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ACCESSIBILISM DEFINED

MICHAEL HATCHER
michael.d.hatcher@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Accessibilism is a version of epistemic internalism on which justification is determined by what is accessible to the subject. I argue that misunderstandings of accessibilism have hinged on a failure to appreciate an ambiguity in the phrase 'what is accessible to the subject'. I first show that this phrase may either refer to the *very things* accessible to the subject, or instead to the *facts about* which things are accessible to her. I then discuss Ralph Wedgwood's (2002: 350–2) argument that accessibilism absurdly implies that an infinite regress of facts, each more complex than the last, must be accessible to the subject. I show that this regress objection only threatens the 'very things' disambiguation of accessibilism, not the 'facts about' disambiguation. After this, I discuss the relationships between the motivations for accessibilism and these two disambiguations. We will see that these motivations *appear* to support each disambiguation. But I will argue this appearance depends on a mistake. Just as only the 'facts about' disambiguation escapes the regress objection, it is also the only disambiguation which enjoys genuine support from the motivations for accessibilism. For these reasons, I recommend that future discussions of accessibilism focus on the 'facts about' disambiguation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Epistemic internalism is the view that epistemic justification is determined by what is, in some sense, internal to the subject. Internalism stretches back at least to Descartes and Locke;[1] indeed, according to Laurence BonJour (1980: 56), rejecting internalism constitutes "a very radical departure" from the tradition in western philosophy. According to a common distinction,[2] there are two main versions of internalism, which correspond to different understandings of 'internal to the subject'. On *mentalism*, justification is determined by the subject's mental states. On *accessibilism*, which I focus on in this paper, justification is determined by what is accessible to the subject.[3]

My aim is to show that misunderstandings of accessibilism have hinged on a failure to appreciate an ambiguity in the phrase 'what is accessible to the subject'. Accessibilism may also be ambiguous in other ways, but my focus will be to show what turns on a particular kind of ambiguity in that phrase.

1 See Plantinga (1993: Ch. 1).
2 See Conee and Feldman (2001: 2).
3 Wedgwood (2002: 351) calls accessibilism the "standard version of internalism".

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Here is the plan for the paper. §2 contains preliminaries. In §3, I show that 'what is accessible to the subject' may either refer to the *very things* accessible to the subject, or instead to the *facts about* which things are accessible to her. In §4, I discuss Ralph Wedgwood's (2002: 350–2) argument that accessibilism absurdly implies that an infinite regress of facts, each more complex than the last, must be accessible to the subject. I will show that this regress objection only threatens the 'very things' disambiguation of accessibilism, not the 'facts about' disambiguation. In §§5–6, I discuss the relationships between the motivations for accessibilism and these two disambiguations. We will see, in §5, that these motivations *appear* to support each disambiguation. But, in §6, I will argue this appearance depends on a mistake. Just as only the 'facts about' disambiguation escapes the regress objection, it is also the only disambiguation which enjoys genuine support from the motivations for accessibilism. For these reasons, I will recommend that future discussions of accessibilism focus on the 'facts about' disambiguation, according to which justification is determined by the facts about which things are accessible to the subject. I conclude, in §7, by briefly discussing how accessibilism so understood may be able to explain mentalism, the other main version of internalism.

2. PRELIMINARIES

According to Jessica Brown,

> Epistemic internalism is the view that a thinker's epistemic status depends wholly on matters which are 'internal' to that thinker, rather than at least partially on matters which are 'external' to her, such as her relations to her environment. (Brown 2007: 13–14)

Of course, knowledge is an epistemic status. But since knowledge implies truth and truth does not depend wholly on what is internal to the subject, it is standard to restrict internalism to justification. It is also common to understand what is internal to the subject as what is accessible to her. For example, on the view Robert Audi calls 'internalism about justification',

> justification is grounded entirely in what is internal to the mind, in a sense implying that it is accessible to introspection or reflection by the subject ... (Audi 1998: 233–4)

This common form of internalism is known as *accessibilism*. I take it that a fair gloss on accessibilism is the following:

(A) Whether S is justified to believe *p* is determined by what is accessible to S.

Let me clarify the notion of determination in play here. What determines whether something is the case is a set of facts. To say that whether something is the case is determined by a set of facts of a particular kind is to say that, necessarily, if it is the case (not the case), then a set of facts of this kind entails it is the case (not the case).[4]

4 Thus, it is to say that whether it is the case *strongly supervenes* on a set of facts of this kind. See Van Cleve (1990: 225–6) and Kim (2002: xvii) for definitions of strong supervenience.

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I should also make a clarification about justification. There is a difference between being justified to believe p and justifiedly believing p. S might be justified to believe p even if S does not believe p, and even if S believes p, but not justifiedly. This is commonly known as the distinction between *propositional* justification, namely being justified to believe, and *doxastic* justification, which S has when S justifiedly believes.[5] As in (A), I understand accessibilism in terms of propositional justification. Charity recommends this. For doxastic justification requires propositional justification plus, at least on a standard view, the right kind of causal relationship between the propositional justification and S's belief.[6] Thus, the idea that doxastic justification is determined by what is accessible implies the bold claim that whether this causal relation holds is determined by what is accessible. As (A) is in terms of propositional justification, it does not imply that bold claim.

With our gloss of accessibilism on the table, let me briefly sketch the motivations for accessibilism on offer. We shall discuss these motivations in more detail later in the paper.

An early proponent of externalism in epistemology, D.M. Armstrong (1973: 157) held that "what makes a true non-inferential belief a case of *knowledge*" – and so, presumably, also *justified* – is a lawlike connection between the belief and what makes the belief true. Armstrong compared this connection to that between a thermometer's mercury level and the temperature. In his reply to Armstrong, BonJour (1985: 41–4) gives the example of Norman the clairvoyant. A lawlike connection holds between Norman's belief that the President is in NYC and the President's being in NYC, though no reasons for or against this belief are among what is accessible to him. Intuitively, his belief is not justified, contra Armstrong.

BonJour asks:

> *why* should the mere fact that such an external relation [i.e., the lawlike connection] obtains mean that Norman's belief is epistemically justified when the relation in question is entirely outside his ken? (BonJour 1985: 42)

This rhetorical question drives toward the general idea that only what is accessible to the subject helps determine justification.

Next to the case of Norman, consider what is known as the *new evil demon problem* for reliabilism.[7] On reliabilism, a belief is justified just in case it is formed by a belief-producing mechanism reliable at producing true beliefs. Assume many of our belief-producing mechanisms are reliable in the actual world. Now consider a possible world in which we undergo the exact same experiences, processes of reasoning, and form exactly the same beliefs we do in the actual world except that, unbeknownst to us, a demon ensures our experiences systematically mislead us. Reliabilism implies that most of our beliefs in the actual world are justified, but that most of our beliefs in the demon world are unjustified. However, intuitively, the same beliefs are justified in both worlds. Interestingly, what is accessible to us appears to be the same in each world. Moreover, just as BonJour said of Norman that his lawlike connection with the truth does not make him justified because what is accessible to him does not include it, there is

5 See, e.g., Turri (2010) and Wedgwood (2013) for discussions of the propositional/doxastic distinction.

6 See, e.g., Wedgwood (2006: 661).

7 See Wedgwood (2002: 349) and Ball and Blome-Tillmann (2013). Cohen (1984: 281–4) is an early source. The *old* evil demon problem is the skeptical problem Descartes put forth in his *Meditations*.

