: 157)<sup>60</sup>

The fundamental point of the argument is that justification cannot just be a matter of the subject's non-factive psychology – rather, in the case of non-inferential knowledge at least, justification is a matter of the subject's being connected to the world around her in the right sort of way. Armstrong divides externalist views into two categories, depending on how they understand "the right sort of way": one category of externalist view analyzes the relationship in causal terms, and the other

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<sup>59</sup> One might resist Armstrong's understanding of classical foundationalism, but that issue is not relevant to our concern, since it is nonetheless true that according to classical foundationalism, however understood, justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states.

<sup>60</sup> Since Armstrong is primarily concerned with knowledge, the relevant belief will always be true. We can consider an Armstrong-inspired view of justification as requiring a "natural relation" between the belief state  $B_{ap}$  and objective considerations that make it objectively likely to be true (even though in the non-knowledge case the justified belief could be false).

category analyzes the relationship in reliabilist terms. What is common to both, however, is the idea that the relationship that grounds the subject's chains of justification is understood in terms of the truth or probable truth of the subject's belief (Armstrong 1973: 157-158, 184-194). What that means is that justification is ultimately determined by the subject's relation to the world that makes her beliefs true or probably true. That is the virtue of externalism that allows it, in contrast to the various versions of internalism, to solve the regress problem. The connection between justification and truth therefore motivates Armstrong's argument for externalism.

Armstrong's argument, if correct, would show that justification is not determined just by the subject's non-factive psychological states. Armstrong also maintains, however, that his argument shows something stronger. He holds that a subject's reasons are the contents of her beliefs (Armstrong 1973: 78, 200). Thus the regress of justification for him is a regress of reasons: when my belief that  $p$  is justified in virtue of being based on reasons, it is justified in virtue of being based on the content of my belief that  $q$ . The fact that the chain of justification must terminate in a belief that is justified not by another belief means for Armstrong that the chain of justification must terminate in a belief that is justified without the subject's having any reason for holding it (Armstrong 1973: 166, 183).

Externalism, as a solution to the regress, then, has two faces for Armstrong. Externalism firstly presents an explanation of how our beliefs could be justified in a way that ultimately does not depend just on our non-factive psychological states. But, secondly, externalism presents an explanation of how our beliefs could be justified in a way that ultimately does not depend on our having any reason at all for holding our foundational beliefs. These two faces are linked by Armstrong's view of reasons for belief. The connection between justification and truth shows that justification is not determined just by the subject's non-factive psychological states. And since, on his view of reasons, the subject's reasons are determined entirely by her non-factive psychological states, the connection between justification and truth also shows that justification is not determined just by the subject's reasons for belief. Even if Armstrong argues successfully that justification has a foundational structure that only externalism can account for, however, the further claim that justification is not fundamentally a matter of the subject's reasons for belief would only follow if that view of reasons, which he does not argue for, were correct.

For both Plantinga and Armstrong, then, internalism is wrong because the justification a subject has for a belief is partly determined by the subject's relation to contingent features of the world around her, and those features bear on the probable truth of the subject's belief. The fact that justification is objectively connected to probable truth explains why internalism is problematic, and thus the demand of truth is a key motivation for both of these arguments for externalism. Whether it also motivates rejecting the demand of reasons I discuss in Section 3.4.

### 3.3 Justification defeaters

Internalists who see that justification, conceived along internalist lines, could not make one's belief objectively likely to be true face two options. One is to accept the skeptical implication that our beliefs about contingent features of the world around us are not justified.<sup>61</sup> The other option is to reject the demand that justification be objectively connected to truth. Internalists who pursue this option will admit that there is some theoretically substantive connection between justification and truth, but they will deny that such a connection demands an objection relation.

The most fully developed internalist response of this type is due to Lehrer and Cohen (1983) and Cohen (1984). They claim that some versions of internalism can account for the connection between justification and truth without respecting the demand of truth as I have been understanding it (in objective terms). They maintain both (i) that one can account for the relation between justification and truth by providing an explanation of how justification defeaters work, and (ii) that some versions of internalism can provide such an account. If correct their proposal would offer internalists a response to externalists arguments based on the demand of truth: those arguments, internalists could say, assume an overly strong conception of the link between justification and truth that begs the question against internalism. Perhaps there is even some intuitive appeal to the objective demand of truth, the internalist can admit, but rejecting that intuition does not involve real theoretical cost, because the correct understanding of the relation between justification and truth (provided by (i)) is something that internalism can provide.

In this section I will evaluate Lehrer and Cohen's proposal to see whether it offers promise for internalism. In order to do so, however, we will need some additional terminology. Following Pollock (1974), there are at least two distinct types of reasons that can defeat justification – Pollock calls these type-I and type-II defeaters. Say P is your basis for believing Q. A type-I defeater would be reason for thinking that Q is false. For example, seeing the gas gauge read empty is my basis (P) for believing that the tank is empty (Q). A type-I defeater would then be some reason for thinking that the tank in fact isn't empty – such as the testimony of my mechanic who is looking in the tank with some device. A type-II defeater, by contrast, is not a reason for believing Q is false, but is a reason for believing that the truth of P is not an indication of the truth of Q.<sup>62</sup> If my mechanic, e.g., weren't looking in my tank but instead were looking under my hood and claimed that a wire

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<sup>61</sup> Fumerton (1995: 183-190), e.g., shows real sensitivity to this conundrum and seems prepared to accept the skeptical result.

<sup>62</sup> Some call this type of defeater an "underminer", reserving the term "defeater" or "rebutter" for type I. This terminological difference is unimportant, so from now on I will follow Lehrer and Cohen.



is cut and my gas gauge isn't working properly, then I would have a type-II defeater of my belief that the tank is empty.

Notice that type-II defeaters work by threatening the connection between the basis of one's belief and the probable truth of that belief. By revealing what happens when such a connection is threatened, they seem to be an aspect of the connection between justification and truth in action. What Lehrer and Cohen propose is that a criterion for accounting for the connection between justification and truth is that one's theory explains why type-II defeaters defeat: for one would then be explaining why it is that we can lose justification when the link between the basis of our belief and the probable truth of that belief is threatened in certain ways.

Lehrer and Cohen<sup>63</sup> make two claims about their criterion on accounting for the connection between justification and truth: they give it bite by arguing that some popular views of justification don't meet it; and they argue that their version of internalism does meet it. I will argue that Lehrer and Cohen's claim of relative advantage is a chimera: their view does no better than the views they criticize at explaining type-II defeaters. So if their criticism of those views is probative, we need to look further to find a theory that does account for the relation between justification and truth.

First we need to examine the type of view that Lehrer and Cohen criticize. This happens to be the type of view that Pollock himself advocates. Pollock (1974) puts forward the following kind of condition on justification:

If S is appeared to redly, then S is *prima facie* justified in believing that there is something red before him. (Lehrer and Cohen 1983: 201)<sup>64</sup>

First notice that being appeared to redly is a non-factive specification of the subject's experience. Let's call "*prima facie*" views of justification those that assert that merely having a non-factive experience is sufficient (in certain circumstances) for certain beliefs formed on the basis of that experience to be justified.<sup>65</sup> The phrase "*prima facie*" is apt because this kind of justification can be defeated by defeaters of either type I or type II. Incorporating this possibility of defeaters, we could say that Pollock's view has two conditions on justification from experience in general: that

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<sup>63</sup> Here is a good place to note that Cohen (1984) and Lehrer and Cohen (1983) are very similar in content. In order to avoid switching back and forth between "he" and "they", I will just discuss both papers generally as if they were written by "them". The two papers do differ in one critical place, however, which I discuss explicitly below.

<sup>64</sup> This is Lehrer and Cohen's gloss on Pollock's view. See Pollock 1974: ch. 3.

<sup>65</sup> For other views of this type see Chisholm (1977), Huemer (2001, 2007), and Pryor (2000). This is the general sort of view Armstrong called "modern" foundationalist or "initial credibility" theories.

the subject has some potentially sufficient *prima facie* basis P (such as the experience of it's appearing redly to one) for the belief that Q, and that the subject lacks defeaters of P on Q. Since our interest is type-II defeaters, I will consider a more specific version of this second condition dealing just with type-II defeaters, detailing Pollock's view as follows:

- (Pollock) Subject S is experientially justified in believing that Q on the basis of P iff
- (a) S has some *prima facie* basis P, and
  - (b) S does not believe that P does not make the truth of Q probable.

Now, why do Lehrer and Cohen think that this kind of view does not explain why type-II defeaters defeat? Their criticism is not that Pollock's view doesn't account for the existence of type-II defeaters. Pollock's inclusion of the second condition does just that. Rather, the criticism is that Pollock's second condition makes the existence of type-II defeaters a brute fact about justification. Neither the second condition, nor anything else in Pollock's theory, helps us understand why type-II defeaters should exist in the first place – that is, why justification should require some sort of link to probable truth at all. Merely meeting condition (a) does not involve any link at all between P and the potential truth of Q. What then grounds the inclusion of condition (b)? It looks like an *ad hoc* condition added on to the theory in order to make room for the existence of type-II defeaters. But as such it does not do what we wanted. What we wanted was an explanation of why type-II defeaters defeat, not just a stipulation by the theory that there are such defeaters.

In order to understand the force of this criticism we need to see by contrast what Lehrer and Cohen think is an adequate explanation of type-II defeaters. Two types of view that they think are adequate are (i) process reliabilism and (ii) Lehrer's own version of internalism. First let's look at process reliabilism. As I said in Section 3.2, process reliabilism in its most general formulation is the view that a belief is justified if it is the result of a reliable cognitive process. When Goldman defended this view in 1979, however, he was aware that there are counterexamples to the view if that general formulation isn't qualified. In particular, there needs to be room for justification defeaters: even if a belief is reliably caused, we wouldn't say that it is justified if the subject ignores other reliable sources of information contrary to it. For example, even if the belief that Q is reliably produced, it wouldn't be justified if the subject also justifiably believes that his grounds for the belief that Q are faulty. Following our practice with Pollock in considering the no-defeaters clause just specifically for type-II defeaters, we can then sketch Goldman's 1979 view as follows.

- (Goldman) Subject S is experientially justified in believing that Q on the basis of P iff

- (a') S has some reliable experiential basis P that makes the truth of Q probable, and
- (b') S does not believe (based on some other reliable process) that P does not make the truth of Q probable.

Now, why might Lehrer and Cohen think that such a view explains type-II defeaters in a way that Pollock's view does not? Like condition (b) on Pollock's view, Goldman's (b') is a no-defeaters clause that signals the existence of type-II defeaters. What is needed is an explanation of why there should be such a condition like (b') in the first place: i.e., why type-II defeaters defeat. Goldman's condition (a'), according to Lehrer and Cohen, does just that. The reliability condition (a') ensures that there is some link between P and the probable truth of Q. Such a condition, then, explains why justification could be defeated if a subject has good grounds for thinking that that link is jeopardized.<sup>66</sup> Lehrer and Cohen's criticism of Pollock is that (a') explains (b') in a way that (a) does not explain (b). Goldman's view, recall, would meet the very natural idea that the connection between justification and truth requires that one's basis for belief makes the truth of the belief objectively probable – which in effect means that it is well placed to explain why something that threatened that link could affect justification.

The second view Lehrer and Cohen think can explain type-II defeaters is Lehrer's version of internalism.<sup>67</sup> There are two distinctive features of Lehrer's view for our purposes: the first is that the grounds that justify beliefs are the subject's other non-factive mental states, and the second is that justification requires second-order support beliefs to the effect that those grounds make the truth of the belief objectively probable.<sup>68</sup> Following our previous sketches, then, Lehrer's view looks like this:

- (Lehrer) Subject S is experientially justified in believing that Q on the basis of P iff
  - (a\*) S has some experiential grounds (evidence) P, and
  - (b\*) S believes that P makes the truth of Q objectively probable.

The critical question is: why do Lehrer and Cohen think that this view can explain type-II defeaters like reliabilism does and Pollock's view does not? Note that (b\*) is a form of no-defeaters clause, just like (b) and (b'): type-II defeaters would be incompatible with believing that P makes the truth of Q probable; i.e., they would be

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<sup>66</sup> See Cohen 1984: 290.

<sup>67</sup> In addition to Lehrer and Cohen (1983), see Lehrer (1974, 1990, 1997).

<sup>68</sup> Lehrer calls the grounds "evidence"; without loss of applicability we can just refer to the grounds as reasons.

incompatible with (b\*). One might think, then, that (b\*) merely flags the existence of type-II defeaters and what we need from the theory is some other explanation of *why* they exist. But this is not Lehrer and Cohen's strategy. Rather, they think (b\*) alone explains why type-II defeaters defeat. Unfortunately, there is not an abundance of explanation in Lehrer and Cohen's paper that explains how (b\*) can play this dual role. There are, in fact, two critical passages. Here is one explaining why their view, like Goldman's, can meet the explanatory criterion:

If a theory requires that P make the truth of Q probable (like Goldman's); or if a theory requires that the subject believe that P makes the truth of Q probable (like Lehrer's); then such a theory can account for why the subject having a reason to believe that P is not connected to the truth of Q, defeats his justification for believing that Q is true on the basis of P. (Cohen 1984: 290)

Unfortunately this is just an assertion that the two views can equally meet the criterion rather than an explanation of how this is so. Goldman's view, recall, requires that there actually is an objective link between P and the probable truth of Q. That is his condition (a'). But Lehrer's condition (a\*) does no such thing. Lehrer's view is internalist, which means that his (a\*) cannot possibly require an objective link between P and the probable truth of Q. We are still left wondering, then, how (b\*) can play its dual role.

In fact it cannot – and Lehrer and Cohen only think it can because of a crucial equivocation. We can see this by considering how Cohen in 1984 contrasts Lehrer's view with Pollock's. The key sentence in which Cohen (1984) explains the relative advantage of the Lehrer-Cohen view is this:

Where P is a *prima facie* reason for S to believe that Q, essentially type-II defeaters attack the connection between P and the truth of Q. But we have seen that a theory like Pollock's does not require any such connection between P (the justification conditions for Q) and the truth of Q. (Cohen 1984: 290)

And, he later adds, without such a requirement “the existence of type-II defeaters is utterly mysterious” (Cohen 1984: 290). The problem here is that, with the parenthetical remark, Cohen makes it sound as if requiring a connection between P and the probable truth of Q is the same thing as requiring a connection between the justification conditions for Q and the probable truth of Q. That is, the parenthetical remark reads as purely elucidatory. But that is not so. P, the justifying basis of one's belief, is one thing, and the conditions under which it justifies is another. This is no mere pedantic distinction. Recall that Lehrer's view does not (and cannot) require any connection between P and the probable truth of Q: that is how Goldman's view

does explain type-II defeaters and how Lehrer's view is barred from explaining them. So if that is what meeting the criterion requires, then their view falls in with Pollock's as inadequate. Note that in the 1983 paper Lehrer and Cohen formulated the point in just this problematic way – referring to P without the parenthetical remark about justification conditions. Compare the quote above with:

Type-II defeaters undermine the connection between P and Q, but Pollock's theory does not require that there be any connection between the truth of P and the truth of Q for the former to yield *prima facie* justification of the latter. (Lehrer and Cohen 1983: 202)

The appropriate reply to this 1983 charge is that yes, Pollock's theory does not require an objective connection between P and the probable truth of Q, but nor does their theory (all their view requires is that the subject *believe* there is such a connection). The 1984 quote suggests there is a difference between Lehrer's view and Pollock's only by obscuring the claim being made with the inclusion of the parenthetical remark.

So when in 1984 Cohen claims "a theory like Pollock's does not require any such connection between P (the justification conditions for Q) and the truth of Q," he equivocates between holding that the connection between justification and truth requires (1) that there is an objective connection between P, the basis of the belief, and the probable truth of Q, and (2) that there is a connection in the "justification conditions" for Q (*viz.*, in one's attitudes about P and the probable truth of Q). If, on the one hand, Lehrer and Cohen choose option (1), then their theory fares just as badly as Pollock's, because no internalist view can claim that there is such an objective connection. But if, on the other hand, they choose option (2) and hold that meeting the criterion just requires a connection in the "justification conditions" concerning one's attitudes toward P and the probable truth of Q, then again Lehrer's view shares company with Pollock's. Pollock's justification conditions were (a) and (b), while Lehrer's were (a\*) and (b\*) – both of which include a no-defeaters clause and therefore have some condition involving a connection between one's attitudes toward P and the probable truth of Q. The only difference is that Pollock's condition is formulated negatively (the subject must lack a reason for thinking there is no connection) and Lehrer's is formulated positively (the subject must have a belief that there is such a connection). So unless we are given some reason for thinking that a positive formulation has some advantage over a negative formulation, going with option (2) also bars Lehrer and Cohen from claiming a relative advantage over Pollock.

Lehrer and Cohen never give us such a reason. Indeed, the supposed advantage they claim over Pollock's view seems to be more of a liability than an asset. Why is it especially advantageous to require that, in order for us to be justified in believing Q on the basis of P, we have to believe there is an objective relation

between P and Q *when according to them it isn't true that there need be such a relation in order for the belief to be justified?* Lehrer and Cohen's second-order belief requirement holds that epistemic subjects treat objective relations as relevant to what they ought to believe; subjects must believe that their grounds for belief make the belief objectively likely to be true. In a sense, then, Lehrer and Cohen recognize the intuitive pull of the demand of truth as I have been understanding it (requiring an objective relation): as normal subjects we do think that what we ought to believe, or what we would be justified in believing, on the basis of some reason is partly determined by whether that reason bears an objective relation to the probable truth of the belief. But since they reject the demand of truth as I understand it they are forced to admit that in a sense this concern with objective relations is misguided or confused, since whether a belief really is justified has nothing to do with objective relations between one's reasons and one's belief. If these remarks are correct we are left with the conclusion that if there is a good argument here against Pollock, then their view fares just as poorly, if not worse, and Lehrer and Cohen only thought differently by equivocating in the way I have indicated.

Let me now return to the explanatory burden that Lehrer and Cohen place on theories of justification. According to Lehrer and Cohen's criterion for an adequate account of type-II defeaters (and thereby an adequate account of the relation between justification and truth), what would an explanation of such defeaters look like? What would explain why it is that some putative reason, P, cannot justify the belief that Q in circumstances in which some other consideration R suggests that P has no bearing on the probable truth of Q? Here is one idea:

**Minimal Explanation:** A reason (R) for believing that P is not in any way related to the probable truth of Q defeats P's being a reason for believing Q because whether P is related in some way to the probable truth of Q could possibly affect the ability of P to justify Q.

This is, for example, the kind of explanation Goldman could give of type-II defeaters, because by his condition (a') the relation between P and the probable truth of Q *can* affect justification. In effect, what the Minimal Explanation requires is that objective relations do play a role in determining the justification one has for some belief.