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temptation to say that the demon's interference would not make us unjustified because what is accessible to us would not include it. We can hear the echo of the idea that only what is accessible to the subject helps determine justification.

Accessibilists often link the intuitions we tend to have about Norman and the new evil demon problem to *epistemic deontologism*, the view that justification consists in its being blameless for one to believe.[8] If we combine deontologism with the intuitive idea that whether it is blameless for one to believe is determined by what is accessible to one, we can explain why these intuitions should be taken seriously.

To the extent that a definition of accessibilism vindicates the intuitions we tend to have about Norman and the new evil demon problem, and allows accessibilism to enjoy support from deontologism, we have added reason to think it captures the nature of accessibilism.

Before concluding this section, let me make a final comment. As in the quotation from Audi, it is standard to hold that something is accessible, in the relevant sense, just in case it is knowable by reflection alone. For most of this paper, I shall go along with this standard understanding of accessibility. However, we shall have occasion to discuss other construals of accessibility in §6.4 and §7.

3. THE AMBIGUITY OF 'WHAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE SUBJECT'

In §2, we glossed accessibilism as (A) and briefly surveyed accessibilism's motivations. In this section, I showcase an ambiguity in (A) which will drive the rest of the paper. I begin by introducing the general kind of ambiguity I have in mind.

Consider

(1) Whether Abby is ready for a history exam is determined by what Abby knows.

(1) seems like a sensible thing to say. And it appears to have the following meaning: whether Abby is ready for a history exam is determined by the answer to the question of what Abby knows. The answer to the question of what Abby knows is a list of facts of the form *that Abby knows (does not know) p*. These facts are *facts about* which things Abby knows. (1) says that, necessarily, these facts either entail that Abby is ready for a history exam, or they entail that Abby is not ready.

It is possible, though uncharitable, to read (1) as saying that whether Abby is ready for a history exam is determined by the *very things* Abby knows. So read, (1) is demonstrably false. For nearly any set of facts F, there is a possible world in which Abby knows F, as well as a possible world in which F obtains but Abby does not know F. Abby might well be ready for a history exam in the former world while not ready in the latter, even though F obtains in both worlds. Thus F neither entails that Abby is ready, nor entails that Abby is not ready.

Now consider

8 See Pryor (2001: 111) and Bergmann (2006: 77) for formulations of deontologism, and Alston (1989: 115–52) for criticism of the view. Plantinga (1993: Ch. 1) argues that both Descartes and Locke endorse accessibilism on the basis of deontologism. Cohen (1984: 281–4) appeals to deontologism in a similar way. Notice that 'deontologism', in this context, does not refer to the view that, in ethics, is typically contrasted with consequentialism.

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(2) Whether the star will go supernova is determined by what Abby the astrophysicist believes.

Read charitably, (2) says that among the very things Abby the astrophysicist believes are astrophysical facts that determine whether the star will go supernova. Perhaps Abby believes that the star meets conditions sufficient for its going supernova, or that the star meets conditions sufficient for its not going supernova. So understood, (2) says that, necessarily, these astrophysical facts either entail that the star will go supernova, or they entail that it will not.

It is possible, though uncharitable, to read (2) as saying that whether the star will go supernova is determined by the answer to the question of what Abby the astrophysicist believes. The answer to this question is a list of facts about which things Abby believes. So read, (2) is demonstrably false. Consider two possible worlds in which these facts are the same, where one of these facts is that Abby believes that the star meets conditions sufficient for its going supernova. But suppose that Abby believes this in one of the worlds simply because she unknowingly made a mistake in her calculations. It might well be that the star will go supernova in one world but not the other, contra (2) so construed.

Understood charitably, (1) has it that 'what Abby knows' refers to the answer to the question of what Abby knows, which is a set of facts about which things Abby knows. Meanwhile, understood charitably, (2) has it that 'what Abby the astrophysicist believes' refers not to the answer to the question of what Abby believes, but instead to the very things she believes, which include certain astrophysical facts. In this way, this kind of 'what' phrase may refer to the facts about which things the subject bears the attitude towards, or instead to the very things towards which she bears the attitude. Some mechanism, like context, speaker intent, or etc., triggers one reading over the other.

Sometimes it is unclear which reading is at issue, as in

(3) Whether Abby will get the job is determined by what Abby knows.

Interestingly, different intonation patterns offer a rough and ready way to indicate which reading of (3) is intended. If one says that *what* Abby knows determines whether she will get the job, we take her to mean that among the very things Abby knows are facts that determine the matter. But if one says that what Abby *knows* determines whether she will get the job, we take her to mean that the facts about which things Abby knows determine the matter.

Now we have a handle on the kind of ambiguity that infects (A). We should expect that 'what is accessible to S' is ambiguous in the same way that phrases like 'what Abby believes' and 'what Abby knows' are ambiguous. Therefore, we should expect that

(A) Whether S is justified to believe p is determined by what is accessible to S.

is ambiguous between $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ and $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$:

$(A)^{\text{very things}}$ Whether S is justified to believe p is determined by the *very things* accessible to S.

$(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ Whether S is justified to believe p is determined by the *facts about* which things are accessible to S.

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On the standard understanding of accessibility, the very things accessible to S are the things S is in a position to know by reflection alone. Such things are, presumably, facts. And if the very things accessible to S are facts, the ambiguity in the reference of 'what is accessible to S' is between the *first-order* facts which are accessible to S, and the *second-order* facts about which first-order facts are accessible to S.[9]

Notice that Audi's definition of accessibilism, quoted in §1, can be read as either $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ or $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$. The following bracketed insertions clarify the different readings:

> justification is grounded entirely in [*the very things which are*] what is internal to the mind, in a sense [of 'internal'] implying that [something internal is such that] it is accessible to introspection or reflection by the subject …

> justification is grounded entirely in [*the answer to the question of*] what is internal to the mind, in a sense [of 'internal'] implying that [something internal is such that] it is accessible to introspection or reflection by the subject …

The first reading is $(A)^{\text{very things}}$: justification is determined by the very things accessible to S. The second reading is $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$: justification is determined by the answer to the question of what is accessible to S. The answer to this question is the facts about which things are accessible to S.

In the rest of the paper, I argue that misunderstandings of accessibilism have hinged on failures to appreciate the 'very things/facts about' ambiguity. In the next section, I show that whether a certain objection to accessibilism hits its mark depends on this ambiguity.

4. THE REGRESS OBJECTION TO ACCESSIBILISM

Several have argued accessibilism generates vicious regress. I will focus on Ralph Wedgwood's (2002: 350–2) argument, which is the most developed.[10] We shall see that this regress objection only tells against $(A)^{\text{very things}}$, not $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$.

Let us clarify the main players in the regress objection. Remember that what determines whether something is the case is a set of facts. Recall also that to say that whether something is the case is determined by a set of facts of a particular kind is to say that, necessarily, if it is the case (not the case), then a set of facts of this kind entails it is the case (not the case). Following Jim Pryor (2001: 104), Wedgwood understands accessibilism to be $(A)^{\text{very things}}$. $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ has it that whether S is justified to believe *p* is determined by a set of facts with the following distinction: the set is accessible to S. So, we can rewrite $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ as follows:

$(A)^{\text{very things}}$ Necessarily, if S is justified to believe *p* (not justified to believe *p*), then there is some set of facts F such that F entails S is justified to believe *p* (not justified to believe *p*) *and F is accessible to S*.

9 I thank an anonymous referee for recommending this additional way of framing the disambiguation. Now, on an understanding of accessibility which I briefly discuss in §7, and in more detail in footnote 40, facts are not the only things which can be accessible. $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ and $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ frame the disambiguation in a manner consistent with such non-standard understandings of accessibility.

10 Bergmann (2006: 9–10, footnote 13) presents a similar objection. For relevant discussion, see Fumerton (1995: 81).

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Wedgwood assumes the standard understanding of accessibility, on which x is accessible to S just in case S is in a position to know x by reflection alone. Wedgwood's main premise is a view for which Timothy Williamson (2000: Ch. 4) has influentially argued, namely

Anti-Luminosity For all ordinary sets of facts F and persons S, F does not entail S is in a position to know F by reflection alone.

Succinctly, Williamson's argument is that for S to be in a position to know F by reflection alone, S could not be easily mistaken about F. But if F is an ordinary fact, it is possible for F to obtain in a case where S could easily be mistaken about F. Anti-Luminosity follows. Of course, Williamson's argument has been challenged.[11] What to make of these challenges is not a question I have the space to address, though.[12] But it is worth exploring whether accessibilists could accept Williamson's argument. So, for our purposes, we shall assume Anti-Luminosity.[13]

Anti-Luminosity is restricted to facts I have called *ordinary*. Williamson mentions that some extraordinary facts escape his argument.[14] Consider, for example, the fact that S exists. As there is no possible case in which S falsely believes S exists, there is no possible case in which S could be easily mistaken about it. So, Anti-Luminosity does not apply. If Williamson (2000: 109) is right, though, Anti-Luminosity applies to the lion's share of facts "with which we engage in our everyday life", like the fact that S is cold, or that S is in pain.

An accessibilist should want to allow not only that S can be justified to believe S exists, but also that S can be justified to believe, for example, that S is in pain. At first glance, this may not seem like a problem for the accessibilist. For suppose S is in pain. Typically, this fact is accessible to S. So, can't the accessibilist hold that the fact that S is in pain entails S is justified to believe S is in pain? If Wedgwood is right, she cannot coherently maintain this.

Here is the reasoning. Let 'Pain' refer to the fact that S is in pain, let p be the proposition that S is in pain, and let 'A( )' indicate that whatever is in the brackets is accessible to S. The following world is possible:

$$w_1 \qquad \text{Pain } \& \text{ A(Pain)}$$

11 See, e.g., Berker (2008) and Greco (2014: 194–5, especially fn 50).

12 See Srinivasan (2015) for a defense of Williamson.

13 In his response to Williamson, Berker (2008) defends the view that the fact that it is rational to believe p (not rational to believe p) is a luminous fact. If cast as a view about justification, this view qualifies as a form of $(A)^{\text{very things}}$. For, on it, among the very things accessible to S is a fact entailing justificatory status. Berker also says that "most epistemological internalists are … committed to luminosity claims of one form or another" (Berker 2008: 3, fn 2). For all I have said, Berker's response to Williamson may be right. And he may also be right that many accessibilist-minded internalists endorse luminosity claims. But, even so, it is worth exploring the prospects of accessibilism, given Anti-Luminosity.

14 Williamson has two terms for the facts I am calling *extraordinary*: "trivial" and "curiosities" (Williamson 2000: 108–9). I do not call them trivial because, as we shall see, some are quite substantive.

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But since Pain is an ordinary fact, Anti-Luminosity implies that w_2 is also possible:

$$w_2 \qquad \text{Pain } \& \sim \text{A(Pain)}$$

Now, let 'Other Facts' refer to other facts besides Pain which are candidates for entailing that S is justified to believe p. The following world is possible:

$$w_3 \qquad \sim \text{A(Other Facts)}$$

But if a world is possible in which Pain & ~A(Pain) and a world is possible in which ~A(Other Facts), then a world is possible in which *both* of these conditions hold.[15] That is, w_4 is possible:

$$w_4 \qquad \text{Pain } \& \sim \text{A(Pain) } \& \sim \text{A(Other Facts)}$$

But $(\text{A})^{\text{very things}}$ says any world in which S is justified to believe p is a world in which some set of facts entailing S is justified is accessible to S. In w_4, no set of facts entailing S is justified to believe p is accessible to S. So, on $(\text{A})^{\text{very things}}$, it is not the case that S is justified to believe p in w_4. Therefore, on $(\text{A})^{\text{very things}}$, Pain does *not* entail S is justified to believe p. For Pain obtains in a world in which it is not the case that S is justified, namely w_4.

Part of the trouble is that Pain is not accessible to S in w_2. So, the accessibilist might say that it is not Pain which is the fact which entails S is justified and is accessible to S in w_1, but instead A(Pain). In one way, this suggestion is of little help. For Anti-Luminosity implies A(Pain) & ~A(A(Pain)) is possible, and the reasoning runs as before to show that, on $(\text{A})^{\text{very things}}$, A(Pain) does not entail S is justified to believe p. But in another way, the suggestion indicates a way out for the accessibilist. She can infinitely iterate accessibility. Where '…' signifies infinitely many iterations, consider a fact we can refer to as follows:

$$\text{A(A(A } \ldots \text{ (Pain))) } \ldots$$

Let 'Pain*' refer to the above fact. Just as infinity plus one is identical with infinity, A(Pain*) is identical with Pain*. Thus, Pain* & ~A(Pain*) is not possible. So, Pain* is an extraordinary fact over which Anti-Luminosity does not range. The accessibilist can hold that Pain* entails S is justified to believe p.

Indeed, given the above reasoning, if $(\text{A})^{\text{very things}}$ is true, Pain is a (proper or improper) part of a fact that entails S is justified to believe p only if Pain is a part of Pain*. A similar conclusion holds for other ordinary facts. An infinite regress of accessibility is always required. Some philosophers accept this consequence of $(\text{A})^{\text{very things}}$.[16] But, plausibly, this regress is vicious. Pain* is an infinite array of facts each more complex than the last. Plausibly, it is never the case that every member of an array of this kind is accessible to a mere mortal. So, if S is a mere mortal, S is not justified to believe S is in pain, or cold, or etc. S may be justified to believe S exists, as the fact that S exists is one of the

15 This step of the regress objection assumes that something along the lines of Lewis' (1986: 87–8) principle of recombination holds, according to which "patching together parts of different possible worlds yields another possible world".