Note that I am not claiming that theories of justification must account for type-II defeaters in the way Lehrer and Cohen suppose. Rather, I am claiming that the way Lehrer and Cohen suppose that type-II defeaters must be accounted for seems to require something like the demand of truth as I have been understanding it. The desire to endorse such an explanation is, I think, precisely behind Lehrer and Cohen's conflation that we saw above. When they say in the 1983 paper that there needs to be a connection between P and the probable truth of Q, they are in fact endorsing a version of the Minimal Explanation to which they are not entitled.

Now perhaps Lehrer and Cohen are wrong that any theory of justification must explain type-II defeaters in the way they have claimed. Any plausible internalist view, after all, will still maintain that a subject's non-factive mental states can defeat justification in certain circumstances and thus will provide a theoretical role for type-II defeaters (even if that theoretical role does not meet the explanatory demand Lehrer and Cohen make). If Lehrer and Cohen are wrong about that, however, then we are still left with a void where they promised internalism a solution. Lehrer and Cohen offered internalism principled grounds for thinking that the intuitive appeal of the demand of truth (as I understand it) is too strong. Those principled grounds promised to limit the cost of denying the intuitions behind the demand of truth. Internalists can still reject those intuitions, but barring some other explanation internalism will strike us as dissatisfying precisely because it cannot account for, or explain why it needn't account for, some of our basic intuitions about justification. Furthermore, even if Lehrer and Cohen are wrong about the explanatory demands on a theory of justification (vis-à-vis type-II defeaters), that error does not impugn their recognition that normal epistemic subjects really do take objective relations to bear on what they ought to believe or what they would be justified in believing. If that is right then the demand of truth might not just be a compelling intuition we recognize when we theorize about justification; it might be an implicit and fundamental part of our epistemic practices.<sup>69</sup>

### 3.4 Externalism, reasons and Psychologism

Plantinga and Armstrong's arguments for externalism on the surface are quite different. Plantinga argues by cases, relying on our intuitive judgments about when subjects are justified or have knowledge, and he uses them to show that any internalist view faces counterexamples. Armstrong argues that justification has a foundational structure that only externalism can account for. Despite these differences, the two arguments share several important features. Firstly, what secures the advantage of externalism in both cases is the same thing: externalism connects one's belief to the world in a substantive way that ensures that one's belief is likely to be true. That feature of externalism is precisely what we have been calling the demand of truth, so we can see that what is motivating the rejection of internalism for both Plantinga and Armstrong is the demand of truth. Secondly, both Plantinga and Armstrong take the demand of truth to motivate the rejection of the idea that justification is determined by the subject's reasons for belief.

If that is right, then externalists have used the demand of truth to motivate two claims.

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<sup>69</sup> A point I return to, and connect with deliberation about what to believe, in Chapter 4.

- (1) Justification is not determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states.
- (2) Justification is not determined just by the subject's reasons for belief.

The problem, however, is that the considerations cited by externalists (deriving from the demand of truth) only support the first of these claims. Recall, for example, Plantinga's criticism of Chisholm. Plantinga argued that the fact that the subject's "cognitive environment" plays a role in determining the subject's justification shows that justification is not determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states. As long as he is right about the role of the environment, that argument is sound. Even if he is right about that, however, it does not also follow that justification is not determined just by the subject's reasons for belief. It would support that second claim *if* we add the assumption that the subject's reasons are determined entirely by her non-factive psychology. That is, if we add Psychologism as a premise then Plantinga's argument would support (1) and (2), but without that premise it would only support (1).

It's not as if Psychologism, though, plays an incidental role in the dialectic here that Plantinga can abjure. Plantinga uses this argument to provide positive support for his own externalist theory of justification – that is, he uses it to show that justification can be analyzed with the notions of proper function, proper environment, and design plan, which make no mention at all of the idea of the subject's reasons for belief or "basing one's belief on evidence." Plantinga's rejection of the demand of reasons is therefore a central part of his project, and his ground for that rejection is the fact that justification is determined in part by the subject's "cognitive environment" such that her belief is objectively likely to be true, and not determined just by her non-factive psychology. Without the assumption of Psychologism, however, this argument does not go through. If the subject's cognitive environment *is* relevant to what reasons she possesses, then the argument Plantinga makes does not cast any doubt on the idea that justification is determined just by one's reasons.

Given the way Plantinga and Armstrong have argued, it is no surprise that they both subscribe to Psychologism: both hold that a subject's reasons are determined entirely by her non-factive psychological states. First consider Armstrong:

Does this mean that A's reason for believing that *p* is his belief that *q*? Is my reason for believing Jim is dead my belief that he has been decapitated? It seems that we sometimes speak in this way, but certainly we do not always do so. Very often, at least, what is called my reason is not my belief-state, but what I believe: the proposition 'that Jim has been decapitated'. The proposition is called my reason because I believe it, but, very often, it is the proposition to which the word 'reason' attaches. (Armstrong 1973: 78)



Here Armstrong discusses two views of reasons, but notice that both are versions of Psychologism. If one's reasons are simply one's beliefs themselves, or the propositional contents of one's beliefs, then one's reasons are determined just by what beliefs one holds and hence just by one's non-factive mental states. (Additionally, Armstrong recognizes no other type of reason than those fixed by our beliefs (Armstrong 1973: 150-153, 182-183).) So all that matters for our reasons is what non-factive mental states (*viz.*, beliefs) we are in.

Secondly, Plantinga seems to share the same view as Armstrong. Plantinga's notion of "propositional evidence", e.g., identifies one's reasons with the propositions one believes.

*Propositional* warrant comes in two styles: *deductive*, and *nondeductive* or probabilistic. A proposition A can get deductive warrant, for me, by way of being believed on the basis of other propositions I already believe that have warrant for me, and that entail A. (Plantinga 1993b: 138)

Other beliefs – beliefs not in the foundations – will be accepted *on the evidential basis* of foundational beliefs; and these beliefs, if things are going properly, will be *evidentially supported* by the foundational beliefs. That is to say, the basic beliefs serve as *propositional evidence* for the nonbasic beliefs. (Plantinga 1993b: 178)<sup>70</sup>

The result is that according to both Plantinga and Armstrong the subject's non-factive psychology determines the subject's reasons.

The fact that Plantinga and Armstrong hold this view of reasons helps us understand why they argue in the way they did, but it leaves their stronger conclusions hostage to an unargued assumption, Psychologism. We can also understand why perhaps they did not think that they had to argue for this assumption when we recall that in Chapter 2 we saw that their internalist opponents share the same view of reasons.

I have argued that there is intuitive force to the demand of truth, and that it gives us grounds for rejecting internalism. It also gives us grounds for rejecting the demand of reasons, however, only if Psychologism is true. If Psychologism is true, then we have discovered a fundamental tension in our concept of justification. We saw in Chapter 2 that there is also strong intuitive support for the demand of reasons, but if Plantinga and Armstrong are right then that intuition clashes with the strong intuitive support motivating the demand of truth. What we need to know, then, in order to understand what shape a theory of justification should take, is whether Psychologism is the correct view of reasons for belief.

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<sup>70</sup> Also see Plantinga 1993a: 67.

## CHAPTER FOUR REASONS FOR BELIEF

### 4.1 Overview

I have argued that both the demand of reasons and the demand of truth are intuitively compelling demands on our notion of justification, but on a natural and widely shared view of reasons for belief they are incompatible. That view of reasons is Psychologism: the view that our reasons are determined entirely by our non-factive mental states. If that view of reasons is correct, then we are in an unfortunate situation: we have fundamentally contradictory intuitions about justification. If a different view of reasons is correct, however, then it might still be possible for a theory of justification to capture the force of all of our basic intuitions about justification.

The first goal of this chapter is to argue that a different view of reasons is indeed correct. I present four considerations that support the view that I call Factualism, the view that facts of the world around us can be our reasons for belief. If Factualism is correct then our reasons are partly determined by the facts of the world around us, and thus our reasons are not determined entirely by our non-factive mental states (i.e., Psychologism is false). I argue that (i) linguistic evidence, (ii) deliberative considerations, (iii) perceptual considerations, and (iv) the combined force of the demand of reasons and the demand of truth all support Factualism over Psychologism.

That support for Factualism, however, must be balanced against considerations favoring Psychologism. The second goal of the chapter is to evaluate arguments that philosophers have given for Psychologism. I argue that what is compelling about these arguments is actually compatible with the most plausible version of Factualism. The result is that, contrary to first appearances, there is very little that favors Psychologism over Factualism. The result, I argue, is that Factualism is a much more plausible view of reasons than Psychologism.

### 4.2 The Argument from Factual Reasons

The first consideration that favors Factualism over Psychologism is a certain type of linguistic evidence.<sup>71</sup> Consider one of the common ways we talk about reasons for belief. Reasons for belief are considerations that count in favor of believing things. The fact that the knife was found in Jack's apartment is a reason for believing that Jack is the murderer. That fact is a consideration that speaks in

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<sup>71</sup> Possible linguistic evidence that favors Psychologism over Factualism is considered in Section 4.5 below.

favor of believing that Jack is the murderer. The fact that the gas gauge reads “E” is a reason for believing that the car is nearly out of gas. The fact that the baby is crying in a certain way is a reason for believing that it is hungry. All of these are perfectly intelligible claims of a sort that we encounter daily. When we talk about reasons in this way I will call them factual reasons.

If we take this evidence at face value, then facts of the world around us are reasons for belief. The mere existence of factual reasons, though, is not inconsistent with Psychologism. Psychologism is a view about what determines a *subject’s* reasons for belief, and it entails that the subject can’t base her beliefs on non-psychological facts. The mere existence of factual reasons does not jeopardize that consequence. If non-psychological facts are reasons, however, it is difficult to resist the further idea that these facts can be a subject’s reasons for belief. Factual reasons, after all, are reasons *for belief*: the fact that the baby is crying is a reason for believing that the baby is hungry. We ought to wonder, however, what it means to call something a reason for belief if it’s not possible for it to ever be a subject’s reason for belief. If something is a reason for belief then it must be possible, at least in some sense, for a subject to believe something for that reason. If that is right, we could make the following argument:

**The Argument from Factual Reasons**

- (i) The fact that the baby is crying in a certain way is a reason for believing that it is hungry.
- (ii) If the fact that the baby is crying in a certain way is a reason for believing that it is hungry, then it is possible for John to believe that the baby is hungry for that reason (the reason that it is crying in a certain way).

Hence,

- (iii) It is possible for John to believe that the baby is hungry for the reason that it is crying in a certain way (i.e., that fact).

The conclusion (iii) entails that we can base our beliefs on the facts of the world around us, and thus it entails that Psychologism is false. The problem for those who want to resist this conclusion is that (i) and (ii) just seem obviously true. I’ve already claimed that (i) is an ordinary way of talking about reasons for belief that any normal epistemic subject can understand, so let’s look more closely at (ii).

The sense of “possibility” in (ii) clearly matters. On at least one sense of possibility, it makes perfect sense to say that there could be a reason for belief but it is not possible for that reason to be any subject’s reason for belief. The Access Condition<sup>72</sup> requires that the subject be related to her reason so that she can base her belief on it. Now we can suppose that there are facts that obtained before there

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<sup>72</sup> See Chapter 2.

were any subjects and whose traces no subject will ever become aware of. So there are factual reasons for believing some things that will never be anyone's reasons. And hence there could be some reasons such that it's not possible (as a matter of contingent fact) for them to be anyone's reasons for belief. But Psychologism entails a much stronger claim than that it is not possible, as a matter of contingent fact, for subjects to base their beliefs on certain non-psychological considerations of the distant past. Psychologism entails that even mundane considerations in the world around us right now cannot be our reasons for holding beliefs, and that seems incompatible with recognizing that they are reasons *for belief*.

Notice that in this argument neither premise alone is inconsistent with Psychologism, and both premises are intuitively compelling: denying (i) just sounds like willful ignorance of a perfectly ordinary notion of reasons, while denying (ii) strains the idea of what it means to be a reason for belief. Since, *prima facie*, the advocate of Psychologism must deny (i) or (ii), this argument creates a dilemma for her. We therefore need to consider the important replies an advocate of Psychologism might make.

How an advocate of Psychologism would reply to this argument depends on the specific view of reasons she endorses. Recall that Psychologism is the view that a subject's reasons are determined entirely by her non-factive psychological states. As such it is not an ontological thesis about what those reasons are. There are two dominant ontological views of reasons that defenders of Psychologism have advocated. One view holds that one's reasons are one's non-factive mental states themselves.<sup>73</sup> The other view holds that one's reasons are the propositional contents of one's non-factive mental states.<sup>74</sup> On either of these views one's reasons are fixed by one's non-factive psychological states. I will call the first view *state psychologism* and the second view *content psychologism*. How the defender of Psychologism will reply to the argument depends on which ontological view of reasons she prefers.

Let's start with state psychologism. The defender of state psychologism would say that John's reason for believing that the baby is hungry is his experience as of the baby crying.<sup>75</sup> One's reasons, however, must be propositionally structured – by which I mean that they are the kind of thing referred to with that-clauses.<sup>76</sup> So saying that John's experience is his reason means, for state psychologism, that *that* John has an experience as of the baby crying is his reason. This that-clause cites something that is the case: it is a fact that John has an experience as of the baby crying, and that fact is a reason for him to believe that the baby is hungry. State

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<sup>73</sup> E.g., BonJour (1985, 2003, 2004), Conee and Feldman (2001), and Ginet (1975).

<sup>74</sup> E.g., Audi (1986); also a plausible interpretation of Davidson – see Davidson (1983).

<sup>75</sup> Though nothing depends on it, I am assuming that the most plausible version of state psychologism counts experiences, not just beliefs, as reasons.

<sup>76</sup> For arguments see Williamson (1997, 2000) and Dancy (2000); cf. Hornsby (2008).

psychologism as I understand it, then, is the view that a subject's reasons are facts that concern her own psychology. This view therefore shares with Factualism the general idea that reasons for belief are facts. The difference is that the defender of state psychologism restricts the class of facts that can possibly be one's reasons to one's own psychology, and thus must deny either premise (i) or (ii). If she admits the truth of premise (i) and holds that all facts are reasons, then she must deny (ii) and hold that there are reasons for belief that could never be any subject's reasons. If she admits the truth of premise (ii) and holds that all reasons for belief could possibly be a subject's reasons, then she must deny (i) and maintain that the fact that the baby crying in a certain way is not a reason for believing that it is hungry.

Since state psychologism must accept one horn of this dilemma I think there is serious cost to the view. It is important to note that the defender of state psychologism might think that there is a principled reason for denying that subjects can base their beliefs on facts of the world around them. Consider, for example, the thesis in Chapter 2 that I called the core of epistemic internalism: that justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states. If the defender of state psychologism is an epistemic internalist, she would hold that one's justification cannot be even partly determined by contingent facts of the world around her, such as the fact that the baby is crying, and consequently those facts can't be her reasons. Thus one might think that internalism gives us a principled reason for favoring Psychologism. Notice firstly, however, that even if there are arguments for internalism the force of the Argument from Factual Reasons does not disappear. The defender of state psychologism would still have to deny premise (i) or (ii), and thus the motivation accrued by the arguments for internalism would have to be weighed against the cost of denying one of these premises.

Secondly, there is a critical problem with using the internalist arguments we have already examined (in Chapter 2) to motivate this reply on behalf of Psychologism. In Chapter 2 I showed that the arguments for internalism give by Conee, Feldman, Bonjour, and Lehrer do not support internalism as such. What is compelling about those arguments is that justification is determined by the subject's reasons for belief (the demand of reasons) and that the subject must be related to her reasons so that she can base her belief on them (the Access Condition). Both of those consequences, however, are compatible with Factualism. The arguments given by internalists would only further support internalism, I showed, if internalists assumed that Psychologism is true. It would therefore be circular for the internalist to then turn around and claim that internalism shows that Psychologism is preferable to Factualism. Thus those internalist arguments cannot function here as the defender of Psychologism needs them to, because those arguments simply did not offer any grounds for thinking that the relevant class of reasons must be restricted to considerations of the subject's psychology.

In Chapter 2 we did not pretend to survey all possible arguments for internalism, and thus we have not ruled out the possibility that other internalist

arguments can help the defender of state psychologism reply to the Argument from Factual Reasons. I will consider other arguments for internalism below (Sections 4.5 and 4.6) when we turn to positive considerations in favor of Psychologism. It is interesting to note, however, that even if there are such arguments they would not necessarily improve the dialectical force of Conee, Feldman, Bonjour, and Lehrer's arguments for internalism. That is because, as just mentioned, their arguments can make a case for internalism only by relying on Psychologism, but the case for Psychologism, we are assuming, relies on some other arguments for internalism. So the arguments of Conee, Feldman, Bonjour, and Lehrer would support internalism only insofar as internalism was already directly supported by those other arguments. There may be independent support for internalism, and perhaps that support can be used by the internalist to motivate Psychologism, but then to argue that Psychologism plus the demand of reasons further supports internalism (à la Conee, Feldman, Bonjour, and Lehrer) would, seemingly, be mere double counting.

Let's now turn to content psychologism. There are two different responses the defender of content psychologism might make to the Argument from Factual Reasons. The difference turns on a substantive metaphysical issue – whether facts can be identified with true propositions. Some philosophers have argued that we should not make this identification.<sup>77</sup> The basic idea is that we need a substantive, concrete conception of facts as ways that the world is; facts are things that obtain or fail to obtain, which make our beliefs true or false. Propositions, by contrast, are abstract entities that are made true or false by the facts. If the advocate of content psychologism subscribes to this picture, however, she will have a very difficult time responding to the Argument from Factual Reasons. According to this version of content psychologism, facts cannot literally be a subject's reasons for belief, since by definition only the representational contents of a subject's psychological states can be her reasons – which are propositions and not facts. The defender of content psychologism, though, could try to tell a story about factual reasons in this way: the fact that the baby is crying in a certain way causes John's experience as of the baby crying, and the content of that experience is then John's reason for believing that the baby is hungry. She could then claim to respect the sense in which the fact that *p* is a reason, that is, premise (i), by holding that the fact that *p* can cause an instance of the representational content that *p* (which is, strictly speaking, the reason); and since this content could be a subject's reason, it respects the sense in which the fact that *p* could be a subject's reason.

The problem with this response, however, is that it is not really a response at all. This version of content psychologism claims that facts cannot be a subject's reasons for belief – only representational contents can. It doesn't recover any sense at all in which a fact is a reason for belief to hold that a fact can't possibly be a reason for belief but it can cause something else, a mental state, whose content is a

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<sup>77</sup> E.g., Harman (2003) and Dancy (2000).

reason for belief. Facts are simply metaphysically the wrong sort of thing to be reasons for belief – so it shouldn't even make sense to say that the fact that the bloody knife was found in Jack's apartment is a reason for believing that Jack is the murderer. All that content psychologism can make sense of is the idea that facts can cause things whose contents are reasons for belief. But I submit that that is not the ordinary notion of factual reasons that we all possess. I therefore consider this version of content psychologism unsatisfactory.