16 See, e.g., Fales (2014).

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extraordinary few which escapes the clutches of Anti-Luminosity. But even so, accessibilism is in bad straits.

In response, the accessibilist might point out that Anti-Luminosity is defined in terms of knowability by reflection alone, and suggest that accessibility could be construed differently.[17] But it is unclear how this suggestion could help $(A)^{\text{very things}}$. For $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ requires that a set of facts that entails S is justified (not justified) is accessible to S. On this picture, in the crucial instance, accessibility must be a relation to *facts*. It is, at least, unclear what such a relation could be if it is not a kind of knowability. And Williamson's argument for Anti-Luminosity generalizes to any kind of knowability, so long as the relevant facts are ordinary. Though, for all I have said, a response to the regress objection on behalf of $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ might yet be in the offing, it is clear that the objection *threatens* $(A)^{\text{very things}}$, at the least.

But, and here is the main takeaway of this section, while the regress objection threatens $(A)^{\text{very things}}$, it does not so much as *touch* $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$. On $(A)^{\text{very things}}$, some set of facts entailing S's justificatory status must *itself* be accessible to S. But $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ merely says that some set of facts entailing S's justificatory status must be among *the facts about* which things are accessible to S. These facts about which things are accessible to S need not *themselves* be accessible to S. Thus, one who simply endorses $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ can coherently hold that A(Pain) entails S is justified to believe p, even if

$$w_5 \qquad \text{A(Pain)} \;\&\; \sim\text{A(A(Pain))} \;\&\; \sim\text{Other Facts}$$

is possible. For $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ does not require A(Pain) to be accessible in order for S to be justified. Thus A(Pain) can entail S is justified all by itself.[18] There is no foothold for regress in $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$.

So, whether the regress objection hits its mark depends on the 'very things/facts about' ambiguity in (A). $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ emerges entirely unscathed. $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ does not.

5. TWO UNDERSTANDINGS OF ACCESSIBILISM'S MOTIVATIONS

In this section, I will show that the motivations for accessibilism introduced in §2 appear to support *both* $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ and $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$. In the next section, I will argue that this appearance actually depends on a mistake, and that just as only $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ escapes the regress objection unscathed, only $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ enjoys genuine support from the motivations for accessibilism.

That these motivations *appear* to support $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ can serve as an error theory explaining why some may have mistaken $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ for the heart of accessibilism. And an error theory appears to be needed. We have seen that Audi's definition of accessibilism can be read as either $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ or $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$. But it is easy to find definitions of accessibilism which can only be read as $(A)^{\text{very things}}$. For example, Jim Pryor defines accessibilism as the view that

17 I discuss different ways of understanding accessibility in §6.4 and §7.

18 And so, without the help of Other Facts, as w_5 makes clear.

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> Whether one is justified in believing *p* supervenes on facts which one is in a position to know about by reflection alone. (Pryor 2001: 104)

While 'what is accessible' can be read as referring to the answer to the question of what is accessible rather than the very things accessible, "facts which one is in a position to know about by reflection alone" can only be read as referring to the very things accessible to one. A similar point holds with respect to Carl Ginet's view, according to which

> 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. (Ginet 1975: 34)

So, we need an error theory explaining why some take (A)$^{\text{very things}}$ to be accessibilism. It is also clear that if the heart of accessibilism has been misunderstood, what will show this is a better understanding of the intuitive data which motivates the view in the first place, not a head count of definitions in terms of how they can be read.

Let us begin with how the motivations for accessibilism appear to support (A)$^{\text{very things}}$. Return to the case of Norman the clairvoyant. BonJour allows that the fact that Norman is reliable is, in some sense, a *reason* to believe that the President is in NYC. In BonJour's (1985: 43) words, this fact is among the "true premises or reasons ... that could in principle provide a basis for justification". But BonJour does not allow that this fact could be a reason explaining why *Norman*, by contrast with a third party to whom the fact is accessible, might be justified to believe the President is in NYC.

Much of what BonJour (1985: 42–3) says suggests that, in the following way, deontologism undergirds the idea that a reason can help explain why a person is justified only if it is accessible to her. Given deontologism, justification consists in its being blameless for one to believe. But whether it is blameworthy to believe depends solely on reasons that can *guide* one – that is, reasons one can take into account in one's reasoning[19] and either believe or not believe on their basis. For a reason which cannot guide one in this sense is irrelevant to whether or not it is blameworthy for one to believe. But a reason can guide one only if it is accessible to one. Therefore, connecting the dots, only reasons accessible to one can help explain why one is justified.

We can represent the argument as follows:

(1) Justification consists in its being blameless for S to believe.
(2) If (1), then only reasons which can guide S can help explain why S is justified.
(3) Only accessible reasons can guide S.
(4) So, only accessible reasons can help explain why S is justified.

Among the facts which entail S is justified are some which explain why S is justified. According to (4), all of the latter are accessible to S. And that implies (A)$^{\text{very things}}$, on which some set of facts which entails S is justified is accessible to S, if S is justified.

(1)–(4) would explain the intuition that Norman's reliability could not make him justified. It is not accessible to him that he is reliable. Thus, he cannot be guided by that fact,

19 I am liberal with respect to what qualifies as reasoning. In addition to deliberation and inference, I also take non-inferential belief formation, revision, and abandonment to be an events of reasoning. See Wedgwood (2006: 660–1) for precedence in this regard.

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and so it cannot help explain why he should be justified. Similarly, (1)–(4) could explain the intuition that the unreliability of the people in the demon world could not make them unjustified. Their unreliability is not accessible to them. Thus, they cannot be guided by the fact that they are unreliable, and so it cannot help explain why they should be unjustified. And notice that because (1) is deontologism, each of the motivations for accessibilism reviewed in §2 nicely dovetail in (1)–(4) – namely, the example of Norman, the new evil demon problem, and deontologism.

I shall later argue that (1)–(4) rests on a mistake. If that is right, then the initial attractiveness of (1)–(4) gives us an error theory which would explain why some may have mistaken (A)$^{\text{very things}}$ for the heart of accessibilism. But before digging further into (1)–(4), let us see if the motivations for accessibilism also appear to support (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$.

Consider Norman again. BonJour gives us facts about which things are accessible to Norman. We are told, in particular, that no reason to believe the President is in NYC today is accessible to him. Intriguingly, we have the intuition that Norman is not justified to believe the President is in NYC *as soon as we are told these facts about which things are accessible to him*.

Why is this enough to generate the intuition? Let us begin again with deontologism, on which justification consists in its being blameless for one to believe. Plausibly, the facts about which reasons can guide S determine the facts about whether it is blameless for S to believe. For suppose that the facts about which reasons can guide two different persons are the same. Then it is intuitive that, should they believe a particular proposition, it would not be appropriate to blame one unless it were also appropriate to blame the other. Now add to the mix the proposal that the facts about which things are accessible to S determine the facts about which reasons can guide S. This proposal is *prima facie* plausible. And the result, to connect the dots, is that the facts about which things are accessible to S determine the facts about whether S is justified.