If the defender of content psychologism identifies facts and true propositions, however, she has a much stronger response to the argument.<sup>78</sup> She can hold that propositions are our reasons, and they are our reasons only when they are the contents of our psychological states. Let's assume, for example, that the content of John's experience is that the baby is crying. Thus his reason is the proposition that the baby is crying. But when this proposition is true, his reason is also a fact, since facts just are true propositions. The conclusion of the Argument from Factual Reasons was that we can base our beliefs on the facts – and this version of content psychologism can simply agree. When our experiences are veridical, basing our beliefs on their contents *just is* basing our beliefs on the facts. What is critical to this response, however, is that the world around John is not making a difference to his reasons: John would have the exact same reason for belief even if his experience were not veridical.<sup>79</sup> We can base our beliefs on the facts but, firstly, we need not do so, since we can also base our beliefs on false propositions, and, secondly, when we do so their being facts is irrelevant to our reasons. Thus this view is still a version of Psychologism, since John's reasons are determined entirely by his non-factive mental states: John's reason in the good case is a fact, but the fact that it is a fact is playing no role in determining what reasons he has.<sup>80</sup> The challenge to Factualism, then, is that one could accept the Argument from Factual Reasons, and agree that facts are reasons, but hold that factivity is not relevant to our reasons even when we base our beliefs on the facts.<sup>81</sup>

Since state psychologism incurred the cost of having to deny premise (i) or (ii), and the first version of content psychologism could not make sense of facts being reasons at all, I think that this second version of content psychologism offers

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<sup>78</sup> Philosophers who endorse the metaphysical identification of facts and true propositions include Frege (1918) and King (1995, 2002).

<sup>79</sup> John would have the same reason only if we grant that his experience could have the same content. If the content is object dependent that may not be so, but I will put aside this sort of worry (see McDowell 1986).

<sup>80</sup> No role other than how we describe it (since we can only call it a fact when it is true).

<sup>81</sup> If one identifies facts and true propositions, but also holds that just the facts (just the true propositions) can be our reasons, one's view will be a version of Factualism, not Psychologism.

the strongest reply to the argument. If that is correct it is interesting in its own right that Psychologism would depend on a substantive and controversial metaphysical thesis. The first worry about this reply, then, is that it depends on the substantive and controversial metaphysical thesis that facts are identical to true propositions. But, secondly, even if facts are true propositions, there is linguistic evidence suggesting that just the facts are reasons, contrary to what this version of content psychologism predicts. Factivity does matter to our reasons: we talk of facts being reasons, and we care about basing our beliefs on the facts, precisely because the fact that they are facts matters.

For example, all of the following are felicitous:

- (1a) The fact that the bloody knife was found in Jack's apartment is a reason for believing that Jack is the murderer.
- (1b) A reason to reach out your hand is the fact that the child is drowning.
- (1c) John based his belief on the fact that the baby is crying.

By contrast, I submit that none of the following is felicitous:

- (2a) #The proposition that the bloody knife was found in Jack's apartment is a reason for believing that Jack is the murderer.
- (2b) #A reason to reach out your hand is the proposition that the child is drowning.
- (2c) #John based his belief on the proposition that the baby is crying.

It is true that the defender of content psychologism could try to explain these infelicities on pragmatic grounds. For example, she could hold that I can *say* that something is a reason only if I think that it is true. It would then be misleading to say that a proposition is a reason – that would be like purposefully saying it's a reason and leaving out my endorsement of it as true and thus a reason.<sup>82</sup> This response, however, is problematic. Consider now (3a) and (4a): the problem is that it's not any more felicitous to say:

- (3a) #The *true* proposition that the bloody knife was found in Jack's apartment is a reason for believing that Jack is the murderer.

Nor is it possible to cancel the potential implicature:

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<sup>82</sup> It seems rather *ad hoc* to stipulate that I can only say that something is a reason if I think that it is true, but once that stipulation is made one could assimilate this pragmatic response into Grice's view of conversational implicature (Grice 1975). (The violated maxim would be Quantity.)



- (4a) #The proposition that the bloody knife was found in Jack's apartment is a reason for believing that Jack is the murderer, and it's true!

Furthermore, what is felicitous, but unusual, is (5a):

- (5a) That the proposition that the bloody knife was found in Jack's apartment is true is a reason for believing that Jack is the murderer.<sup>83</sup>

Notice, however, that (5a) does not support content psychologism. Rather, it supports Factualism, for (5a) is still felicitous only when it is nominalized as:

- (6a) The fact that the proposition that the bloody knife was found in Jack's apartment is true is a reason for believing that Jack is the murderer.

This discussion is far from conclusive, but it suggests that the identification of facts and true propositions, even if right, does not save content psychologism.<sup>84</sup> Even if facts are true propositions, just the facts are reasons. Thus when we base our beliefs on the facts, our reasons are partly determined by what the facts are. Thus they are not determined entirely by our non-factive mental states. That would mean that the strongest version of Psychologism still does not offer a viable understanding of how and why facts are reasons for belief.

Before concluding this section I want to consider one final objection to the Argument from Factual Reasons. This objection is not partisan to any ontology of reasons, but is rather an objection to the linguistic evidence employed in the argument. Part of the motivation for the argument is that we commonly say things like:

- (7) John's reason is the fact that the baby is crying.  
(8) John's reason is that the baby is crying.  
(9) The fact that the baby is crying is a reason for believing that the baby is hungry.

I have been treating, quite naturally, "is" here as identity: John's reason is identical to the fact that the baby is crying. That very fact is his reason. Pryor (2007), however,

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<sup>83</sup> I owe this sort of example to Dancy (2000: 114-117).

<sup>84</sup> Note that as I am defending Factualism, Factualism is compatible with the metaphysical identification of facts and true propositions, and thus linguistic evidence for that identification is not evidence for content psychologism over Factualism. Additional linguistic evidence raised in Pryor (2007) is discussed shortly.

has argued against that treatment, and thus he would consider the Argument from Factual Reasons illegitimate. Let me briefly explain Pryor's objection, and then show why it does not cast any doubt on my argument. Notice first the similarity between (8) above and the following:

- (8) John's reason is that the baby is crying.
- (10) John's belief is that the baby is crying.

Pryor claims, basically, that the "orthodox" semantics for (10) treats the "is" in (10) as identity, and that one might then use that treatment as a model for arguing that the "is" of (8) is identity as well (Pryor 2007: 220-221). Pryor then argues that such a procedure would be wrong because the "orthodox" semantics of (10) is wrong, and he concludes that linguistic evidence like (7) – (9) does not "succeed in giving *any* support" to the view that facts are reasons (Pryor 2007: 220).<sup>85</sup>

In reply, the main reason Pryor's argument is not relevant to, and casts no doubt on, the Argument from Factual Reasons is that that argument has nothing to do with the semantics of propositional attitude claims like (10). The semantics of (10) is different from (8) in two obvious and relevant ways. First, the cognitive nominal "belief" cannot be understood in isolation from the cognitive verb "believes". That is, the obvious relation between

- (10) John's belief is that the baby is crying
- (11) John believes that the baby is crying

cannot be ignored. But (8) is not a cognitive nominal and has no related cognitive verb: reasons are not propositional attitudes! Secondly, (8) is obviously related to (7), while (10) has no analogous construction. That is, it is impossible to felicitously say something of the form:

- (12) #John's belief is the fact that the baby is crying.

Even for the cognitive attitude knowledge, for which it is common to say "John knows the fact that *p*", there is no analogous construction such as:

- (13) #John's knowledge is the fact that the baby is crying.

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<sup>85</sup> Though note the qualifications he makes of his conclusions at Pryor 2007: 240, which I explain below. *Pace* his stronger claims, perhaps Pryor only really means to argue that it would be problematic to reason from the "orthodox" reading of (10) to a Factualist reading of (8). If he only intends that weaker claim, then his argument would pose no challenge at all to the Argument from Factual Reasons, since the Argument from Factual Reasons has nothing to do with (10).

Pryor therefore focuses on and criticizes an argument that no one ought to make (and to my knowledge no one has made), an argument that relies on a specious comparison between (8) and (10).

If my reading of (8) isn't supported by the "orthodox" reading of (10), then one might ask, what is it supported by? The answer is precisely the *disanalogy* with (10), namely the fact that "John's reason is that the baby is crying" is correctly nominalized as "John's reason is the fact that the baby is crying" and not "John's reason is the proposition that the baby is crying." As discussed above, nominalizations with "the fact" are universally felicitous and nominalizations with "the proposition" are universally infelicitous. (10) follows the exact opposite pattern: it can be nominalized by "the proposition" but not "the fact." To put the point another way, Pryor's discussion about the semantics of propositional attitudes like belief only seems relevant at all to my topic of reasons for belief if one focuses on (8), as Pryor does, in isolation from its obvious relation to (7) and (9). Only then might one think the surface similarity between (8) and (10) is significant. My reading of (8), however, has nothing to do with Pryor's (10), but is directly related to the constructions (7) and (9) that Pryor considers outside the bounds of his essay (Pryor 2007: 221). Although Pryor makes strong claims that clash with my argument (*viz.*, he claims that linguistic evidence like (7) – (9) provides no support at all to the view that facts are reasons), it is also interesting that in the conclusion of his paper he actually rescinds those claims, recognizing that his discussion has little bearing on the ontology of reasons (Pryor 2007: 240).

Let's step back and consider where this discussion leaves us. We have examined how three different versions of Psychologism might respond to the Argument from Factual Reasons. The first was state psychologism, the view that facts of our own psychology are our reasons for belief. That version of Psychologism faces a simple dilemma: either it admits that non-psychological facts are not reasons for belief, or it admits that there are reasons for belief that could never be a subject's reasons. Either way the view incurs considerable cost. Even less satisfying, though, is the second version of Psychologism we considered: the form of content psychologism that distinguishes between facts and true propositions. This view, I claimed, can't make sense of facts being reasons for belief at all, a consequence I think that we should find very difficult to accept. The third version of Psychologism, however, avoids the problems of the first two. This version of content psychologism identifies facts and true propositions and thus it can agree both that facts are reasons for belief and that when they are the contents of the subject's non-factive mental states they are the subject's reasons for belief. The problem for this view is that it may be false to identify facts and true propositions, and even if we grant that identification, it is still just the facts that are our reasons. If just the facts are our reasons then whether something is a fact partly determines what

our reasons are, and thus our reasons are not determined entirely by our non-factive mental states.

### 4.3 Deliberative and Perceptual Transparency

I've claimed that the Argument from Factual Reasons helps motivate Factualism. That argument, however, isn't the view's only motivation. Two other important considerations stem from features of deliberation and perception. The first is a feature of deliberation I will call Deliberative Transparency.<sup>86</sup> When we deliberate about what to believe, we deliberate about the facts of the world (as we take them to be). If we were to ask John why he believes that the baby is hungry (or what his reason is), he would say: "Because it is crying." Or, if John were to ask himself in a deliberative spirit, "Is the baby hungry?" he would try to answer that question by looking at considerations that speak for or against thinking that the baby is hungry. The considerations he would normally appeal to would be states of the world around him, not states of himself. He would say, e.g., "Well, the baby is crying in that certain way that she only does when she is hungry." He would take that fact (that the baby is crying in a certain way) to speak in favor of holding the belief that the baby is hungry, and he would form his belief on the basis of it.

The other idea that motivates Factualism is that in perception we engage with and respond to the way that the world is around us (I will call this phenomenon Perceptual Transparency).<sup>87</sup> John sees the baby crying and immediately forms the belief that it is hungry. He is attending to the world and treating it as the basis for his beliefs and actions. He is not self-consciously attending to himself and his own psychology. When he forms his belief on the basis of what he sees, then, he is forming it on the basis of the facts of the world that perception gives him access to.

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<sup>86</sup> I owe a debt for my use of the term "transparency" to Moran (2001), but my use of the term should not be confused with his. Moran discusses the transparency of the question of whether I believe that  $p$  to the question of whether  $p$ . I am concerned with the transparency of answering whether  $p$  is the case to the facts that bear on  $p$ , facts that are often not facts of our first-person psychology. A connection between transparency and deliberation also plays a role in Shah (2003), though Shah's use of the term is different from both Moran's and mine (also see Shah and Velleman 2005). The common idea to all three is that there is an element in deliberation focused on the world, but none of what I claim relies on the truth of Moran's or Shah's views.

<sup>87</sup> This feature of perception resonates with a naïve realist understanding of perception (see Martin 2002, 2004), but the epistemic claims I make are consistent with other views of perception as well (such as some versions of representationalism or what Byrne and Logue call the "moderate" view). See Byrne and Logue (2008, 2009).

An important element of both of these considerations (Deliberative and Perceptual Transparency) is the relation between the subject and her reasons: what the subject attends to provides a clue as to what her reasons are.<sup>88</sup> In general subjects do not self-consciously attend to themselves and the fact that they are perceiving or thinking of something. Subjects attend to what they see and hear, not to the fact that they are seeing and hearing. When John hears the baby crying, he attends to what he hears – the noise and the baby – and he does not self-consciously attend to himself and the fact that he is hearing the baby. In a sense John’s attention is “transparent”, by which I mean it is focused on non-psychological considerations (that the baby is crying) that bear on his belief and not on psychological considerations about himself (e.g., that he is hearing the baby cry).

If Deliberative and Perceptual Transparency are genuine phenomena, then we can argue against Psychologism in following way.

### **The Argument from Reasons Transparency**

1. In normal, successful cases of perception, subjects base their beliefs on what they attend to.<sup>89</sup>
2. In normal, successful cases of perception subjects attend to facts of the world around them (not to psychological considerations about themselves).

Thus,

3. In normal, successful cases of perception subjects base their beliefs on facts of the world around them (not on psychological considerations about themselves).

The force of this argument can be seen by contrasting two different ways of taking a consideration to be a reason for a belief. Consider John and Dan.

**Case 1.** John has an infant daughter who cries in a certain way only when she’s hungry (and John knows as much). That she is crying in that way is a consideration that counts in favor of believing that she is hungry. Which is to say, a reason for believing that she is hungry is that she is crying in that way. Now John hears her crying in that way, and he thereby comes to believe his daughter is hungry. When he hears her crying he attends to what he hears – that the baby crying – and on the basis of what he hears he forms his belief. That is, he treats the consideration that she is crying in that way as a reason for believing she is hungry and forms his belief on the basis of it.

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<sup>88</sup> I call it a “clue” because it is not an infallible indication of what her reasons are. See Section 4.6 below.

<sup>89</sup> For expository reasons I focus first on good cases. Discussion of bad cases follows shortly.

**Case 2.** Dan has recently lost his daughter in a traffic accident. Even though the accident was not his fault, he was driving and is full of repressed guilt over her death. In a bit of escapism, he has devoted all his energy to his work and is achieving some success there. That success has left him thinking that he is dealing well with his daughter's death. When he thinks about it, he believes her death has not left him grief stricken. That is, when he reflects on the subject matter of whether his daughter's death has left him grief stricken, he reflects on considerations like the fact that he held himself together at the funeral without breaking down; the fact that he has kept a stiff upper lip at work and hasn't been a depressed drunk like fathers he's heard about in similar situations; and the fact that he's been quite successful at work, which the grief stricken aren't prone to be.

One day, however, Dan is at home and has a perfectly vivid experience as of his daughter crying. He doesn't believe she is crying, since he knows that she is dead. But it's as if she's right there crying and it makes him feel a deep need to comfort her. Dan realizes that only a person still coping with grief could have a perfect illusion and emotional reaction like this, so he takes the fact that he is having such an experience to be a reason for believing that his daughter's death has left him grief stricken. (Perhaps he then comes to believe that the considerations that he previously took to be good reasons for believing he isn't grief stricken aren't good reasons to believe that at all.)

Both John and Dan have sensory experiences which lead them to form beliefs. John's experience gives him genuine awareness of his daughter crying, but Dan's experience is illusory. There is nonetheless a description that is true of both of them. John's experience is a reason why he forms his belief (that the baby is hungry), and Dan's experience is a reason why he forms his belief (that his daughter's death has left him grief stricken). In each case, the subject's experience is a reason that explains why he holds his belief (i.e., it is a reason why he believes as he does).

But there is a critical difference between the two cases. John forms his belief by attending to considerations that bear on whether it is the case that the baby is hungry – and these considerations have nothing to do with his first-person psychological attitudes. He doesn't attend to the psychological fact that he is hearing his baby – that would be an overly self-conscious description of him. He attends to what he is hearing; he attends to the consideration that the baby is crying, and on that basis forms the belief that it is hungry. Dan, however, forms his belief by considering his first-person psychological attitudes themselves – namely the fact that he is having an experience as of his daughter crying. He takes the fact that he has that experience to be a reason for believing that he is grief stricken.

John and Dan typify two different ways of basing a belief on reasons. In both cases their experiences give them access to considerations that count in favor of believing something. In John's case, his experience gives him access to a non-psychological consideration. It is only because he has that experience that he can take that to be a consideration that counts in favor of his belief – but in forming his belief he doesn't attend to his own psychological states themselves. His experience is transparent; it is just the medium which allows him to take some non-psychological consideration to be a reason for belief. Dan's experience, by contrast, isn't transparent in this way. Dan attends to his experience itself, and takes *it* to be a consideration that counts in favor of believing something. Dan's experience is in that sense “opaque”.<sup>90</sup>

If cases like John's are possible at all, then it is possible for subjects to base their beliefs on non-psychological facts. Once we see the contrast between John and Dan, however, it's clear that John's case is the norm and Dan's the exception. Jill's reason for believing that it rained last night is the fact that the streets are wet. Bill's reason for believing that George Clooney is working on a new movie with Brad Pitt is that *People* magazine says so. The examples are limitless, because people form beliefs in this way all the time. In particular, they do so in normal cases of successful perception in which they don't self-consciously reflect on the fact that they are perceiving; in which they instead treat their perception transparently and form beliefs (and perform actions) on the basis of what they see, hear, etc.

Next I want to consider important replies that the defender of Psychologism might make to the Argument from Reasons Transparency. What the defender of Psychologism needs to offer is a reason for thinking that, contrary to appearances, in normal, successful cases of perception subjects don't base their beliefs on non-psychological considerations. First, she might reject premise (1) and hold that our reasons are not the considerations that we attend to. The defender of Psychologism might admit that in perception we attend to the way the world is, but reply that our reasons are not necessarily the considerations we are attending to. She might claim, e.g., that even though John is attending to the fact that the baby is crying, he is “implicitly” relying on his experience as the basis for his belief. It is very difficult, however, to make this position plausible. It may be that subjects rely on the fact that they are experiencing something in order to take what they experience as grounds for belief, but that is not enough to help Psychologism. What the defender of Psychologism must claim, in addition, is that subjects base their beliefs on (e.g.) the fact that they perceive that *p* to the exclusion of basing their beliefs on the fact that *p*. This is a difficult position to maintain, because the defender of Psychologism needs

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<sup>90</sup> Note that the fact that Dan's experience is illusory is not essential to it's being opaque. We can imagine that unbeknownst to him his daughter survived and he really is hearing her crying. Nonetheless he could take the fact that he is having such an experience to be reason for believing that her death has left him grief stricken.

not just the claim that John implicitly bases his belief on the fact that he perceives that the baby is crying, even though he doesn't self-consciously attend to his perceiving, but also that he *doesn't* base his belief on what he *does* attend to (the way the world is). If John can hear the baby, and can hear that the baby is crying, and can attend to the fact that the baby is crying, why couldn't he base his belief on that fact?