We can summarize the argument as follows:

(5) Justification consists in its being blameless for S to believe.
(6) If (5), then whether S is justified to believe *p* is determined by the facts about which reasons can guide S.
(7) The facts about which reasons can guide S are determined by the facts about which things are accessible to S.
(8) So, whether S is justified to believe *p* is determined by the facts about which things are accessible to S.

(8) is (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$.

(5)–(8) would explain why we have an intuition about whether Norman is justified as soon as we are told the facts about which things are accessible to him. For these facts determine the facts about which reasons can guide him, which facts, in turn, determine the facts about whether he is justified. Similarly, (5)–(8) may also explain why we have the intuition that people in the demon world are exactly as justified as those in the normal world. For the facts about which things are accessible are the same in each world. Again, as (5) is deontologism, each of the motivations for accessibilism reviewed in §2 nicely dovetail with this (5)–(8) argument for (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$.

But we have seen that the same appears to be true of the (1)–(4) argument for (A)$^{\text{very things}}$. So we are left with a question: is (A)$^{\text{very things}}$ or instead (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$ the upshot of these motivations?

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6. THE BETTER WAY TO UNDERSTAND ACCESSIBILISM'S MOTIVATIONS

6.1 *Where We Are*

In §4, we saw that whether the regress objection hits its mark depends on the 'very things/facts about' ambiguity. In this section, I shall argue that whether the motivations for accessibilism provide genuine support also depends on this ambiguity. In §5, we saw that the motivations for accessibilism *appear* to support both $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ and $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$. In the heart of the (1)–(4) argument for $(A)^{\text{very things}}$, though, is the idea that only reasons which can guide S can help explain why S is justified. I will show that this idea conflates two different kinds of reasons, and thus that (1)–(4) is confused. Moreover, we will see that the (5)–(8) argument for $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ is what the motivations for accessibilism genuinely support, once we are clear on the distinction between these two kinds of reasons. And finally, though (5)–(8) employs substantive, controversial premises, we shall see that it is defensible.

6.2 *Two Kinds of Reasons*

(1)–(4) mentions reasons which can guide S as well as reasons which can help explain why S is justified. It is entirely appropriate to use the word 'reasons' in each of these contexts. However, we must be careful to not let this fact about our linguistic practice blind us to the possibility that what can guide the subject may be very different from what explains why she is justified. As it turns out, these are importantly different kinds of reasons.

What are reasons which can guide the subject? Suppose Beth has had the flu for the past few days. This morning, she is feeling slightly better, and is wondering whether or not she is well enough to go to work. Upon introspection, she knows she no longer feels nauseous. But she also notices a headache. Now suppose also that, unbeknownst to her, her respiratory tissue is inflamed. Some of the reasons in play in this case can guide Beth to either believe she is well enough or instead refrain from believing this. But not all can. Notably, the fact that her respiratory tissue is inflamed cannot guide her in this way. This is because, in a certain sense of 'could', that her respiratory tissue is inflamed is not something for which she could believe or refrain – or, more precisely, it is not something that could move her some degree toward believing or refraining. For she is entirely unaware that it is inflamed, and so this is not something she can take into account in her reasoning. By way of contrast, she can take into account the fact that she no longer feels nauseous, and the fact that she has a headache.

Let me clarify how I will be thinking about this example. To use terminology common in the literature on practical reason but equally applicable to epistemology, let us call the reasons *for which* or *on the basis of which* one did something one's *motivating reasons* for having done it.[20] Now, suppose it turns out that Beth's headache tips the balance in her deliberation about what to believe, and she believes she is not well enough to go to work. Depending on one's background theory about motivating reasons, her motivating reason for believing she is not well enough is either her *belief* that she has a headache, or simply *that she has a headache*.[21] The main argument of this paper does not depend on which

20 For precedence, see Schroeder (2007: 12).

21 For the former kind of background theory, see Smith (1987); for the latter, see Schroeder (2008).

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way of thinking about motivating reasons we adopt. However, I myself find it more natural to hold that what Beth took into account in her reasoning was the *content* of her belief, not the belief itself. So, to fix ideas, henceforth I shall treat *that she has a headache* as her motivating reason, in the development of the example in which she goes on to believe she is not well enough.

Return to Beth at the time when she is still wondering whether she is well enough. A reason can guide her if and only if, in a certain sense of 'could', it *could* be a motivating reason for which she believes or instead refrains. Let us call any reason that could motivate, in this sense, a *potentially motivating reason*.[22] To say that among the reasons that can guide her is that she has a headache, but not that her respiratory tissue is inflamed, is to say that the first is a potentially motivating reason, while the second is not. Reasons which can guide the subject are one and the same as potentially motivating reasons.

It is a substantive question what sense of 'could' is at issue, when we say a potentially motivating reason *could* motivate. To illustrate, there are surely possible scenarios in which Beth learns of the inflamed tissue, and the fact that the tissue is inflamed motivates her to believe she is not well enough. But, presumably, the sense in which a potentially motivating reason could motivate is more immediate: it is something one can take into account in one's reasoning at the relevant time.[23] I will return to this issue later.

I turn now to reasons which help explain why one is justified. Suppose we recognize Beth is justified to believe she is not well enough to go to work. Still, we might ask *what explains* the fact that she is justified. In answer to this question, we try to cite *reasons why* she is justified. Such reasons are part of an explanation of the fact that she is justified. Similarly, if we recognize Beth is not justified, we might ask what explains this fact. Then we would try to cite reasons that explain the fact that she is not justified. I will call this kind of reason a *justification explanation reason*.[24]

We are now well situated to evaluate the idea I had said is in the heart of (1)–(4), which we can restate as the idea that only potentially motivating reasons are justification explanation reasons. I suspect the idea has nothing to recommend it besides a failure to appreciate the difference between these two kinds of reasons.

6.3 *The Confusion Behind (1)–(4)*

Let us rewrite (1)–(4) using the terminology of potentially motivating reasons and justification explanation reasons:

22 Bernard Williams (1995: 35) thinks of reasons as starting points for a "deliberative route" to a conclusion. Kieran Setiya (2007: 12) has a similar picture. In these terms, potentially motivating reasons are starting points in reasoning. Schroeder (2007: 14) calls potentially motivating reasons "subjective normative reasons".

23 The fact that her respiratory tissue is inflamed does appear to be, in *some* sense, a reason to believe that Beth is not well enough to go to work. This is similar to the sense in which the fact that Norman is reliable is a reason to believe that the President is in NYC. These facts *favor* believing, much as a proposition's brute *truth* counts in favor, in some sense, of believing it. Schroeder (2007: 13) calls facts like these "objective normative reasons".

24 Justification explanation reasons are a subtype of the reasons Schroeder calls "explanatory" (2007: 11). Like John Broome (2013: 47–9), I understand explanation to be a relation between worldly things, i.e., facts, rather than a relation between linguistic descriptions.

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(1) Justification consists in its being blameless for the subject to believe.
(2) If (1), then only potentially motivating reasons are justification explanation reasons.
(3) Only accessible reasons are potentially motivating reasons.
(4) So, only accessible reasons are justification explanation reasons.

(4), again, immediately implies (A)$^{\text{very things}}$. At least one premise of this argument is plausible, namely (3). But, as I hope to show, if (3) is true, (2) is false.

Assume (3) is true: only accessible reasons are potentially motivating reasons. Plausibly, it follows that for any given potentially motivating reason, the fact that it is accessible is at least part of what explains the fact that it is a potentially motivating reason. Now remember Beth, who is wondering whether she is well enough to go to work. Suppose that Beth is justified to believe she is not well enough. Let us also suppose, as we are free to do, that part of what explains why Beth is justified to believe she is not well enough is *the fact that one of the potentially motivating reasons she has is that she has a headache*. From what we have said, at least part of what explains this last fact is *the fact that it is accessible to her that she has a headache*.

Thus, the fact that it is accessible to Beth that she has a headache is part of what explains why Beth is justified to believe she is not well enough. That is, this fact is a justification explanation reason. But surely it is possible for the fact that it is accessible to Beth that she has a headache to *fail* to be a potentially motivating reason. That Beth has a headache is one thing, and the fact that it is accessible to her that she has a headache is another. We should expect that what it takes for the first to potentially motivate is different from what it takes for the second. For one, we should expect that what it takes for the first to be accessible is different from what it takes for the second. So, since the fact that it is accessible to her that she has a headache is a justification explanation reason, it is simply not true that only potentially motivating reasons are justification explanation reasons.

One way to avoid this result is to hold that if p is accessible to S, it follows by metaphysical necessity that it is accessible to S that p is accessible to S. An initial point is that, given the standard understanding of accessibility as knowability by reflection alone, this strategy commits one to denying Anti-Luminosity. But even if we understand accessibility differently, we should expect the relevant analogue of Anti-Luminosity to be at least as plausible as Anti-Luminosity itself. No matter how we understand accessibility, the fact that Beth has a headache is one thing, and the fact that it is accessible to her that she has a headache is another. We should expect it to be possible for the first to obtain without the second.

In any case, I conclude that it is not true that only potentially motivating reasons are justification explanation reasons. Put differently,

(2) If justification consists in its being blameless for the subject to believe, then only potentially motivating reasons are justification explanation reasons.

has a false consequent. But (2)'s antecedent is just (1), i.e., deontologism. So either (1) or (2) is false. (1)–(4) is doomed.

But the moral we should draw, in particular, is that (2) is false. Surely a deontologist can hold that *the fact that* something is a potentially motivating reason may be a justification explanation reason even if this fact is not itself a potentially motivating reason. Similarly, a deontologist can hold that the fact that something is accessible may be a

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justification explanation reason even if this fact is not itself accessible. To put it colloquially, this is simply to hold that it may well be blameless for one to believe *p* partially in virtue of *the fact that* one has a particular guide, even if the fact that one has that guide is not *itself* a guide one has. This looks like something we should expect a deontologist to endorse, once clear on the issue. Our conclusion that not all justification explanation reasons are potentially motivating reasons shows that (2) is false, not that deontologism is false.

So what makes (2) seem attractive? When I first introduced the (1)–(4) argument, the following idea motivated (2):

Irrelevance A reason which cannot guide S is irrelevant to whether or not it is blameworthy for S to believe.

For reasons I shall now explain, any attraction to the thought that Irrelevance is good grounds for (2) derives entirely from conflating potentially motivating and justification explanation reasons.

It is natural to hold that potentially motivating reasons play an indispensable role in explanations of its being blameless for one to believe. So if 'a reason' is read as only ranging over candidates for being potentially motivating reasons, and so only over candidates for playing this indispensable role, Irrelevance appears plausible. Any such candidate which cannot guide the subject fails to be a potentially motivating reason, and so is disqualified from playing this role. But so construed, Irrelevance does not imply (2). For it may well be that an explanation of its being blameless for one to believe involves, besides certain potentially motivating reasons, the fact that one *has* those potentially motivating reasons, and whatever explains that fact.

On the other hand, suppose 'a reason' ranges over candidates for justification explanation reasons as the deontologist understands them – that is, parts of explanations of its being blameless for one to believe. Then Irrelevance implies (2): if deontologism is true, only potentially motivating reasons are justification explanation reasons. But so construed, Irrelevance is implausible. As we have seen, *the fact that* one has a particular guide may not *itself* be a guide she has, but it makes perfect sense to suppose that this fact may help explain why it is blameless for her to believe. These facts are far from irrelevant.

So, Irrelevance is plausible only if concerned with potentially motivating reasons, but implies (2) only if concerned with justification explanation reasons. Hence, I suspect the temptation to endorse (2) derives from one's initially taking the reasons at issue to be potentially motivating reasons, but then failing to distinguish such reasons from justification explanation reasons. To do this, though, is to conflate two very different kinds of reasons.

As we shall see, the (5)–(8) argument for $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ is what the motivations for accessibilism genuinely support, once we are clear on the distinction between these two kinds of reasons.

6.4 *On (5)–(8)*

Let us rewrite (5)–(8) in terms of potentially motivating reasons:

(5) Justification consists in its being blameless for S to believe.
(6) If (5), then whether S is justified to believe *p* is determined by the facts about which potentially motivating reasons S has.

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(7) The facts about which potentially motivating reasons S has are determined by the facts about which things are accessible to S.
(8) So, whether S is justified to believe *p* is determined by the facts about which things are accessible to S.

Look at (6). For the deontologist, justification explanation reasons are facts which explain the facts about whether it is blameless for S to believe. Now notice that according to (6), it is the *facts about* which potentially motivating reasons one has, not these *very* reasons themselves, which determine the facts about whether it is blameless for S to believe, and so constitute justification explanation reasons. Here the 'potentially motivating reason/justification explanation reason' distinction is properly appreciated. And appreciating this distinction leads to a particular disambiguation of the 'very things/facts about' ambiguity, as can be seen. It is no accident that the conclusion of the above argument is $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ and not $(A)^{\text{very things}}$.

Now, by contrast with (2), (6) has some plausibility. Plausibly, the facts about which potentially motivating reasons S has determine the facts about whether S has *adequate* potentially motivating reasons to believe. And plausibly, the facts about whether S has adequate potentially motivating reasons to believe determine the facts about whether it is blameless for S to believe. It follows that the facts about which potentially motivating reasons S has determine the facts about whether it is blameless for S to believe, just as (6) says.

Let us consider the other premises of (5)–(8). (7) follows from two premises:

(7a) Only accessible things are potentially motivating reasons.
(7b) For all x, whether x is a potentially motivating reason S has is determined by the facts about what x is (intrinsically)[25] and whether x is accessible to S.

If (7a) is true, then the facts about which things are accessible to S determine the facts about which potentially motivating reasons S has so long as any two subjects have the same potentially motivating reasons if the very same set of items is accessible to each. Now suppose it were possible that, for some item x, in addition to the facts about what x is and whether x is accessible, we need to add other facts about S or the environment in order to fix whether x is a potentially motivating reason S has. Then two subjects can have different potentially motivating reasons even though the very same set of items is accessible to each. (7b) rules out precisely that possibility.