These remarks illustrate how difficult it is to deny that there is any special relation between a subject's reasons and what she attends to (i.e., to deny premise (1)). Intuitively, the subject's reasons are the considerations she takes to speak in favor of her belief; they are the considerations that, from the first-person perspective, she was guided by when she formed her belief. When she deliberates over what to believe, for example, the considerations she is deliberating over are potential reasons for belief. So understood reasons are psychologically real for the subject: reasons are often things we attend to and mull over, weigh the worth of or analyze the implications of. From the first-person perspective, however, we are normally concerned with the world around us and not just with ourselves. This response admits that John can hear the baby, and can hear that the baby is crying, and can attend to the fact that the baby is crying (and unless it denies premise (i) of the Argument from Factual Reasons it admits that the fact that the baby is crying is a good reason for believing that the baby is hungry). Why then couldn't he base his belief on that fact? It is an irony that many philosophers who endorse Psychologism, and thus hold that subjects cannot base their beliefs on the facts, claim that they are prioritizing the subject's perspective.<sup>91</sup> What we can see, I think, is that denying premise (1) greatly distorts that perspective.<sup>92</sup>

A second reply to the Argument from Reasons Transparency is to deny premise (2) and hold that in normal cases of successful perception we don't attend to ways the world is around us. What is problematic about this reply is that, seemingly, the only way to make it work is to hold that the direct objects of perception are not normal physical objects of the world around us, but rather mind-dependent sense-data. That is because if we admit that we directly see and hear tables, chairs, bottles, and babies, it is hard to deny that we can attend to the ways that tables, chairs, bottles, and babies are. If I can see and hear the baby crying, how could I not attend to the fact that she is crying? *Prima facie*, the clearest reason why I couldn't attend to that fact is that I don't even see or hear the baby: I just see and hear mind-dependent sense-data. If that is right then this reply would commit the defender of Psychologism to a very controversial and problematic theory of perception that

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<sup>91</sup> E.g., Audi (1986) and Bonjour (1985, 2003).

<sup>92</sup> For a helpful discussion of how reasons are constrained by considerations of deliberation and perception see Ginsborg (2006), who discusses a notion of reasons as facts.



virtually no contemporary philosopher is attracted to.<sup>93</sup> A sense-data theory of perception has a difficult time accounting for (*inter alia*) both the phenomenology of perception (the fact that it seems, intuitively, that we see and hear mind-independent objects) and the epistemology of perception (how experience provides reasons for holding beliefs about the world around us), and therefore I consider this too costly a reply to the Argument from Reasons Transparency.

A third, and more attractive, reply to the argument can be made by defender of the content psychologism who identifies facts and true propositions. This defender of content psychologism can admit that in normal cases of perception John attends to the fact that the baby is crying. When John hears that the baby is crying, he is in some experiential state, and it is the content of that state that is his reason when he comes to believe that the baby is hungry. This view can recognize the critical difference between John and Dan: the content of John's experience is non-psychological, while what justifies Dan is the content of a second-order state he is in (that he is having an experience as of his daughter crying). Content psychologism can recognize the fact that John takes something non-psychological to be grounds for belief, because the content of John's state is non-psychological in subject matter. The content of the state that justifies Dan, by contrast, is psychological in subject matter.

If we focus on good cases, as I did in the argument above, then this version of Psychologism can simply agree with the conclusion that in normal cases of successful perception subjects base their beliefs on facts of the world around them. This result confirms one point of the previous section: that the version of content psychologism that identifies facts and true propositions offers the most promising version of Psychologism. Since other versions of Psychologism must deny one of the two premises of the Argument from Reasons Transparency, they incur significant cost that this version does not. It can agree with the Factualist that John and Dan both base their beliefs on facts, since they are both basing their beliefs on true propositions that experience gives them access to. John attends to, and bases his belief on, a fact of the world around him (that the baby is crying), while Dan bases his belief on a fact about himself (that he is having an experience as of his daughter crying). This version of Psychologism can therefore capture the intuitive difference between John and Dan, and can recognize that in good cases we attend to, and deliberate about, facts of the world around us. That makes it a much more plausible view than the alternatives.

The above discussion might suggest that the version of content psychologism that identifies facts and true propositions can do just as good a job as Factualism at making sense of the first-person perspective (*viz.*, Deliberative and Perceptual Transparency). Indeed, when we also consider bad cases, one might think that this version of content psychologism does a better job than Factualism at

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<sup>93</sup> The main exception being Robinson (1994).

making sense of that perspective. In a bad case, John does not attend to the fact that the baby is crying, because there is no such fact. Nonetheless John would say that his reason is that the baby is crying, and this version of Psychologism can hold that he is right. In this case his reason is the (false) proposition that the baby is crying. Factualism, by contrast, must hold that John is mistaken about what his reason is, since it must identify some other fact as his reason, some fact which does obtain in the bad case.

Bad cases, and Factualist theories of bad cases, will be given fuller discussion in Section 4.6 below, when we consider arguments for Psychologism. The point I want to make here is that this version of Psychologism does not in fact offer a superior, or even plausible, view of the transparency phenomena we have been examining. This version of Psychologism holds that John is right that his reason is the proposition that the baby is crying regardless of whether John is in a good case or bad case, but despite its initial appeal that view conflicts with how subjects retrospectively understand their own deliberations. Once John learns that he was the victim of an illusion, he would not say that his reason was that the baby is crying. He would say that he only thought that that was his reason, but in fact it wasn't. Instead he might explain why he believed that the baby was hungry by saying that he believed that the baby was crying (or that he heard his neighbor's baby crying, etc.). As we will see below, that sort of evidence is commonly cited in favor of a *different* version of Psychologism (state psychologism). As I will later argue, we do not have to take this evidence for state psychologism at face value, but it is nonetheless true that there is no available content-psychological story of retrospective bad cases that can make sense of how subjects understand their own deliberations. The result is that no version of Psychologism can make satisfactory sense of deliberation and perception.<sup>94</sup>

#### 4.4 Reasons and truth

The final consideration that favors Factualism over Psychologism derives from the two demands we examined in the previous chapters: the demand of reasons and the demand of truth. The basic idea is that both demands are intuitively compelling, but on any version of Psychologism they are incompatible. The defender of Psychologism, therefore, faces the cost of having to deny either the

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<sup>94</sup> The defender of content psychologism could maintain that in the retrospective bad case when John says that the reason why he believed that the baby is hungry is that he believed that the baby is crying, his reference to his belief can be read as an oblique reference to the *content* of that belief. That claim would then have to explain the odd fact that John's reason is the same proposition in good and bad cases but he cannot refer to that reason in the same way in the two cases. (Notice that no pragmatic explanation is possible here.)

demand of reasons or the demand of truth. Factualism, however, is compatible with both of them and therefore offers a more attractive theory.

Since it emerged from the previous two sections that the strongest version of Psychologism is the version of content psychologism that identifies facts and true propositions, I will focus this discussion on that view. That view was attractive because it could make sense of our ordinary talk of facts as reasons for belief, and it could agree that in normal cases of perception we base our beliefs on the facts. A critical contrast between this view and Factualism, though, emerges when we consider the relation between reasons and truth. Say the advocate of content psychologism agrees that justification is a matter of the subject's reasons for belief: for a belief to be justified is for it to be held for sufficiently good reasons.<sup>95</sup> It is true that according to such a view we can base our beliefs on the facts, and thus in a sense our beliefs are justified on the basis of the facts. But since the subject's reasons are determined just by her non-factive mental states, the facts are not actually contributing to her justification – she would have the exact same reason, and be identically justified, no matter what the facts around her are like. Since this view subscribes to the demand of reasons and Psychologism, it cannot respect the intuitive thought that justification makes our beliefs objectively likely to be true (i.e., it cannot respect the demand of truth).

The problem is that factivity does matter to our reasons: we talk of facts being reasons, and we care about basing our beliefs on the facts, precisely because the fact that they are facts matters. The natural thought here is that the facts justify us because they connect our beliefs to the world. According to the version of content psychologism under discussion, however, any connection between our reasons and the world is coincidental and irrelevant to our reasons. When the propositions we base our beliefs on are true the defender of content psychologism can call them facts, but in a sense that is a hollow victory: we do not have good reasons for belief *because* they are facts. That they are facts is irrelevant to our reasons and thus also irrelevant to the justification we have for our beliefs based on reasons. That seems contrary to the reason why we are concerned to base our beliefs on the facts in the first place: we want the world to inform our beliefs.<sup>96</sup> Consequently this version of Psychologism will face all of the problems that externalists have leveled against internalists (as in Chapter 3).<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> The intuitive idea behind the demand of reasons.

<sup>96</sup> Not just to be the cause of our beliefs, to invoke a theme from Sellars (1956) and McDowell (1994).

<sup>97</sup> Or the defender of Psychologism would have to deny the demand of reasons, and face all of the objections we saw internalists level at externalists in Chapter 2. Note that Factualism is not the only view that can respect both the demand of reasons and the demand of truth, and thus it is not the only view supported by this argument based on those demands. Alternatives to Factualism are discussed in Chapter 5.

Even though the defender of content psychologism who identifies facts and true propositions can make her view sound like Factualism, by talking about facts as reasons for belief, she cannot make sense of why we are concerned to base our beliefs on the facts. That is, she cannot account for the relation between one's reasons and truth.

## 4.5 The Case for Psychologism

Thus far I have presented the case for Factualism over Psychologism. That one-sided picture now needs to be balanced by examining the considerations philosophers have cited in favor of Psychologism. In this section I examine arguments that philosophers have given for Psychologism that do not focus on bad cases (cases in which subjects are mistaken about the facts), and then in the next section I examine the most serious challenge to Factualism, arguments that do focus on bad cases.

### 4.5.1 Guiding vs. explanatory reasons

The simplest reason one might have for advocating Psychologism is that we commonly talk of beliefs and experiences being reasons for belief. Since we talk that way all the time, we might think that it is just a bit of common sense that a subject's reasons are determined entirely by her psychological state. Armstrong, for example, has this to say about reasons for belief:

Does this mean that A's reason for believing that  $p$  is his belief that  $q$ ? Is my reason for believing Jim is dead my belief that he has been decapitated? It seems that we sometimes speak in this way, but certainly we do not always do so. Very often, at least, what is called my reason is not my belief-state, but what I believe: the proposition 'that Jim has been decapitated'. The proposition is called my reason because I believe it, but, very often, it is the proposition to which the word 'reason' attaches. (Armstrong 1973: 78)

Here Armstrong observes that we often call beliefs reasons, and that we also call propositions ("what is believed") a subject's reasons. Notice that both of these ways of talking could be cited in support of Psychologism: the former would be *prima facie* evidence for state psychologism, and the latter would be *prima facie* evidence for content psychologism. If Armstrong is right, Psychologism might be well supported by ordinary linguistic evidence and common sense.

Let's start with Armstrong's first claim. It is true that we sometimes talk of beliefs being reasons. E.g., we often say things like

- (1) The reason that John believes that the baby is hungry is that he believes that it is crying,

or

- (2) John believes that the baby is hungry because he believes that it is crying,

where this “because” clearly cites a reason (in some sense). Here we have two cases of citing beliefs as reasons, both of which are natural, commonsense claims. But (1) and (2) do not give support to Psychologism, for we must distinguish two different ways that we talk about reasons for belief. Sometimes we talk of reasons for belief from the perspective of the believer: the grounds she takes to support her belief; the grounds for which she holds her belief. When a subject takes a consideration to count in favor of believing that *p*, and thereby forms the belief that *p* on that basis, then that consideration becomes the *subject’s* reason for her belief. John takes the fact that the baby is crying to be a reason for believing that it is hungry, and he forms his belief on that basis. That fact is thereby *John’s* reason. When we talk of reasons in this way I will call them guiding reasons, since in a sense they are the considerations that guided the subject to believe as she does.<sup>98</sup>

As I have been discussing a subject’s reasons for belief throughout this dissertation I have been talking about reasons in the guiding way. But that is not the only common way of talking about reasons. Sometimes we talk about the reasons *why* someone believes as he does, where we are not concerned with the considerations he took to count in favor of holding his belief. For example, say that John’s baby doesn’t always cry when it’s hungry; sometimes the baby doesn’t “notice” the hunger. But when it hears the door open it “thinks” of mom, and that makes the baby “notice” its hunger and start crying. We could then say that the reason why John believes that the baby is hungry is that the door opened. That fact explains why he believes as he does; it was a cause of his belief. But John did not take that fact to count in favor of believing that the baby is hungry. *His* reason is that the baby is crying. I will call any reasons that in some sense or other explain why a subject holds a belief explanatory reasons. Sometimes the kind of explanation

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<sup>98</sup> Cf. Dancy (2000) on motivating reasons: “When someone does something, there will (normally) be some considerations in the light of which he acted – the reasons for which he did what he did. [...] When we think in terms of reasons in this way, we think of them as *motivating*” (2000: 1). I am formulating the notion of guiding reasons as a parallel to the notion of motivating reasons (for action). Other epistemologists who give a prominent role to reasons for belief and use the terminology of “guiding” and “the light in which”, though not necessarily in the same sense I do, are Alston (1988) and Audi (1986).

invoked concerns the subject's guiding reasons. John's guiding reason, e.g., is also explanatory.<sup>99</sup> He believes as he does because the door opened, but he also believes as he does because the baby is crying. Not every reason why a subject believes something, though, is a reason for which she believes it. There are different kinds of reasons-explanations (that is, different from explanations invoking guiding reasons), and hence not all explanatory reasons are guiding.

Now return to the two examples that putatively support Psychologism.

- (1) The reason that John believes that the baby is hungry is that he believes it is crying.
- (2) John believes that the baby is hungry because he believes that it is crying.

These are both clearly claims about explanatory reasons, but neither is clearly a claim about guiding reasons. We can grant that (1) and (2) are correct psychological explanations of John's belief; i.e., grant that the reason why John believes that the baby is hungry is that he believes it is crying. The truth of that psychological explanation does not entail that John took the fact that he believes the baby is crying to be a consideration that counts in favor of believing that the baby is hungry. It is perfectly consistent with (1) and (2) that John took the fact that the baby is crying to be a reason for believing that the baby is hungry. So the existence of psychological explanations does not show that non-psychological considerations cannot be a subject's guiding reasons. To simply take (1) and (2) to support Psychologism would be to confuse guiding and explanatory reasons. Furthermore, Armstrong seems to think that if we asked someone what her reason is for believing that Jim is dead she would often say, "My reason is my belief that he has been decapitated." But that is clearly wrong. We almost never cite beliefs as reasons in this way. Normally a subject would just say, "My reason is that he has been decapitated," not making any reference to her own psychology. It is therefore unclear whether there is good linguistic evidence for state psychologism of the form noted by Armstrong.<sup>100</sup>

Armstrong secondly claims that it is a natural way of talking to say that propositions are a subject's reasons for belief. Armstrong seems to think that if we ask someone what her reason is for believing that Jim is dead she will often say, "My reason is the proposition 'that Jim has been decapitated.'" Now, this is also surely wrong. In ordinary life we don't refer to propositions when asked for our reasons. As we just observed, what our subject would say is, "Jim has been decapitated."

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<sup>99</sup> One could argue that a subject's guiding reasons are always explanatory. Audi argues this in Audi 1986; Swain argues for something similar in Swain 1981. Lehrer (1990: 168-171) denies that a subject's reasons are always explanatory.

<sup>100</sup> In Section 4.5.2 I discuss cases in which it is in fact more natural to refer to the subject's psychological states.

Similarly, if we ask John what his reason for believing that the baby is hungry is, he would say:

(3) The baby is crying.

He would never say:

(4) The proposition that the baby is crying.

Contrary to what Armstrong claims, our ordinary talk of reasons does not offer *prima facie* support to Psychologism, because the most natural reading of (3) is that it cites something that is the case, a fact: it is a fact that the baby is crying, and that fact is John's reason for believing that the baby is hungry.

The defender of Psychologism, however, needn't accept this claim without objection. He might claim that when John cites his reason in (3) as "the baby is crying", what he is citing is the content of one of his psychological states. That content is his reason. The key question, then, is what the status of "the baby is crying" is in (3). We often cite reasons with that-clauses. John's reason is *that the baby is crying*. As philosophers know, however, that-clauses are propositions. So the defender of Psychologism could make the following argument:

#### **The Basic Argument for Content Psychologism**

1. John's reason is that the baby is crying.
  2. That the baby is crying is a proposition.
- Hence,
3. John's reason is a proposition.

This argument, however, is problematic. Is the that-clause being used in the first premise a proposition or a fact? The simplest reply to make to the defender of content psychologism is that he has not shown that

(5) John's reason is the proposition that the baby is crying

is the correct nominalization of the that-clause in the first premise rather than

(6) John's reason is the fact that the baby is crying.

But more can be said. As discussed in Section 4.2, (5) is infelicitous; there is no linguistic evidence for talk of propositions as reasons. But (6) is perfectly natural –

we talk of facts being reasons all the time. If we reflect on the linguistic evidence<sup>101</sup>, all of the following claims are natural:

- (7) The fact that the bloody knife was found in Jack's apartment is a reason for believing that Jack is the murderer.
- (8) The fact that the strangers have dark skin is Northrop's reason for believing that they are terrorists.
- (9) A reason to reach out your hand is the fact that the child is drowning.
- (10) The fact that you believe the child is drowning is a reason to reach out your hand.
- (11) John based his belief on the fact that the baby is crying.

By contrast, none of the following is felicitous:

- (7\*) #The proposition that the bloody knife was found in Jack's apartment is a reason for believing that Jack is the murderer.
- (8\*) #The proposition that the strangers have dark skin is Northrop's reason for believing that they are terrorists.
- (9\*) #A reason to reach out your hand is the proposition that the child is drowning.
- (10\*) #The proposition that you believe the child is drowning is a reason to reach out your hand.
- (11\*) #John based his belief on the proposition that the baby is crying.

The linguistic evidence therefore strongly counts for the nominalization with “the fact” and not “the proposition.” When John cites his reason as “the baby is crying,” the correct paraphrase is (6) and not (5).