Let us begin with (7a). Recall that it is a substantive question what sense of 'could' is at issue, when we say potentially motivating reasons *could* motivate. Remember Beth, who can discern upon introspection that she has a headache. In the relevant sense of 'could', we said that her having a headache could motivate her to believe she is not well enough to go to work, while the fact that her respiratory tissue is inflamed, of which she has no inkling,

25 What we want (7b) to rule out is the possibility of two subjects having different potentially motivating reasons in a case where the very same set of items is accessible to each. But if we allow part of *what x is* to consist in x's having extrinsic or relational properties, this possibility is not ruled out even if whether x is a potentially motivated reason is determined by the facts about what x is and whether x is accessible. For then, supposing x is accessible to two different subjects, a fact about what x is could involve extrinsic properties by virtue of which x potentially motivates one of these subjects but not the other.

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could not motivate her. I suspect the sense of 'could' at issue is conceptually tied to the sense of 'can' at play in the notion of accessibility. Accessibility is access one *can* have, in a certain sense of 'can'. For example, if direct recognition, knowledge by reflection alone, or etc., is access, then direct recogniz*ability*, know*ability* by reflection alone, or etc., is access one can have, in this sense. My suspicion, in particular, is that x is *accessible* just in case one can access x in the strongest sense[26] in which one must be able to access x if x is to be a potentially motivating reason for one. If this is right, then, as a matter of course, all potentially motivating reasons are accessible.

Here is why I have this suspicion. Accessibility is a technical notion within accessibilism, a view often linked with deontologism. And deontologism encourages a particular way to think about potentially motivating reasons. If to be justified to believe is for it to be blameless to do so, then, in the relevant cases,[27] one's believing is a response to reasons it is appropriate to hold one responsible to. That is, it is a response to reasons it would be appropriate to blame one for responding to in one way rather than another. It is natural for deontologists to think of potentially motivating reasons as precisely the reasons it is appropriate to hold one responsible to, in this sense. But it is appropriate to hold one responsible to a given reason only if she is able to take it into account in her reasoning at the time, which requires that, in some fairly strong sense of 'can', she can access it at the time.

One possibility is that a person can take a reason into account in the relevant sense only if she is in a position to know it by reflection alone. If so, then deontologism vindicates the standard understanding of accessibility as knowability by reflection alone. Thus far in the paper, we have gone along with this standard understanding of accessibility. But for all I have argued, it is an open question whether being appropriately held responsible to a reason requires that the person be in a position to know the reason by reflection alone. Perhaps it is enough that the reason is easily knowable, even if a fact about the world which has not yet made a difference to the person's mind.[28] As we can see, there are different options for the strongest sense in which one must be able to access x if x is to be a potentially motivating reason for one. And as I discuss in §7, the accessibilist theory which results may draw the internal/external boundary farther out in the surrounding world than the boundary drawn by mentalism.

But given that x is a potentially motivating reason just in case it is appropriate to hold one responsible to x, and given that this is appropriate only if the person can take x into account in her reasoning, it is plausible that there is *some* sense in which one must be able to access x if x is to be a potentially motivating reason. For, plausibly, a person can take x into account in her reasoning only if she can access x, in some sense. Given that

26 One sense in which one must be able to access it is that there is some metaphysically possible world in which one accesses it. A significantly stronger sense is required.

27 The deontologist may want to allow that some ways of coming to believe fall outside the scope of her view. These are ways that would be screened off from the question of whether it is blameless for one to believe, and so screened off from the question of whether one is justified to believe. An example of such a way of coming to believe might be Dr. Evil shooting his belief altering ray gun at one. Even if, in this sense, there is a way of coming to believe such that if I came to believe in that way, I could not be appropriately blamed, it does not follow that, *in the relevant sense*, it is blameless for me to believe.

28 John Gibbons (2006) has a view along these lines. An issue worth flagging is that this kind of accessibilism does not appear to capture the intuition behind the new evil demon problem. In this connection, see footnote 39.

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accessibility is access one can have, in whatever sense turns out to be required, the upshot is that only accessible things are potentially motivating reasons. This upshot is (7a).

Let us turn to

(7b) For all x, whether x is a potentially motivating reason S has is determined by the facts about what x is (intrinsically) and whether x is accessible to S.

One might object to (7b) in the following way. No matter what the item is that is accessible to one, it is always *possible* for one to have some kind of disability that prevents it from potentially motivating one.[29] But then, in addition to the facts about what x is and whether x is accessible, we need to add the fact that the subject has the relevant abilities, to fix whether x is a potentially motivating reason.

A response to this objection is available. We can endorse the view that part of what it *is* for a mental state to be an accessing of x, in particular, is for the one in this state to have a disposition to transition from this state to a range of other mental states, where this range of states is fixed by what x is.[30] With this view in hand, we could say that, for any item of the relevant kind, to have a disability that prevents it from potentially motivating one is for it to *fail* to be accessible to one in the first place.

Moreover, if this response is on track, it follows that (7b) is true. For then any item of the relevant kind, *if* accessible in the first place, is a potentially motivating reason. And this is to say that the facts about what x is and whether x is accessible suffice to fix whether x is a potentially motivating reason: (7b) is true. Of course, the envisioned response to the objection involves a substantive, likely controversial view.[31] The point is merely that (7) is defensible.

The only remaining premise is (5), which affirms deontologism. What to make of deontologism is a major issue I have not the space to discuss. Some argue it is a mistake to think of justification as blamelessness in the first place.[32] Others argue that deontologism presupposes we have a kind of control over belief that we do not, in fact, possess.[33] In this paper, I must leave as an open question whether deontologism can be developed in a plausible way. I will say that deontologism is a common enough idea, so it is worthwhile making clear how it could motivate accessibilism. (5)–(8) does so.

In §5, I explained how $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ and $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ each appears to be supported by the motivations for accessibilism, namely the case of Norman, the new evil demon problem, and deontologism. Each of the two ways of understanding these motivations appealed to the plausible idea that only accessible things are potentially motivating reasons. However, the (1)–(4) argument for $(A)^{\text{very things}}$ conflates potentially motivating reasons and justification explanation reasons. Once we are clear on the distinction between

29 Someone with this disability might be like the Tortoise in Carroll's (1895: 278–80) fable.

30 See, e.g., Wedgwood (2007: 165–7) and Levin (2013: §4.3).

31 Even if we shy away from the envisioned response, notice that the objection does not touch a view otherwise identical to $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ save one revision. This is the view that whether S is justified to believe *p* is determined by the facts about which things are accessible to S *plus the facts about which abilities S has*. Even if $(A)^{\text{facts about}}$ turns out to be false, to offer a starting point from which to take, if needed, these kinds of small steps from disaster is a service to anyone who finds accessibilism's motivations attractive.