This observation helps us see that the problem with the Basic Argument is that it equivocates on “that the baby is crying” in a way that corresponds to two different nominalizations. The that-clause in the first premise picks out a certain fact (the fact that the baby is crying), while the that-clause in the second premise picks out a proposition (the proposition that the baby is crying). This equivocation corresponds to a well-known confusion: the confusion of use and mention. The first premise *uses* a proposition to specify John's reason, but that doesn't mean that what he refers to is a proposition. We can use propositions to refer to facts. The second premise, by contrast, involves a mentioning of a that-clause: it is a claim about ‘that the baby is crying’, not a claim about the baby crying.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Again, since the same point was made in Section 4.2.

<sup>102</sup> Note that even if we grant that the correct semantics of sentences or utterances including that-clauses is always captured by a proposition, that would show that the



If that is right, the *prima facie* case for state psychologism relies on a guiding-explanatory confusion, and the *prima facie* case for content psychologism relies on a use-mention confusion. Contrary to Armstrong, ordinary linguistic evidence shows that Factualism is a natural way of speaking.<sup>103</sup> Armstrong is not alone, however. The idea underlying the Basic Argument seems to be responsible for many philosophers' advocacy of content psychologism. For example, Audi is a clear advocate of content psychologism, and when he advances examples of subjects believing things for reasons nearly all of the examples he uses are non-psychological. Take this passage, e.g.:

Consider *S*'s believing that his brakes are worn, for the reason that they squeak. Unlike, say, the belief that there is something rectangular before me, this belief might be called inferential. But if we call it that, we must not assume that it is produced by *inference*, understood generically as a process of passing from one or more premises to a conclusion. *S* might simply note the squeak and, having a standing belief that squeaky brakes are worn, form the belief that his brakes are worn. (Audi 1986: 237-38)<sup>104</sup>

In Audi's example, the subject's reason is *that the breaks squeak*. Given that Audi thinks that his reason is a proposition, Audi must think that this that-clause picks out a proposition. But that does not follow. It is highly infelicitous to say:

(12) #*S*'s reason is the proposition that the brakes squeak.

Rather,

(13) *S*'s reason is the fact that the breaks squeak.

To see the oddity of Audi's view, imagine the subject talking herself through her thought process *sotto voce*. She wouldn't say: there is a proposition 'the breaks squeak' – so my brakes must be worn. Rather, she would say: *the breaks squeak* (i.e., *it is the case that the breaks squeak*) – so they must be worn. That the breaks squeak is something that is the case, and that is what she bases her belief on. As Audi says, our subject notes the squeak; what she notes is *that it is the case that the breaks squeak*.

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*semantic value* of that-clauses (even in "the fact that *p*") is always a proposition. But that semantic claim is no help to Psychologism.

<sup>103</sup> Note that by saying that Factualism is a natural way of speaking, I am not saying that we never cite beliefs and experiences as guiding reasons. Factualism claims that one's guiding reasons aren't always one's beliefs and experiences: sometimes they are non-psychological facts.

<sup>104</sup> Also see Audi 1986: 235-236, and 251.

She doesn't note the proposition that the breaks squeak. Audi's use of this example only makes sense if he thinks that because we use that-clauses to refer to our reasons ("S's reason is that the breaks squeak"), those reasons must be propositions. As I have argued, however, this is a claim we can easily resist.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Williamson might seem to be the clearest case of a philosopher who advances an analogue of the Basic Argument, since he argues (Williamson 1997, 2000) that one's evidence justifies one and one's evidence is a certain set of propositions, the propositions one knows. Consider this passage, e.g.:

What is it for evidence to be propositional? The idea is that we should be able to refer to evidence using "that" clauses. My evidence for the conclusion that the house was empty is *that* is was silent, *that* no lights were on in the evening, *that* the telephone went unanswered, [...] For simplicity, "that" clauses (including "that") are treated as referring to abstract objects: propositions. Which propositions such a clause refers to may depend on context. Propositions are the objects of propositional attitudes, such as knowledge and belief; they can be true or false. One's evidence is propositional just in case it is a set of propositions. (Williamson 1997: 724-25)

On the face of it this argument looks very similar to what I have been calling the Basic Argument. The crucial two sentences for interpreting this passage, however, appear in a footnote to the sentence in which Williamson says that that-clauses refer to abstract objects, propositions. In the footnote he says: "On alternative views of 'that' clauses, they sometimes refer to facts rather than propositions, or never refer at all. The arguments of this paper can be adapted to such frameworks" (Williamson 1997: 725). As I read him, what this footnote reveals is that Williamson is concerned to argue that evidence is referred to with that-clauses (as he claims in the second sentence of the block quote) and whether that means that evidence is a set of propositions or facts is only of secondary importance to him. Williamson calls them propositions ("for simplicity"), but the footnote indicates that he would be just as happy calling them facts. Thus Williamson is not concerned to argue for an analogue of the Basic Argument. In fact, Williamson could endorse a version of Factualism, as I will discuss in Chapter 5. He could hold that all and only facts could be reasons, and in order for a fact to be one's reason one must know that it is the case. Note that in places Williamson even tends toward a Factualist way of putting his claims. He says things like: "E = K implies that underdetermination theses of the relevant kind must count all knowable facts as data" (Williamson 1997: 721). So although Williamson looks like a philosopher who endorses something like the Basic Argument, because of his footnote I think it is better to interpret his view as compatible with Factualism.

## 4.5.2 Chisholm and appropriateness

According to Factualism we can base beliefs on the way we observe the world to be. John observes the baby crying and bases his belief that it is hungry on the fact that it is crying. The way the world is is his reason. Notice that in this example there is a difference in content between the fact that is his reason and the belief based on that fact: schematically, the fact that  $p$  is John's reason for believing that  $q$ . The Factualist, however, might hold that sometimes there is no such difference in content: sometimes that fact that  $p$  is one's reason for believing that  $p$ . Let's call such cases instances of "duplicate reasons". For example, the Factualist might claim that John observes the baby crying and forms the belief that the baby is crying on the basis of what he sees: the fact that the baby is crying is his reason for believing that the baby is crying.

Chisholm has argued that such cases are not possible: non-psychological considerations cannot "directly"<sup>106</sup> justify us in this way. If his argument is correct, then it wouldn't show that Factualism in general is false, but it would show that for a certain range of cases our reasons cannot be non-psychological facts.<sup>107</sup> The critical question is this: what reason does Chisholm give us for thinking that only psychological facts can figure in "direct" justification? Consider this passage from Chisholm 1977.<sup>108</sup>

Our man has stated his justification for a proposition merely by reiterating that proposition. This type of justification is *not* appropriate to the questions that were previously discussed. Thus, in answer to "What justification do you have for counting it as evident that there can be no life on the moon?" it would be inappropriate – and presumptuous – simply to reiterate, "There can be no life on the moon." But we can state our justification for certain propositions about our *beliefs*, and certain propositions about our thoughts, merely by reiterating those propositions. They may be said, therefore, to pertain to what is directly evident. (Chisholm 1977: 21)

Chisholm's claim is that only when  $p$  concerns the subject's psychology can an instance of his schema for "direct" justification be correct: what justifies me in thinking that  $p$  is simply the fact that  $p$ . He thinks non-psychological instances would be false because it would be "inappropriate" and "presumptuous" to reiterate,

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<sup>106</sup> Chisholm uses the word "direct" justification for what I am calling duplicate reasons.

<sup>107</sup> This type of case, involving duplicate reasons, will play an important role in Chapter 5. Chisholm's argument is therefore not just an idle curiosity.

<sup>108</sup> In order to avoid unnecessary discussion of Chisholm's terminology I am treating "evident" roughly as "justified by evidence or reasons".

“There can be no life on the moon.” Similarly, Chisholm would say the same thing about John: it is false that what justifies John in thinking that the baby is crying is simply the fact that the baby is crying. Given that what justifies John is his reason, that is tantamount to claiming that the fact that the baby is crying cannot be John’s reason for belief.

The obvious problem with this argument is the fact that in our post-Gricean environment we should be very careful about inferring that something is false from the fact that it is “inappropriate” to say. Grice posited that conversation is governed by rules that make conversation a meaningful and productive affair.<sup>109</sup> In conversation there is a basic presumption that what we say will be relevant, convey an appropriate degree of specificity, etc. When a subject in conversation says something that strikes us as inappropriate, then one of two things might have happened: (i) what the subject said is false, or (ii) the subject violated one or more conversational maxims. Thus it doesn’t follow from the fact that, in certain circumstances, it would be inappropriate to say that what justifies me in thinking that there can be no life on the moon is simply the fact that there can be no life on the moon that that fact isn’t what justifies me (i.e., isn’t my reason for belief).

This Gricean response to Chisholm can be made more precise. One of Grice’s conversational maxims was the maxim of Quantity, which demands that one be as informative as the situation demands. Now consider the following setup. Joe believes that there could be no life on the moon and he just said as much to Mary. Mary, however, responds with a thorough scientific exposition as to why, contrary to common opinion, life on the moon is possible and why many people hold the mistaken impression that it is not. Joe then asserts that she is wrong – he asserts flatly that there can be no life on the moon. Mary then challenges his assertion – she wants to know the basis for his claim, since she just gave an elaborate and detailed account of why life is possible and why people who commonly don’t think so are mistaken. In this situation Mary already knows that Joe believes that there can be no life on the moon. So if Joe merely repeats his claim as his basis – that is, if he replies, “Because it’s a fact that there can be no life on the moon” – then he is not really meeting Mary’s challenge. Simply repeating what he has already said does not further the conversation. On one way of thinking about it, what Mary wants is an explanation of how he could be entitled to that bit of knowledge, even if he does hold that belief on that basis. For example, she wants an explanation of why his reasoning does not fit the pattern which she just explained offers only specious grounds for believing that there can be no life on the moon. In order to properly cooperate in this conversation Joe needs to appeal to further considerations that bear on either Mary’s claims or his original claim. But that fact, the fact that Joe must

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<sup>109</sup> For Grice’s theory of conversational implicature see Grice (1975). The remarks I make could be adapted to other theories of conversation as well (e.g., Stalnaker 1978).

appeal to further considerations and not just repeat himself, does not show that what he said is false. It may be true, but it violates the cooperative principle that governs conversation. Thus Chisholm's argument from the inappropriateness of a claim to the falsity of the claim is faulty.

Although Chisholm's argument is unconvincing, it highlights an important aspect of the case for Psychologism: when talking of reasons there are certain situations in which referring to the subject's psychology is more natural than referring to non-psychological facts. Chisholm's argument, for example, is related to the contrast between dialogues of this type:

**Dialogue#1**

A: What is your reason for believing that the baby is crying?

B: It is crying.

**Dialogue #2**

A: What is your reason for believing that the baby is crying?

B: I can see that it is.

Dialogue #2 is certainly more natural than #1, though, as we said, that does not make it a good argument for Psychologism: there seems to be a clear pragmatic explanation for this difference. In addition to this type of example, retrospective cases form another important class of cases in which we naturally refer to the subject's psychology. Let's say, for example, that John later learns that the baby was not in fact crying. Then he can't say, "My reason for believing that it was hungry was the fact that it was crying." But he might naturally say, "Well, I believed it was crying."

These sorts of examples, however, offer no better argument for Psychologism than Chisholm's. Two points could be made. First, John's reference to his past beliefs is most naturally read as exculpatory: as explaining why he believed as he did. But that does not mean that at the earlier time he took the fact that he believed the baby was crying to be his reason for believing that it was hungry.<sup>110</sup> Second, even if we grant that in this sort of case (in which the subject had mistaken beliefs) the subject's reasons are psychological, that would not show that in good cases (in which subjects are not mistaken) his reasons must also be psychological. (Bad cases are treated in more detail in the next section.) I conclude, therefore, that the arguments for Psychologism based on conversational inappropriateness, such as Chisholm's, are unsuccessful.

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<sup>110</sup> Cf. the response to Armstrong above and the distinction between guiding and explanatory reasons.

### 4.5.3 Pollock and Cruz and causation

In their 1999 book Pollock and Cruz argue for the claim that justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive psychology (or, as they put it, by the subject's "internal states"). According to Pollock and Cruz, when a subject forms a belief she is guided by certain norms or cognitive rules of the form "Believe that  $p$  when  $X$ ," and they argue that the considerations cited in " $X$ " can only concern the subject's psychology. Thus John cannot be guided by the norm "Believe that the baby is hungry when it is crying in a certain way." Rather, he is being guided by the norm "Believe that the baby is hungry when you *believe* that it is crying in a certain way." Now if the Access Condition holds, there will always be psychological considerations causally upstream from non-psychological explanations of the subject's belief. If what Pollock and Cruz say is correct, then facts about the nature of epistemic norms would entail that only these psychological considerations could properly figure in epistemic norms and thus be the subject's reasons for belief.

What, then, is the argument that epistemic norms are as Pollock and Cruz claim? They hold that epistemic norms must be "internalist" because they must enable "our cognitive system to follow them in an automatic way without our having to think about them" (Pollock and Cruz 1999: 132). E.g., in riding a bike we cannot follow the norm "Turn the handlebars to the right when the bike leans to the right"; rather we can only follow the norm "Turn the handlebars to the right when you think the bike leans to the right", because

The automatic processing systems implemented in our neurology do not have access to whether the bicycle is leaning to the right. What they do have access to are things like our *thinking* that the bicycle is leaning to the right, and certain balance sensations emanating from our inner ear. What we learn is (roughly) to turn the handlebars to the right if we either experience those balance sensations or think on some other basis that the bicycle is leaning to the right. (Pollock and Cruz 1999: 132)

There are two reasons why this argument is unconvincing. One is that Pollock and Cruz conflate personal and subpersonal levels in a problematic way. They first say that our subpersonal processing systems only have access to certain information, and they conclude that what we (persons) learn to base our reactions on is therefore restricted to that information. Grant for the moment that certain modules of our subpersonal processing only have access to our psychological states – it simply does not follow that the norms that we are being guided by on the personal level concern only those psychological states. If we ask John why he formed his belief, he would say, "Because the baby is crying." John would say, if we forced him to verbalize it, that he is following the rule "Believe that he baby is hungry when it cries in that way." Pollock and Cruz maintain that it is simply

impossible for John the person to follow this rule just because one of his subpersonal modules only processes information about his psychological states. As normal epistemic agents, however, we can immediately know that that is wrong: on the personal level we are engaged with ways the world is, regardless of whether certain subpersonal modules of us are only engaged with ways our psychology is. The second reason why Pollock and Cruz's argument is unconvincing, though, is that we should not grant in the first place that our cognitive subpersonal modules can only respond to our psychological states. The subpersonal story is an empirical matter of cognitive science, psychology, and neurophysiology, and while some traditional cognitive theories would substantiate Pollock and Cruz's claims, much current research would not.<sup>111</sup> Thus their argument relies on dubious empirical claims that we ought not grant. Thus Pollock and Cruz give us no reason for thinking that only psychological considerations can be a subject's reasons.

#### 4.6 Bad cases

I have thus far indicated why Factualism is compelling, and why some common arguments do not cast any doubt on the view. The greatest challenge for the view, however, concerns "bad cases", cases in which things are not as the subject takes them to be.<sup>112</sup> I have said that John's reason for believing that the baby is hungry is the fact that the baby is crying in a certain way. But what if there is no such fact; what if John is having an illusory or hallucinatory experience, or he just isn't paying attention closely? Does that mean that John has no reason for his belief? What does Factualism say about cases like these? If Factualism has no plausible story to tell about such cases that would constitute a serious objection to the view.

It is helpful at this point to compare this objection to Factualism with a well-known argument for internalism: the "new evil demon" problem for externalism. As originally stated, the problem maintains that process reliabilism is false because it entails that evil-demon victims do not have justified beliefs (since their beliefs are the result of an unreliable process).<sup>113</sup> Since we think evil-demon victims could have justified beliefs, process reliabilism faces intuitive cost. Since we also think that subjects in bad cases in general (not just evil-demon victims) could have good reasons for belief, Factualism faces intuitive cost as well – unless it can tell a plausible story about what subjects' reasons are in bad cases.

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<sup>111</sup> For a review of relevant literature see Thagard (2010).

<sup>112</sup> I am assuming bad cases are subjectively indistinguishable from good cases, though it is difficult to spell out fully what that comes to. For discussion see Byrne and Logue (2008) and Williamson (2000).

<sup>113</sup> The classical sources of this objection are Lehrer and Cohen (1983), Cohen (1984), and Luper-Foy (1985).

Following this comparison with the new evil demon problem, it is important to mention one possible Factualist view of bad cases: that John has no reason at all when he hallucinates (he just thinks he has a reason for belief).<sup>114</sup> There is something attractive about the austerity of this view of reasons, but I think it comes at significant cost. There are at least two reasons why it is counterintuitive to hold that hallucinating subjects have no reason at all for their beliefs. First, we can give important rational explanations of why they believe and act as they do. When John has a hallucination of the baby crying we can explain why he forms the belief that the baby is hungry and why he goes to the refrigerator to make up a bottle. These explanations aren't merely causal explanations of John's beliefs and actions – they seem to make his behavior intelligible to us on a rational, personal level. The most natural explanation of why they do so is that they involve reasons he has for believing and acting.<sup>115</sup> Second, it seems that in at least many cases the beliefs that subjects form in hallucination are justified. It would be very difficult, however, for the no-reasons Factualist to agree. Perhaps not all of our beliefs are justified on the basis of reasons, but it seems that a belief like John's (that the baby is hungry) is the sort of belief that we need good reasons to hold in order to be justified. The Factualist, then, would simply have to accept the cost of denying John any justification. That is, the Factualist would face the exact problem (the new evil demon problem) that internalists have leveled against process reliabilism.

At this point it is worth recalling the Argument from Factual Reasons. That argument held that we have a normal way of talking about reasons such that facts of the world around us are good reasons for belief. It would be a mark against any view that held that this ordinary notion of reasons is mistaken, but if Factualism also has significant intuitive costs (such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph), then the opponent of Factualism could simply argue that her view is no more, and maybe even less, costly than Factualism. Thus if the Factualist wishes to maintain the integrity of the Argument from Factual Reasons, this discussion highlights two constraints on her theory of bad cases (covering both illusion and hallucination): (1) in bad cases subjects actually have some reasons for belief, and (2) those reasons are good enough, at least in many cases, to justify their beliefs (the Factualist would then avoid the new evil demon problem).

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<sup>114</sup> Of course, there will be a reason *why* John believes as he does, but not all reasons why subjects believe things are the subjects' reasons for believing them (the guiding-explanatory distinction of 4.5).

<sup>115</sup> Although this explanation is the most natural, it is far from compulsory. Perhaps the norms of rationality are distinct from the norms of reason, or perhaps there are no norms of rationality and an error theory correctly explains why we think that subjects are violating the supposed norms of rationality. For discussion see Kolodny (2005, 2007, and 2008).



A second view of bad cases the Factualist might endorse is that one's reasons in bad cases are always psychological. In the bad case, the Factualist might say that John's reason is the fact that he is having an experience as of the baby crying. In effect, the Factualist might simply claim that in bad cases he adopts the exact same view of reasons as state psychologism, while in good cases he maintains that our reasons can be non-psychological facts. Let's call this hybrid sort of view Mixed Factualism. I think this solution is also unsatisfactory for Factualism. Notice that the defender of state psychologism cannot object that the Factualist has identified the wrong thing in the bad case as John's reason. The Factualist is just mirroring the view of state psychologism in bad cases, so that cannot be what is problematic about this solution according to his opponent. The real problem is that the mixed view of reasons seems inconsistent with the motivations for Factualism. Recall that part of the motivation for Factualism is that John in the good case does not attend to his own psychological states when he forms his belief – he attends to, and responds to, the way the world is as he forms his belief. John in the bad case, however, does – or at least attempts to do – the exact same thing. At least on the surface, John in the bad case no more attends to his psychological states than John in the good case. So (at least *prima facie*) if the fact that John in the good case does not attend to his own psychological states is a good reason for thinking that his reason is not psychological, then the same should go for John in the bad case.<sup>116</sup>

What this shows, I think, is that if the Factualist is to consistently capitalize on this motivation for his view, then he should hold that when subjects are in bad cases we should not automatically think that their reasons are psychological. I say “automatically” because in some cases we can't avoid identifying one's reasons with psychological facts; but let me first illustrate how it is possible for one's reasons to be non-psychological in a bad case. Say there is a pizza shop that only sells one kind of pizza each day. Rather infrequently the pizza has wild mushrooms on it. Our subject, Alice, loves wild mushroom pizza, and so does her friend Connor. Connor in fact will only eat pizza at this shop when it sells wild mushroom pizza, so whenever Connor is sitting in front of the pizza shop eating pizza it is a wild mushroom day (and Alice knows as much). Now let's say Alice drives by the pizza shop and sees someone who looks just like Connor eating pizza out front. Alice thinks it is Connor, and Alice thinks that what she sees – Connor eating pizza, supposedly – is a good reason for believing that it's a wild mushroom day. Unfortunately for Alice, she is in a bad case. In fact it isn't Connor eating pizza – it's Connor's identical twin brother, whom Alice knows nothing about. So what she takes to be a consideration that speaks in favor of believing that it's a wild mushroom day is no consideration at all. What is the Factualist to say about this case?

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<sup>116</sup> Note that I am not claiming that this objection to Mixed Factualism is conclusive, for I have not ruled out the possibility that it has additional and better motivation.

In order to meet our two constraints the Factualist must say that Alice has some reason for her belief and that that reason justifies her in believing that it's a wild mushroom day. Mixed Factualism would hold that in this case Alice's reason is psychological – the fact that she has an experience as of Connor eating pizza is her reason. What is unsatisfactory about that response, however, is that Alice really is attending to the way the world is when she forms her belief. It so happens that the world is not exactly as she takes it to be, but the world is *partly* as she takes it to be. For example, while it's not the case that Connor is eating pizza out front, it is the case that there is a person qualitatively identical to Connor eating pizza out front. In a sense this latter fact, the fact that there is a person qualitatively identical to Connor eating pizza out front, is a determinable fact of which the fact that Connor is eating pizza out front is one determinate.<sup>117</sup> So while the world is not determinately as she thinks it is, it is determinably so, and that gives us another answer that the Factualist might offer as to what her reason is. On this version, in the bad case her reason is the nearest determinable fact of what her reason would have been in the good case.<sup>118</sup> As such her reason is still non-psychological, so this version of Factualism does not face the objection leveled at the previous one. Alice is attending to the world, and the way the world is is her grounds for belief. It just so happens that the world is not exactly as she takes it to be, but her belief is still based on the way the world is inasmuch as it is the way she takes it to be.

Although this version of Factualism does not face the problem of the previous version, an opponent might still object to it on the following grounds. We are not supposing that Alice thinks about the fact that there is a person qualitatively identical to Connor eating pizza out front. That is, in a sense, too “guarded” a thought. Alice just thinks about the putative fact that Connor is eating pizza out front, and she doesn't worry (normally) about that not being so. The Factualist, then, has identified something as her grounds for belief that she isn't even consciously considering, and that might seem implausible and again in tension with the motivations for Factualism. The reason it shouldn't strike us as implausible and in tension with the motivations for Factualism, however, is that if we asked her whether she believes that there is a person qualitatively identical to Connor eating pizza out front, she would say, “Of course I do – I believe that *Connor* is eating pizza out front.” The determinable belief dispositionally “goes along with” the more

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<sup>117</sup> The determinate-determinable distinction is usually put in terms of properties: the property of being scarlet is a determinate of the determinable property of being red (see Martin 2004). I am assuming that we can use this distinction between determinate and determinable properties to speak of determinate and determinable facts: the fact that a scarf is scarlet is a determinate of the determinable fact that the scarf is red.

<sup>118</sup> I will rely on the reader's intuitive understanding of “nearness” here. See the official statement of the view below.

determinate belief. So even though she's only consciously entertaining the content of the determinate belief, she does hold the determinable belief as well.<sup>119</sup> When Alice attends to the way the world is, in a sense she is aiming her process of belief formation at a target (the way the world is). In this case she overshoots the target, and takes the world to be a determinate way that it is not. But we give her credit for the determinable way the world actually is. When she shoots her reasons-arrow at the target, she doesn't get a reason only if she hits the target exactly, in all its determinacy. Rather, she takes what she can get – she gets as a reason however determinate the world happens to be. We can call this the Take-What-You-Can-Get Principle. The fact that Connor is eating pizza out front is a conclusive reason for believing that it's a wild mushroom day. The fact that there is a person qualitatively identical to Connor eating pizza out front is also a good reason for believing that it's a wild mushroom day, though it's not as good a reason as the former fact.<sup>120</sup> Thus Alice's belief is still justified, but it is not as well justified as it would have been in the good case. Let's call this the Take-Get version of Factualism.

It is important to note that in cases of total hallucination there will be no suitable determinable non-psychological fact. When John, in his sleep-deprived state, has an experience as of his baby crying, and there is simply no fact of the world around him that he is suitably related to, then Take-Get Factualism will collapse into Mixed Factualism. The only available fact is a fact about John: the fact that he seems to see (or hear) his baby crying is his reason for believing that it is hungry. This means that there may be cost to Take-Get Factualism, but I think the cost is much less than the cost to Mixed Factualism. Mixed Factualism is unsatisfactory because in Alice's case the subject really is attending to the world around her and she bases her belief on the way the world is. In claiming that her reason is psychological the mixed view divorces the subject's reasons from the considerations indicated by Deliberative and Perceptual Transparency. In cases of total hallucination, however, we are not attending to the world around us. Rather, we *think* we are attending to the world and basing our beliefs on it, but the tragedy of the situation is that that is a mistake. In such cases there is no world in view for us to base our beliefs on.<sup>121</sup> It is

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<sup>119</sup> Indeed, one could hold that she knows it, so if the Access Condition requires knowledge she can still meet it.

<sup>120</sup> I am assuming that the fact that there is a person qualitatively identical to Connor eating pizza out front is a reason for believing it is a wild mushroom day because it is also a reason for believing that Connor is eating pizza out front (not because the chef is independently prone to make wild mushroom pizza when someone with Connor's look is around). I am also assuming that the Factualist wants to hold that facts in good cases are sometimes better reasons than facts in bad cases (and that therefore subjects in good cases could be better justified in holding their beliefs than subjects in bad cases, even if both are justified *simpliciter*).

<sup>121</sup> McDowell (1982, 1986, 1994).

a consequence of Take-Get Factualism that we can thus be mistaken about our reasons, since John in the bad case thinks his reason is a consideration of the world around him. That may be a cost of the view, or it may just be the best description of the phenomenon.

The view I defend then can be stated in this way.

**Take-Get Factualism:** In bad cases one's reasons (in general<sup>122</sup>) are the best<sup>123</sup> possible facts one is suitably related to.

Notice that the determinate-determinable mechanism isn't built into the view as such. The reason is that the class of illusions (and hallucinations) is quite heterogeneous, and it is doubtful that a single mechanism can explain what considerations we are actually basing our beliefs on when we suffer from illusions (or hallucinations). The key to the view is not that specific mechanism, but rather the idea that one has the strongest possible reasons given one's relation to the world. The "best" possible facts one is suitably related to, then, are the facts that offer the strongest support to one's belief: a subject's reasons are as good as possible given the facts.<sup>124</sup> Being "suitably related" to the facts means that one satisfies the Access Condition, the condition that one must be related to the facts in such a way that one can base one's belief on them.<sup>125</sup> Consider, e.g., a bad case in which John has an experience as of *p*. He thinks his reason is the fact that *p*, but since he is in the bad case it is not the case that *p*. If there is some non-psychological fact that he is suitably related to that is a better reason than the psychological fact that it seems to him as if *p*, then that non-psychological fact is his reason. If the psychological fact is the best reason he could have, then that is his reason. In cases of total hallucination the psychological fact will be all there is and will thus be his reason, but I have suggested that that consequence isn't actually at odds with the motivations for Factualism.

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<sup>122</sup> This qualification makes room for cases in which a subject's cognitive economy is so structured that she is not willing to take what she can get: e.g., cases in which she would only take a conclusive reason to hold some belief (take-it-or-leave-it cases). I take it that such cases are possible but rare; in general we take what we can get.

<sup>123</sup> By "best" I mean the facts that offer the strongest epistemic (justifying) support to one's belief (as explained below).

<sup>124</sup> Perhaps the goodness of these fact, *qua* reasons, can be analyzed in terms of objective probabilities, though the view does not depend on such an analysis – see footnote 129 below. Cf. Achinstein 2001.

<sup>125</sup> Different views about what counts as suitable are discussed in Chapter 5. There I defend the specific view that one must be in a knowledge-enabling relation, though not necessarily a knowledge-entailing relation.

Take-Get Factualism thus satisfies one of our two desiderata: it entails that hallucinating subjects have reasons for belief. It might seem compatible with the view, though, that these psychological facts are never good enough to justify the beliefs of hallucinating subjects. I will now show that on plausible assumptions that is not so. Take-Get Factualism entails that in many cases hallucinating subjects' reasons are actually sufficiently good to justify their beliefs and thus the view also satisfies the second desideratum. One difficulty is that I think it is an open question whether hallucinating subjects are always justified in holding the beliefs that they do (when their counterparts in good cases are justified in holding their beliefs). What the second desideratum requires is that at least sometimes their beliefs are justified, since I think that is (or should be) less controversial. Let's therefore start with the clearest such case. Let's say that in two possible worlds John's life has proceeded identically up until the present moment. In world  $W_1$  the baby starts crying; John hears it and forms the belief that the baby is hungry. In  $W_2$  the baby stays asleep but John has a perfect hallucination of the baby crying, and he again forms the belief that the baby is hungry. In both cases, I think, we should say that John's belief is justified.

The argument that Take-Get Factualism has that consequence starts from the assumption that we can often epistemically evaluate subjects' suspension of belief: often one can have or lack sufficient reason to suspend belief about some subject matter. Next, for the case of the two Johns it seems reasonable to propose the following:

**Suspension Principle<sub>L</sub>:** If John does not have sufficient reason to believe that  $p$ , and he does not have sufficient reason to believe that not- $p$ , then he has sufficient reason to suspend judgment about  $p$ .<sup>126</sup>

The idea behind the principle is that in both cases John is a stable, competent epistemic agent; it thus seems right that when he considers whether  $p$  some correct "move" in the space of reasons is available to him. If he lacks sufficient reason to believe that  $p$ , then he ought not believe that  $p$ ; and if he lacks sufficient reason to believe that not- $p$ , then he ought not believe that not- $p$ . But if he ought not believe that  $p$  or not- $p$ , he ought to suspend judgment about  $p$ . If that is right, though, we can argue in the following way. In  $W_2$  John has an experience as of the baby crying,

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<sup>126</sup> I owe this principle as well as the idea behind this argument to Silins (2005). I use the subscript "L" in order to differentiate it from Silins' principle: I claim only limited scope for mine (in this case, John); he does not claim limited scope for his (he also puts the principle in terms of justification, not reasons). I actually don't believe the principle has unlimited scope, and thus I disagree with the use Silins makes of the principle.

and he has no reason to doubt that his experience is veridical.<sup>127</sup> It therefore does not seem that he has sufficient reason to suspend judgment: after all, part of what it means to be in a bad case is that one doesn't know that one is in it. John has no idea that he is hallucinating and thus he has no access to the facts that would give him reason to suspend judgment. Since he has no reason at all to doubt his experience, on what basis could he correctly suspend judgment? But it is also clearly the case that John does not have sufficient reason to believe that it is not the case that the baby is hungry. It then follows from the Suspension Principle<sub>L</sub> that his hallucinatory experience is sufficiently good to justify his belief that the baby is hungry.<sup>128</sup>

This sort of argument, however, doesn't just work for John's case. It will work for many cases of hallucination. Specifically, it will work for all cases (1) in which a form of the suspension principle holds and (2) in which subjects' hallucinations would make suspension of belief unjustified. I think it is reasonable to suppose that these two conditions are widely satisfied by hallucinating subjects.<sup>129</sup> It is important to note that the argument from the Suspension Principle<sub>L</sub> does not show that John's belief is equally justified in the good and bad cases. On the version of Factualism that I advocate the fact that the baby is crying is still a better reason for believing that it is hungry than the fact that it seems to John as if the baby is crying. I do not, however, take this consequence to be at odds with the second desideratum. The second desideratum holds that hallucinating subjects' beliefs are often justified; it does not hold that they have the exact same justification as normal subjects. The

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<sup>127</sup> Note that I've left out the bit about John being in a sleep-deprived state. If he were in such a state and such a state often led to him hallucinating, then maybe he would have a reason to question his experience.

<sup>128</sup> I am assuming that the "sufficiently good" reasons in the Suspension Principle<sub>L</sub> are sufficiently good to justify us, and that as long as he bases his belief on them properly his belief is justified.

<sup>129</sup> Since the view of justification that I defend also respects the demand of truth, one further requirement must also be met in order for hallucinating subjects' beliefs to be justified: that hallucinating subjects' reasons make their beliefs objectively likely to be true. If I am right that the demand of truth is intuitively compelling, though, cases in which we think that subjects' beliefs are justified will coincide with cases in which we think that subjects' beliefs are objectively likely to be true. The result is that there will be no counterexample in which we think that the subject's belief is justified but is objectively unlikely to be true. A significant question still remains: what is the notion of objective likelihood that our intuitions are tracking? I do not answer that question in this dissertation – indeed, that question may be unanswerable (see discussion in Achinstein 2001). What I do provide (if my arguments are correct) is the correct theory of justification regardless of how that question (about the analysis of objective likelihood) is answered, or regardless of whether it can be answered at all.

reason is that I find the latter, stronger claim counterintuitive: if we are better connected to the world in good cases, it seems right that we are better justified.

If this is right, then Take-Get Factualism can satisfy both of our desiderata: it can explain how subjects in bad cases often have reasons for belief, and how those reasons often justify the subjects' beliefs. A key part of my defense of Take-Get Factualism employs the idea that subjects in bad cases have good reasons for belief, even though their reasons are not as good as the reasons of subjects in good cases. That idea has been attacked by Silins (2005) with another version of the new evil demon problem. The final task of this section, then, is to dispel Silins' objection. Silins claims that views that accord subjects in good cases a different degree of support by reasons (or a different degree of justification) from subjects in bad cases have the paradoxical consequence that subjects in bad cases are sometimes *better* justified than subjects in good cases. Say, for example, that John in the good and bad cases holds the belief that the baby is hungry to degree 0.9 (which I will call his credence). Suppose, though, that John's reason in the good case (the fact that the baby is crying) supports that belief to degree 0.96, and John's reason in the bad case (the fact that it seems to John as if the baby is crying) supports that belief to degree 0.86. Then the absolute value between John's credence and the degree of support provided by his reason is 0.06 in the good case and 0.04 in the bad case. Silins concludes that, according to the sort of view I defend, John is therefore better justified in the bad case (because the absolute value of the difference is less) than in the good case (Silins 2005: 387-390).

I take it that we ought to avoid the conclusion that John is better justified in the bad case, but there is a simple way for my view to avoid that conclusion and thereby avoid Silins' objection. His objection relies on attributing to my view the dubious principle that degree of justification is to be measured by the absolute value of difference between one's credence and the degree of support provided by one's reasons (inversely, such that a greater gap means less justification). This principle seems simply wrong. John in the good case under-extends himself: his credence is less than the attitude his reasons support. John in the bad case over-extends himself: his credence is greater than the attitude his reasons support. I don't think that means that we should hold that John's belief in the bad case is unjustified, but it also does not mean that only the absolute value of difference matters (vs. whether one is over- or under-extended). Since John in the bad case has gone "bust", so to speak, there are clear grounds for thinking that John in the good case is better justified, even if he is further away from the ideal credence (epistemic caution seems more virtuous than epistemic recklessness). In short, Silins' objection depends on a very simplistic conception of the relation between credence and justification, which there are clear reasons to reject, and he gives no reason at all to think that Factualism cannot account for that relation in a way that accords with our intuitive judgments about subjects' justification.

In this section I have been concerned with explaining how Factualism can make sense of bad cases. The Factualist should admit, I have claimed, both that subjects in bad cases have reasons for belief and that these reasons are often good enough to justify their beliefs. Then I argued that the best defense of Factualism subscribes to a take-what-you-can-get principle: subjects get the best possible reasons given their relation to the world. This view has the consequence that we do not always know what our reasons are, but I suggested that that fact is not at odds with the motivations for Factualism. One of the motivations is that we base our beliefs on how the world is (inasmuch as we are related to it) – it is consistent with that insight that we sometimes misdescribe how the world is but have good reasons nevertheless. Furthermore, examination of how subjects react when they learn that they are in bad cases suggests that they have a take-what-you-can-get attitude toward their own reasons. For example, if we pointed out to Alice that Connor was not eating pizza out front, she would defend herself by saying, “Well, I saw someone who looked just like him!” And if we pointed out to John (in the hallucination case) that the baby is not crying, he would say, “Well, it seemed like she was!”<sup>130</sup> Both of these observations show, I think, that subjects in bad cases are willing to fall back on reasons that were not the reasons they originally thought they had. If that is right, then a take-what-you-can-get principle may be right and consequently bad cases might pose no problem at all for a Factualist theory of reasons for belief.

#### 4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued against Psychologism, the view that a subject’s reasons are determined entirely by her non-factive mental state, and on behalf of Factualism, the view that facts of the world around us can be our reasons for belief. Firstly, in ordinary life we frequently talk of facts being reasons for belief (the fact that the streets are wet is a reason for believing that it rained, the fact that the Red Sox lost is a reason for believing that Justin will be unhappy, and the fact that the baby is crying is a reason for believing that it is hungry), which Psychologism, I argued, can offer no plausible account of. Secondly, Factualism provides a straightforward account of deliberation and perception, in particular, a straightforward account of the fact that in deliberation and perception we “transparently” attend to, and base our beliefs on, ways that the world is around us. Finally, Factualism, in contrast with Psychologism, can respect both the demand of reasons and the demand of truth, thereby helping us understand how reasons justify our beliefs (they make our beliefs objectively likely to be true).

I next argued that many popular arguments against Factualism are not compelling (in particular, those given by Audi, Armstrong, Chisholm, Pollock and Cruz, Pryor, and Silins). There is a genuine worry, however, about whether

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<sup>130</sup> Cf. the discussion of retrospective bad cases in Section 4.3.



Factualism can make sense of bad cases. If we just consider subjects in good cases it might seem like facts are their reasons for belief, but if we attend to subjects in bad cases, the worry goes, we will see that that can't be so. In order to make sense of bad cases we must hold that our reasons are determined just by our non-factive psychology, and that means our reasons can't be affected by what is the case even in good cases. My goal has been to dissolve this worry while at the same time to acknowledge what is right about it. What is right, firstly, is that subjects in bad cases have good reasons for belief and those reasons often justify their beliefs. Secondly, it is also true that in cases of total hallucination the only relevant facts are facts about the subject's own psychology.

I argued, though, that we can acknowledge both of these points and still hold onto the idea that facts of the world around us can be our reasons for belief. Contrary to what Psychologism maintains, a subject's reasons are determined both by what psychological states she is in and by how the world is. A subject will need to be in certain psychological states that give her access to the facts, but still her reasons are the facts that she has access to. It is true that sometimes subjects will not be related to the facts to which they think they are, and so subjects will sometimes lack a reflective awareness of what their reasons actually are, but that is a consequence I think we should be happy to accept. If you really want your beliefs to be better informed, you have to improve your relation to the world, not just your impression of how the world seems.

## CHAPTER FIVE ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM

### 5.1 Overview

We saw in Chapter 2 that several prominent arguments for internalism are really arguments just for the demand of reasons.<sup>131</sup> Those arguments traded on the strong intuitive force of the idea that justification is a matter of having good reasons for belief. We also saw in Chapter 3 that several prominent arguments for externalism are really just arguments for the demand of truth. Those arguments traded on the strong intuitive force of the idea that justification makes our beliefs objectively likely to be true. What we would like to know is whether it is possible for a theory of justification to respect both of these demands.

The first goal of this chapter is to argue that it is. In Chapter 4 I argued that Factualism is a plausible view of reasons for belief, and in this chapter I apply that result to the theory of justification. A Factualist theory of justification, as I understand it, combines Factualism about reasons for belief with the intuitive ideas we saw in Chapters 2 and 3: that justification is a matter of the subject's reasons for belief and that a justified belief is objectively likely to be true. This kind of theory can eliminate the tension between reasons and truth because on such a view there is no gap between the facts that are our reasons and the facts that make our beliefs likely to be true. Factualism therefore can capture the motivations of both sides of the internalism-externalism debate while avoiding their pitfalls.

Factualism is not the first kind of theory of justification, however, that attempts to be sensitive to both of the demands. The second goal of the chapter is to compare a Factualist theory of justification with the attempts that Alston (1985, 1986, 1988), McDowell (1986, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2008), Swain (1981), and Williamson (1997, 2000, 2009) have made to reconcile the two demands.<sup>132</sup> I argue that all of these views share attractive features with Factualism, since all of them reject Psychologism. Factualism, however, offers distinct benefits over each of them, and I therefore argue that the virtues of Factualism are unique, making it the most promising theory of justification.

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<sup>131</sup> And for the Access Condition: the idea that something can be a subject's reason for belief only if she is related to it in such a way that she can base her belief on it.

<sup>132</sup> I owe a debt to the work of all of these authors in developing the ideas of this dissertation. Also compare the views of Achinstein (2001), Dretske (1971), and Stampe (1987).

## 5.2 Solution to the problem

The demand of reasons is the demand that a theory of justification respect the idea that justification is a matter of the subject's reasons for belief – to be justified is to properly hold a belief for sufficiently good reasons. If that is right, then the justification one has for a belief is determined by one's reasons for holding it. The demand of truth is the demand that a theory of justification respect the idea that justification is a means to truth – it makes our beliefs objectively likely to be true. Both of these demands are intuitively compelling and seem to capture an aspect of the concept of justification that many people share. Traditional forms of internalism and externalism have been unable to reconcile these demands, however, because they share a natural and common view of reasons for belief. On that view of reasons for belief, Psychologism, one's reasons are determined entirely by one's non-factive mental states. When that view of reasons is combined with the demand of reasons, the result is a view on which justification is determined entirely by one's non-factive mental states. One could then respect the demand of truth only if one's non-factive mental states could determine that one's justified beliefs are objectively likely to be true. That consequence is problematic, though, because some of our justified beliefs concern facts of the world independent of us, and our non-factive mental states cannot ensure that they are objectively likely to be true. Consider, for example, my belief that it is raining outside. That belief concerns a state of the world that is independent of me and my non-factive psychology – whether it is raining outside is a matter of the independent world and is not made true, or even likely to be true, by my non-factive psychological states. If justification is determined by my reasons for belief, it cannot make my belief objectively likely to be true, and if justification makes my belief objectively likely to be true, it cannot be determined just by my reasons.

We can reconcile the tension between the demand of reasons and the demand of truth, however, once we embrace Factualism about reasons for belief. Without Psychologism the tension between reasons and truth becomes tractable. There is no incompatibility between the idea that justification is determined by one's reasons for belief and the idea that justification is a means to truth, because according to Factualism the facts of the world around us can be our reasons for belief, and it is those same facts that determine whether our beliefs are objectively likely to be true. John's reason for believing that the baby is hungry is the fact that it is crying in a certain way (that it only does when it is hungry). The fact that the baby is crying in that way is a good reason for holding his belief, since it makes that belief objectively likely to be true. John's belief is thus justified. This picture illustrates how the Factualist can think of justification, combining the ideas behind both reasons and truth, in an intuitive way that avoids the tension generated by Psychologism. According to Factualism there is no unbridgeable gap between the

facts that are our reasons and the facts that make our beliefs objectively likely to be true.

In a sense a Factualist theory of justification combines elements of both internalism and externalism. It captures one of the fundamental motivations for internalism, since according to Factualism justification is a matter of the subject's reasons for belief, and it captures one of the fundamental motivations for externalism, since according to Factualism justification makes one's belief objectively likely to be true. At the same time, however, the Factualist abandons traditional forms of internalism as well as traditional forms of externalism. Traditional forms of internalism wed the demand of reasons to Psychologistic theories of reasons – and we saw that externalists have good arguments against such views. Traditional forms of externalism respect the demand of truth, but because they too hold that a subject's reasons are determined entirely by her non-factive mental states they divorce justification from the subject's reasons – and we saw that internalists have good arguments against such views. We can reconcile the fact that internalists have good arguments against traditional externalist views, and the fact that externalists have good arguments against traditional internalist views, by abandoning the view of reasons that they hold in common. We thus have a solution, of sorts, to the internalism-externalism antinomy.<sup>133</sup>

Even though Factualism combines the motivations for internalism and externalism, it is still a form of externalism (since it denies that justification is determined entirely by the subject's non-factive mental states). One might think, then, that Factualism's externalist motivation is more significant than its internalist one. Factualism shares a deep orientation with internalism, however. One way the core of internalism is often expressed is that internalism gives priority to the first-

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<sup>133</sup> The tension between reasons and truth is one aspect of the internalism-externalism debate, but I do not claim that it is the whole of it. Richard Fumerton (1995), for example, claims that the internalism-externalism debate is basically a debate about naturalism in epistemology. I have not addressed naturalism and thus I have not addressed the debate in that sense. A helpful application of our solution to the tension between reasons and truth, however, is that it helps us see the issue of naturalism in a new light. In particular, it allows us to see why traditional externalist views have been unsuccessful “naturalizations” of justification: they have tried to naturalize justification without naturalizing the notion of reasons for belief. Take the paradigm form of externalism, process reliabilism, which analyzes justification with a naturalistic notion of reliability. A belief can be the result of a reliable process without being based on good reasons, so once we see the force behind the demand of reasons it is clear that the naturalistic analysis offered by process reliabilism is inherently problematic. A satisfactory naturalistic analysis of justification must also be an analysis of the notion of believing for good reasons.

person or “subjective” perspective.<sup>134</sup> What is supposed to be wrong with externalism is that it makes justification a feature of beliefs that has nothing essentially to do with the first-person perspective; it makes justification “external” to the subject’s perspective. Internalism, by contrast, respects the way that we reason and the way that justification matters to us as subjects. Factualism shares with internalism this prioritization of the subject’s perspective, because it shares with internalism the idea that justification is determined by the subject’s reasons, the considerations she took to count in favor of her belief; the considerations she was guided by; the light in which she formed her belief. In that sense it is an “internalist” theory rather than an externalist one.

Furthermore, Factualism does a better job than internalism itself at capturing the fundamental features of this perspective. For example, two characteristics of the first-person perspective are: (1) the way that subjects deliberate and come to hold beliefs on the basis of reasons, and (2) the way that subjects are perceptually related to their environment and form beliefs on the basis of perception. I argued in Chapter 4 that if we attend carefully to these aspects of the first-person perspective, we will see that Factualism is correct and Psychologism is incorrect. We deliberate about the facts of the world around us (that we are aware of), and in perception we base our beliefs on the ways that the world is that we are perceptually related to. Internalism “prioritizes” the subject by making just the subject’s non-factive mental states matter in fixing her reasons and her justification; if the arguments of Chapter 4 are correct, however, such a prioritization is misguided and distorts the nature of the perspective we are attempting to understand.

One might think, though, that there is a cost to Factualism’s understanding of the first-person perspective, because Factualism limits the kind of access one has to one’s reasons. A subject who is mistaken about the facts, e.g., will think that her reason for believing that her neighbor is back from vacation is the fact that the cat is on the fence. She thinks that she sees the cat, and putatively deliberates about the fact that the cat is there, finally coming to believe that her neighbor is back. But since the cat isn’t there, that fact isn’t her reason and isn’t even something about which she is deliberating. Consequently one can be mistaken about what one is deliberating about. If Psychologism is true, and one is really deliberating about one’s non-factive mental states (or their contents), and if we are infallible about what non-factive mental states we are in, then the advocate of Psychologism could claim that her view does not have that consequence. The defender of Psychologism could then “prioritize” the subject’s perspective in a way that Factualism cannot: according to Psychologism the subject can always know what her reasons are; she is the final arbiter in determining what she is deliberating about. There are several worries, however, with this objection to Factualism. Many advocates of Psychologism do not

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<sup>134</sup> E.g., BonJour (1985, 2003).

claim that we are infallible about our non-factive mental states<sup>135</sup>, and for good reason. I cannot always know whether I am having an experience as of 25 red dots on a wall (because I can't tell whether it is an experience as of 24 red dots on the wall), or whether I am having an experience as of a black dog (because I can't tell whether it is an experience as of a very dark brown dog).<sup>136</sup> Consequently both Factualism and Psychologism must admit that we can be wrong about what we are deliberating about. The advocate of Psychologism would have to show, then, that the fallibility of the subject according to Factualism is somehow especially objectionable compared to Psychologism. It is not clear, however, what grounds there are for such a claim.

In order to see the benefit of Factualism's prioritization of the first-person perspective, contrast the Factualist understanding of that perspective with the understanding of the first-person perspective in the work of Pollock and Cruz (1999). Pollock and Cruz emphasize the core internalist idea that justification is essentially concerned with the first-person perspective, and they claim that only internalism can faithfully characterize that perspective. Here is how they describe their understanding of justification:

Epistemological questions are about rational cognition – about how cognition rationally ought to work – and so are inherently first-person. The traditional epistemologist asks, “How is it possible for me to be justified in my beliefs about the external world, about other minds, about the past, and so on?” These are questions about what to believe. Epistemic norms are the norms in terms of which these questions are to be answered, so these norms are used in a first-person reason-guiding or procedural capacity. (Pollock and Cruz 1999: 124)

In this passage Pollock and Cruz connect three ideas: justification, the first-person perspective, and reasons for belief. It should be clear that I agree with the spirit of their claims here: I have been arguing that justification is a matter of believing for good reasons, and we cannot understand what it is to believe for good reasons without considering the first-person perspective, the perspective, e.g., from which we deliberate about what to believe. The problem is that Pollock and Cruz think that epistemic norms must be “internalist”; those norms must appeal only to one's non-factive psychological states. They explain:

Now that we understand how epistemic norms work in guiding our epistemic cognition, it is easy to see that they must be internalist norms. This is

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<sup>135</sup> E.g., Conee and Feldman (2001).

<sup>136</sup> Williamson (2000) goes even further and argues that one has infallible access to almost none of one's non-factive mental states.

because when we learn how to do something we acquire a set of norms for doing it and these norms are internalized in a way enabling our cognitive system to follow them in an automatic way without our having to think about them. (Pollock and Cruz 1999: 132)

Pollock and Cruz employ here a theoretical argument from how our “cognitive system” must operate to support the conclusion that in forming their beliefs subjects are, and can only be, guided by considerations of their own non-factive psychology.<sup>137</sup> According to them, the norms which one follows from the first-person perspective, the norms which determine whether one is justified, only concern states of one’s non-factive psychology. It might appear that in the above quotation Pollock and Cruz are theorizing about our “cognitive system” in a subpersonal way, but that is not so. Their understanding of norms is directly cashed out in terms of the subject’s reasons for belief.

A belief is justified if and only if it is licensed by correct epistemic norms. We assess the justifiedness of a belief in terms of the cognizer’s reasons for holding it [... ] Thus we can regard epistemic norms as the norms governing “right reasoning.” (Pollock and Cruz 1999: 123)

Pollock and Cruz’s conception of belief formation on the basis of reasons is squarely personalistic. They would claim, then, that when John forms the belief that the baby is hungry he is not being, and cannot not possibly be, guided by the fact that the baby is crying; rather he is guided by the fact that he believes that the baby is crying (or some other non-factive mental state).

If the arguments of Chapter 4 are correct, however, it is simply false that from the first-person perspective we attend to and are guided by only our own non-factive psychological states when we form beliefs. From the first-person perspective when we perform actions for reasons, and form beliefs for reasons, we are ordinarily concerned with the world around us: when you reach out your hand to open the door you are guided by the shape and placement of the doorknob; when you approach the intersection and decide to step on the brakes you are guided by the fact that the light is red; when you form the belief that you are late for the meeting you are guided by the fact that the clock says 10:15. From the first-person perspective we are concerned with and guided by ways the world is, and that often involves considerations about matters other than ourselves. From the first-person perspective we are all Factualists, and consequently only *externalism* offers any hope of honoring the first-personal aspect of justification. That is not to say that any externalist theory properly captures the first-personal aspect of justification. Since many externalist views deny the demand of reasons, they too distort justification

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<sup>137</sup> This argument was examined in Chapter 4.

from the first-person perspective. It is only an externalist view that embraces Factualism (as well as the demand of reasons and the demand of truth) that can make sense of how we reason and why justification matters to us “from the inside.”

### 5.3 Precedents and precursors

The Factualist theory of justification I advocate is not the first theory of justification to attempt to reconcile the demands of reasons and truth. In this section I will compare and contrast Factualism with views of justification that are guided by the same motivations, and I will explain how Factualism is different from, and preferable to, each of them.

#### 5.3.1 Alston and Swain

Alston and Swain are two philosophers who advocate views similar to the Factualist theory of justification that I defend. They both hold that in order for a subject to justifiably believe that  $p$  the subject must have good reasons for belief which make her belief objectively likely to be true. Alston and Swain therefore respect both the demand of reasons and the demand of truth, and they do so by rejecting Psychologism: how good one’s reasons are depends on contingent facts of the world around the subject, not just on the subject’s non-factive mental states. Like Factualism, their views are consequently externalist, since according to them justification depends on more than just the subject’s non-factive mental states.

Although Alston and Swain show real sensitivity to the tension between reasons and truth, and offer a structurally similar solution to Factualism, the details of their solution differ markedly from the view I defend. The clearest difference between Alston and Swain’s views and Factualism is that they both hold the same ontological view of reasons as state psychologism: they hold that a subject’s reasons are her non-factive mental states (Alston 1988: 267; Swain 1981: 75-76). The difference between their views and state psychologism is that, for Alston and Swain, whether a reason is good depends on whether it is in fact a reliable indicator of that which is believed on its basis. So one’s reasons, in the broad sense<sup>138</sup>, are determined not just by one’s non-factive mental states but also by facts about objective likelihood (Alston 1985: 95, 1988: 269; Swain 1981: 14, 96-100).

In light of the arguments of Chapter 4, this view of reasons is a serious mistake. The fundamental insight of that chapter is that facts of the world around us can be our reasons for belief. If correct, that insight alone would give Factualism an advantage over their views. I will further argue, however, that their ontological view of reasons is a symptom of deeper problems with their positions. It derives from a problematic assessment of the desirable features of a theory of justification, and it

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<sup>138</sup> I.e., what one’s reasons are and how good they are.



results in a view of justification with systematic problems. The crux of the matter is that Alston and Swain think that internalists and externalists are each correct about different aspects of one's reasons. One aspect is ontological: the identity of one's reasons; what one's reasons are. The other aspect is their adequacy: how strong one's reasons are. Alston and Swain hold that internalists are generally correct about the identity of one's reasons and externalists are generally correct about the strength of one's reasons. They attempt to combine the merits of internalism and externalism by isolating their areas of applicability: internalists are correct about one aspect of one's reasons; externalists are correct about a different aspect. Let me first explain why they endorse this division, and then I will explain why it is problematic. I will focus the exposition now on Alston's view, though very similar remarks apply to Swain as well.

Alston incorporates the merits of internalism into his view by holding that internalists are roughly correct about the identity of our reasons: internalists are right that one's reasons are one's non-factive mental states. This view is motivated by two ideas that Factualism is also motivated by: that one needs good reasons for belief in order to be justified, and that one needs suitable access to one's reasons in order to base one's belief on them.<sup>139</sup> Alston is also motivated by two further internalist ideas, though, that Factualism is not: (1) that one's reasons are mentally "internal" (i.e., are one's non-factive mental states), and (2) that one's reasons (ontologically) are highly accessible (one can generally know just by reflection what one's reasons are).

The view is internalist most basically, and most minimally, by virtue of the requirement that there be a ground of the belief. As we have made explicit, the ground must be a psychological state of the subject and hence "internal" to the subject in an important sense. (Alston 1988: 270)

We expect that if there is something that justifies my belief that *p* I will be able to determine what it is. We find something incongruous, or conceptually impossible, in the notion of my being justified in believing that *p* while totally lacking any capacity to determine what is responsible for that justification. (Alston 1988: 272)

It seems reasonable to follow Ginet's lead and suggest that to be a justifier an item must be the sort of thing that, in general, a subject can explicitly note the presence of just by sufficient reflection on his situation. (Alston 1988: 275)

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<sup>139</sup> What I called the demand of reasons and the Access Condition in Chapter 2.

Alston explicitly rejects an access requirement as strong as Ginet's<sup>140</sup>, but his view of the identity of reasons is still motivated by a strong accessibility requirement. It will generally be easier to tell by reflection alone whether one is in some non-factive mental state than it will be to tell by reflection alone whether some fact of the independent world obtains. E.g., when it seems to one that the neighbor's cat is on the fence, it is easier to tell by reflection that one is having an experience as of the cat's being on the fence than it is to tell by reflection that the cat is in fact on the fence. On Alston's view, then, the identity of one's reasons will be much more accessible than on a Factualist view.

His view of the identity of reasons therefore allows Alston to claim that his view incorporates two aspects of internalism that Factualism does not. The first is that "the ground must be a psychological state of the subject and hence 'internal' to the subject in an important sense," and the second is that "to be a justifier an item must be the sort of thing that, in general, a subject can explicitly note the presence of just by sufficient reflection on his situation." The problem, though, is that he is incorporating the wrong aspects of internalism. In Section 5.2 I argued that internalists are right that justification is fundamentally tied to the first-person perspective. Factualism, however, is more faithful to that perspective than internalism itself is, because from that perspective we take considerations of the world around us to be reasons for belief. Alston's view shares company with internalism on this score: it has the same conception of what our reasons are and thus a similarly problematic conception of the first-person perspective. The *strength* of those reasons on Alston's view still depends on the way the world is, but that addition does not involve the world in our reasons in the correct way. We deliberate about ways that the world is; the world needs incorporating into our reasons themselves, not just into their strength.

The result is not just a problematic conception of the first-person perspective; Alston's view results in a problematic view of justification as well. For Alston a belief will be justified if one's reason for that belief happens to be a reliable indicator of what one believes. The subject needs no beliefs at all about how or why one's reason (one's non-factive mental state) is a reliable indicator of what one believes.<sup>141</sup> Consequently an accidental correlation between one's reason and one's belief will result in a justified belief in cases in which it is clear the subject's belief is not justified. To see how, consider a case that Alston uses to motivate the objective connection between justification and truth.

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<sup>140</sup> That one is *always* able to know by reflection alone what one's reason is. See Ginet (1975).

<sup>141</sup> Alston thinks this "externalist" idea is motivated by the thought that small children lack beliefs about their reasons (Alston 1988: 266).

If my grounds for believing that  $p$  are not such that it is generally true that beliefs like that formed on grounds like that are true, they cannot be termed 'adequate'. Why do we think that wanting State to win the game is not an adequate reason for supposing that it has won, whereas the fact that a victory has been reported by several newspapers is an adequate reason? Surely it has something to do with the fact that beliefs like that when formed on the first sort of ground are not *generally* true, while they are *generally* true when formed on grounds of the second sort. (Alston 1985: 108-109)<sup>142</sup>

Consider Alston's case for a subject, Bill: Bill's reason for believing that State has won is that he wants it to win. His belief is unjustified because his wanting State to win is not a reliable indicator of state's winning. The problem, though, is that if Bill's wanting State to win were, through some coincidence, a reliable indicator of State's winning, Bill's belief would be justified according to Alston. That is because for Alston the strength of one's reasons is a completely "external" matter.

If  $R$  is an adequate reason ( $e$  is an adequate indication), then if one believes that  $p$  on that basis, one is *thereby* in a strong position, epistemically; and the further knowledge, or justified belief, that the reason is adequate (the experience is an adequate indication), though no doubt quite important and valuable for other purposes, will do nothing to improve the truth-conduciveness of one's believing that  $p$ . (Alston 1985: 112-113)

Alston's view would count Bill's belief as justified because the belief is formed on the basis of something that is in fact a reliable indicator of the truth of what Bill believes. Intuitively, however, Bill's belief is not justified in this case: it is a complete coincidence that his grounds for belief have anything to do with the truth of the belief.

If that is right then treating the identity of one's reasons and the adequacy of one's reasons in radically different ways (treating the former internally, the latter externally) has problematic consequences. Paradoxically, his view is both too internalist and too externalist. It is too internalist, because he makes the wrong concessions to internalism about the identity of one's reasons: internalists are not right that one's reasons are one's non-factive mental states, and they are not right that our reasons are highly accessible. But it is also too externalist, because externalists are not right that mere accidental reliability (of the indicator) is sufficient for justification.

Although Factualism and Alston both combine the motivations of the demand of reasons and the demand of truth, they do so in very different ways.

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<sup>142</sup> Note that Alston is not presenting his final account in this quote, but is motivating the kind of considerations that he finds significant.

Factualism agrees with internalism about the demand of reasons, but it reconceives the notion of reasons and the first-person perspective. Alston leaves the internalist notion of reasons (ontologically) and the first-person perspective intact, and adds on top of it a reliability condition. Alston merely conglomerates internalist and externalist features in his theory of justification without integrating them at all. Factualism incorporates an internalist idea – a justified belief is one held for good reasons – but that very idea also makes it externalist, since our reasons are often facts of the world around us. Consequently Factualism is a more promising theory of justification.<sup>143</sup>

### 5.3.2 McDowell

Another philosopher who feels the pull of both the demand of reasons and the demand of truth is McDowell. In a variety of work McDowell has argued that the perspective of the subject is not limited to a transparent, self-standing, “inner” realm; the subject’s perspective can be essentially dependent on the world around the subject (McDowell 1986). McDowell’s arguments for this understanding of the subject’s perspective are not primarily epistemic. He does not claim that without this conception of the subject’s perspective we couldn’t understand how knowledge of the world would be possible; rather, without this conception we wouldn’t even be able to understand how we have contentful thoughts about the world at all (McDowell 1986, 1994).<sup>144</sup>

Although McDowell’s concerns are not primarily epistemic, his view has important epistemic implications that bear on Factualism and the subject’s reasons for belief. On McDowell’s view, when a subject sees that  $p$ , the fact that  $p$  is “made manifest” (1994: 34) to her, or is “open to view” (1994: 26, 29, 58, 101), in such a way that she can base her belief on that fact. McDowell therefore ascribes to a view compatible with Factualism<sup>145</sup>, and he shares a similar conception of the first-person perspective to the one I discussed in Section 5.2. From that perspective we often deliberate about, and are perceptually related to, ways the world is.

There are several differences, however, between McDowell’s view and the version of Factualism that I defend. One is that McDowell is concerned with

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<sup>143</sup> This criticism of Alston should be qualified by the observation that in places Alston seems receptive to the view that one’s reasons are facts and not one’s non-factive mental states (Alston 1988: 267). Although he recognizes that talk of facts as reasons is more natural than talk of mental states as reasons, he develops his theory in terms of the latter, with, as I have argued, problematic consequences.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Brewer (1999).

<sup>145</sup> I say “compatible” because he does not claim that facts and only facts are our reasons, so it is not clear whether he would fully endorse Factualism. See below for further differences.

knowledge, and has very little to say about justification *per se*.<sup>146</sup> McDowell focuses on how the world is presented to us in experience when we successfully see that something is the case. In cases of successful perception and knowledge, though, one cannot be mistaken about the facts, and therefore McDowell provides no discussion at all of the key idea in my defense of Factualism: that in bad cases, cases in which we are mistaken about the facts, we are still basing our beliefs on ways that the world is inasmuch as we are related to them.<sup>147</sup> This is not a criticism of McDowell, but merely a virtue of Factualism that McDowell's view does not, and is not designed to, address.

A second difference is that McDowell's defense of his conception of the subject's perspective depends on several controversial theses that Factualism is not committed to. Notably, McDowell's view depends on the thesis that reasons are propositions (McDowell 1994). He holds that one's reasons must be completely composed of concepts (of which McDowell holds a Fregean view). Since he also holds that facts can be our reasons, he is committed to the metaphysical thesis that facts are identical to true propositions. Since that identification may be false (Harman 2003, Dancy 2000), McDowell's view has important liabilities that Factualism lacks.<sup>148</sup>

Even though McDowell's view and Factualism share important similarities, at base they simply address different concerns. McDowell's main concern is how thought about the world is possible at all, and his answer is put in terms of an understanding of successful perceptual access. Factualism's main concern is how justification is possible given the tension between the demand of reasons and the demand of truth, and the answer is put in terms of the subject's reasons for belief in cases of successful perception as well as cases in which subjects are mistaken about what they perceive. The fundamental difference, then, is that McDowell's view and Factualism address different concerns, not that they offer incompatible views of the same concern (in contrast to Alston and Swain).

### 5.3.3 Williamson

A final view of justification that bears a resemblance to Factualism is Williamson's. Williamson's fundamental idea is that we should reverse the normal order of explanation of epistemological notions. The normal order attempts to explain knowledge in other terms, such as justification and belief; Williamson

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<sup>146</sup> Perhaps he even doubts whether there is an important epistemic status short of knowledge. See McDowell 1993.

<sup>147</sup> As in the defense of Take-Get Factualism in Chapter 4.

<sup>148</sup> McDowell's view also depends on his notion of non-doxastic appearances, critical discussion of which can be found in Stroud 2002 and Ginsborg 2006; Factualism does not have that commitment.

proposes we understand justification (and belief as well) in terms of knowledge. The idea isn't that one is justified in believing that  $p$  only if one knows that  $p$ . Rather, one is justified in believing that  $p$  only if one has sufficient evidence for believing that  $p$  (one's evidence makes  $p$  objectively probable), where one's evidence is understood as the set of propositions one knows (thus the concept of knowledge is explanatorily more basic than the concept of justification). The resulting view shares some important features with Factualism. Both views respect the demand of reasons, by making justification a matter of the subject's reasons for belief, and both respect the demand of truth by connecting justification to objective likelihood. Also, on Williamson's view reasons are factive:  $p$  is a reason only if it is the case that  $p$ .

Even though the views have much in common, Factualism has several advantages over Williamson's view. Firstly, like McDowell, Williamson identifies reasons and true propositions.<sup>149</sup> Williamson can advocate Factualism, then, and hold that one's reasons are facts, only if it is true that facts are identical to true propositions. If they are *not* identical, then Factualism has clear advantages over Williamson's view. Factualism would capture all of the motivations of Williamson's view (see, e.g., Williamson 1997: 721-725, and 2000: ch. 9), but it would also capture the motivations of Deliberative and Perceptual Transparency that his view would not. In such a case Williamson could modify his view in order to make it a version of Factualism: he could hold that one's reasons are the set of facts that one knows, instead of the set of propositions that one knows. Such a modification would be able to keep nearly all of his other commitments intact and would gain the advantages Factualism has over his official view.<sup>150</sup>

If it is right that facts just are true propositions, then Williamson's view is a version of Factualism: viz., it is a version of Factualism with a specific (and particularly strong) conception of the Access Condition (one must know the fact that  $p$  in order for it to be one's reason). There are still two reasons, however, to prefer a different version of Factualism to the one that Williamson would be committed to. First, Williamson claims that one's reasons are psychological in certain bad cases (cases in which subjects are in error about the facts) in which Deliberative and Perceptual Transparency indicate that they are not. Williamson treats all cases of hallucination and illusion the same: "If perceptual evidence in the case of illusions consists of true propositions, what are they? The obvious answer is: the proposition that things appear to be that way" (Williamson 2000: 198). His view, consequently, faces an objection similar to the one directed against Mixed Factualism in Chapter 4.

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<sup>149</sup> Williamson calls the grounds for belief that justify us evidence instead of reasons, though he often treats the terms interchangeably (e.g., Williamson 2000: 194).

<sup>150</sup> In Williamson 1997 he is open to this modification (1997: 721 and 725, esp. fn. 13), but he is less open to it in Williamson 2000 (2000: ch. 9, esp. 201, fn. 11). Also note that, as I argue below, the specific version of Factualism that I defend would still have several advantages over the modified-Williamson view.

Take-Get Factualism is therefore a preferable view to Williamson's.<sup>151</sup> Secondly, there are good reasons to think that one doesn't need to know that *p* in order for the fact that *p* to be one's reason. That is, there are good reasons to prefer a weaker form of the Access Condition than Williamson's. Consider, for example, one's reason for believing that *p* when one knows that *p* (and didn't believe that *p* before coming to know it).<sup>152</sup> Williamson claims that in such a case one's reason for believing that *p* is the proposition that *p*, the proposition that one knows (Williamson 2009: 282-284). Since we are assuming that facts are identical to true propositions, in such a case one's reason for believing that *p* is the fact that *p*. The problem, however, is that one's knowledge was not antecedent to one's belief, so here one's reason cannot be the cause of one's belief. Williamson therefore must deny the plausible and widely held view that reasons are causes.<sup>153</sup>

A better version of Factualism would hold that the relation we need to the facts can be knowledge enabling without being knowledge entailing. That is, the Factualist could hold that the Access Condition requires a perceptual relation to the fact that *p* which is the "right" sort of relation to enable knowing that *p*; such a relation could allow one to base one's belief on the fact that *p* without *already* knowing that *p*. That fact could then antecedently be one's reason for believing that *p*, and thus the cause of one's belief.<sup>154</sup> This view would also avoid another paradoxical aspect of Williamson's view. Williamson does not just hold that justification is ultimately to be understood in terms of the concept of knowledge (and consequently the traditional analysis of knowledge as justified true belief is impossible). He further holds that justification does not even primarily apply to knowledge. According to Williamson one always has reasons for anything one

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<sup>151</sup> I don't take this to be a deep criticism of Williamson, since none of his significant commitments requires this overly simplistic conception of illusion and hallucination. Rather, it highlights the work done by my version of Factualism that has no analogue in Williamson's view. My second criticism (immediately to follow) is therefore much more significant, since it concerns the role of knowledge in Williamson's theory.

<sup>152</sup> Williamson holds that knowing that *p* entails believing that *p* (Williamson 2000, 2009).

<sup>153</sup> For discussion of reasons and causes see Korcz 1997 and 2010. An objection to Williamson similar to the one I am making is made by Brueckner (2005, 2009), though Brueckner's objection is based on a problematic understanding of Williamson's view of the relation between belief and knowledge and is criticized by Williamson 2009. That criticism of Brueckner does not solve the problem I am pressing against Williamson.

<sup>154</sup> This proposal does not depend on holding (as McDowell holds) that seeing that *p* does not entail believing that *p*. The perceptual relation I am referring to need not be the one captured by the ordinary language "seeing that" locution. For criticism of McDowell's view see Stroud 2002 and Ginsborg 2006.

knows, since knowing that  $p$  makes  $p$  one's reason. But one's knowledge is not necessarily *based on* reasons, because  $p$  is not one's reason until one already knows it (assuming, again, that basing a belief on a reason is a causal process). Williamson is aware of this consequence of his view, which he justifies by the observation that we normally talk of justification not as it applies to knowledge but as it applies to beliefs being justified when they fall short of knowledge.<sup>155</sup> There is, however, an alternative explanation of why we do not primarily talk of justified knowledge: knowledge is *ipso facto* justified, so any such talk is redundant. Williamson is forced into this position because he holds that one is justified only by one's reasons, and one has  $p$  as a reason only if one knows it. So the justification of knowledge would be circular in a sense in which justification of belief is not. We can avoid this problem, though, if the Access Condition is knowledge enabling without being knowledge entailing. Knowledge could then be caused by and based on reasons.

Of all three of the views similar to Factualism that we've examined (Alston and Swain, McDowell, and Williamson), Williamson's is perhaps the closest to the version of Factualism that I defend. Even in his case, however, the view I defend improves upon several problematic aspects of Williamson's view and therefore offers a superior theory of justification.

## 5.4 Conclusion

There is something compelling about both traditional internalist and externalist theories of justification; each is motivated by a forceful intuition about justification that many people share. It is easy to be dissatisfied, however, with the prospects of either position. As internalists have argued, traditional externalist views simply clash with our intuitions about justification and reasons, and therefore continue to strike us as unsatisfactory. As externalists have argued, internalist views clash with our basic intuitions about justification and objective likelihood, and therefore continue to strike us as unsatisfactory. The theory of justification has been

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<sup>155</sup> "The account might be thought to make all knowledge self-justifying in an absurdly trivial way: one's knowledge is justified absolutely if and only if it is justified relative to itself. This objection would be fair if the point of justification were to serve at its best as a condition for knowledge. But on the present account that is not the point of justification. Rather, justification is primarily a status which knowledge can confer on beliefs that look good in its light without themselves amounting to knowledge. Knowledge itself enjoys the status of justification only as a limiting case, just as, trivially, every shade of green counts as similar to a shade of green" (Williamson 2000: 9). The present point, however, is that Williamson's view faces a problem accounting for the relation between reasons and knowledge that goes beyond the challenge posed by the relation between justification and knowledge.



dominated by two unsatisfactory alternatives, and the internalism-externalism debate will continue unabated as long as these alternatives are all that we have.

The way to make progress on this issue is to identify precisely how and why we are left with only these two alternatives. Internalist views respect the demand of reasons; externalist views respect the demand of truth; and many philosophers think that we are left with only these two alternatives because they have endorsed a certain view of reasons for belief that makes the two demands mutually exclusive. Specifically, they have endorsed the idea that one's reasons are determined entirely by one's non-factive mental states. If that view of reasons were correct, then we would indeed be in a difficult position. The theory of justification would be doomed to unsatisfactory results.

What we have seen, however, is that that view of reasons, though initially attractive, is itself problematic. It clashes with linguistic evidence about our reasons as well as a natural and compelling understanding of deliberation and perception. Those considerations support Factualism: the idea that facts and only facts, including facts of the world around us, are our reasons for belief. The Factualist theory of justification that results shares with traditional externalists the idea that the subject's relation to the world plays a critical role in determining her justification. But it is very much like internalism since it gives a fundamental place to the first-person perspective and to the idea that subjects must have "cognitive access" to that which justifies them (their reasons). This understanding of justification thus bears similarities to both traditional camps. The critical difference is that it allows us to see that respecting the first-person perspective and the demand of reasons does not bar us from thinking that the subject's relation to the world plays a critical role in determining her justification. Factualism allows us to see that human subjects are epistemically situated in their environment, not epistemically cut off from it: the environment can serve as their reasons for belief, such that subjects can form and revise their beliefs on the basis of how things stand in the world around them. The subject's relation to the world is part of the first-person perspective.

We can reject the conception of reasons that traditional internalists and externalists share, but we can do so without giving up the motivations that those theories purport to capture. We thus open up the possibility of thinking about justification in an intuitively compelling way that avoids the problems of either traditional approach. There are still profound problems that a Factualist theory must face: how are objective probabilities to be understood? How exactly do we specify the relation that a subject needs to the facts so that she can base her belief on them? Nonetheless, I think a theory of justification of this form is preferable to the alternatives. Even though many problems remain, the tension between reasons and truth generated by Psychologism is not one of them.

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