32 See, e.g., Pryor (2001: 114–15) and Wedgwood (2002: 351).

33 See especially Alston (1989: 115–52).

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these two kinds of reasons, it is the (5)–(8) argument for (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$ which is the real upshot of the plausible idea that only accessible things are potentially motivating reasons. Finally, we have seen that while (5)–(8) employs substantive premises, the argument is defensible. So, it is (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$, not (A)$^{\text{very things}}$, which enjoys genuine support from the motivations for accessibilism.

7. CONCLUSION

I began by showing that accessibilism is ambiguous because 'what is accessible to the subject' is ambiguous. The phrase either refers to the very things accessible to the subject, or instead to the facts about which things are accessible to her. I then argued that the failure to appreciate this ambiguity leads to misunderstandings of accessibilism. I showed that a regress objection threatens (A)$^{\text{very things}}$ but not (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$. After this, I explained why the motivations for accessibilism appear to support both (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$ and (A)$^{\text{very things}}$. This appearance serves as an error theory that would explain why some might have taken (A)$^{\text{very things}}$ to be the heart of accessibilism. But I argued that once we are clear on the distinction between potentially motivating reasons and justification explanation reasons, it is (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$, not (A)$^{\text{very things}}$, which enjoys genuine support from the motivations for accessibilism. So, not only is it true that whether the regress objection hits its mark depends on the 'very things/facts about' ambiguity, whether the motivations for accessibilism provide genuine support depends on this ambiguity, as well. Compared to (A)$^{\text{very things}}$, (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$ gets the better end of the stick on both counts: it entirely escapes the objection, and enjoys genuine support from the motivations.

For these reasons, I submit that future discussions of accessibilism should focus on (A)$^{\text{facts about}}$. That is, we should define accessibilism as follows:

accessibilism Whether S is justified to believe *p* is determined by the *facts about* which things are accessible to S.

With my main argument complete, it is worth asking whether accessibilism, so understood, could explain why mentalism should be true. Mentalism, recall, is the other main version of internalism, according to which justification is determined by the subject's mental states.[34]

For traction on this question about mentalism, recall the deontological motivation for accessibilism developed in §6.4. According to that motivation, the facts about which things are accessible to S determine justification precisely because they determine the facts about which reasons it is appropriate to hold S responsible to. Reasons it is appropriate to hold S responsible to, recall, are reasons it would be appropriate to blame S for responding to in one way rather than another. This motivation rests on the thought that it

34 Williamson (2000) has argued that *knowledge* is a mental state. In the sense of 'internal' mentalists usually have in mind, though, knowledge includes elements not internal to the subject. Notice, for example, how Wedgwood (2002: 358) restricts mentalism to "non-factive" mental states. I take this restriction to narrow mental states to be standard for mentalists. To simplify my discussion of the relationship between accessibilism and mentalism, I shall assume this standard understanding of mentalism. For related discussion, see footnote 38.

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is appropriate to hold S responsible to a reason only if, in *some* sense, that reason is accessible to S. But as I mentioned, it is an open question what kind of accessibility is required.

Perhaps it is appropriate to hold S responsible to a reason only if S is in a position to know it by reflection alone. If so, deontologism vindicates the standard understanding of accessibility as knowability by reflection alone. And when in the shape this standard understanding provides, accessibilism explains mentalism. For, as the notion is normally understood, S is in a position to know a fact by reflection alone just in case S is able to come to know that fact just by looking into S's own mind.[35] For example, the fact that S is in pain – a fact we called Pain in §4 – is normally knowable by reflection alone. Of course, given Anti-Luminosity, Pain does not *entail* its knowability by reflection alone. But so long as the facts about which mental states S has determine the facts about which mental capacities and dispositions S has, these facts determine whether Pain is knowable by reflection alone. For these facts determine whether, at that time, S's reflective discriminatory capacities are up to the task of coming to know Pain by reflection alone. And if mental facts determine the facts about which things S is in a position to know by reflection alone, and these facts in turn determine justification, then mental facts determine justification.[36]

On the other hand, to appropriately hold S responsible to a reason, perhaps it is enough that the reason is easily knowable, even if a fact about the world which has not yet made a difference to the person's mind. Consider an example from John Gibbons,[37] in which a note on a person's fridge says they are out of cream cheese. Even if the note never enters the person's field of vision, it might be appropriate to hold her responsible to the fact that it is there, and conclude that she is not justified to believe she will soon be eating a cream cheese omelet. For the fact in question is easily knowable. When shaped by this looser understanding of the accessibility required for responsibility, accessibilism conflicts with mentalism. For, as Gibbons' example illustrates, the facts about which things are easily knowable come apart from the mental facts. Though non-standard, this kind of accessibilism is still a kind of internalism, it just draws the internal/external

35 It is not universally so understood. For example, Pryor (2001: 104) defines *reflection* as any combination of introspection, a priori reasoning, and one's memory of the results of introspection or a priori reasoning. So, for Pryor, introspection is just one kind of reflection.

36 Alvin Goldman (1999) criticizes the following explanation of mentalism: justification is determined by the very things accessible to one, but only mental states are accessible to one; so, justification is determined by one's mental states. That explanation begins with (A)$^{\text{very things}}$, not with accessibilism as I have argued we should understand it. Correlatively, while the bridge to mentalism on the explanation Goldman criticizes is that only mental states are accessible, the bridge to mentalism on the explanation I have suggested is that mental facts determine the facts about which things are accessible.

37 Gibbons (2006: 22). Gibbons does not motivate his style of accessibilism via deontologism. Concerning his example, Gibbons says:

> While I will rely on your intuitions about when people ought to know and believe things, nothing I say will rely in any way on anyone's intuitions about when blaming someone is appropriate. (2006: 22)

Even so, for all I have argued, a Gibbons-style accessibilism could find motivation in deontologism. This depends on the degree to which the following is plausible: that it is appropriate to hold one responsible to an easily knowable fact which has not yet made a difference to the person's mind. For discussion of this point, see footnote 40.

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boundary farther out in the surrounding world than the boundary drawn by mentalism.[38,39]

Yet another possibility is that a reason need not be *know*able, in the first place, for it to be appropriate to hold S responsible to it. To illustrate with a toy theory, perhaps it is appropriate to hold a person responsible to all and only the contents of their beliefs and experiences, including the contents of false beliefs and hallucinatory experiences.[40] On

38 According to internalism, justification is determined by what is, in some sense, internal to the subject. The facts about which things are easily knowable to the subject are internal to her in *some* sense, even if not the sense standard accessibilists have in mind. Standard accessibilists are also mentalists. But accessibilism and mentalism are different ways of making the general idea behind internalism concrete, and they are not necessarily equivalent. I thank an anonymous referee for pressing me to clarify whether a view like Gibbon's qualifies as a kind of internalism.

On this point, it is worth mentioning that while Gibbons-style accessibilism is a kind of internalism, it is *also* a kind of externalism. For it is a form of non-mentalism. Succinctly, Gibbons endorses the accessibilist way of making the general idea behind internalism concrete, but rejects the mentalist way. In this connection, Gibbons-style accessibilism can be compared to, and contrasted with, Williamson-style accessibilism. For Williamson (2000), justification is determined by the facts about which things one knows. Like Gibbons' accessibilism, Williamson's accessibilism also qualifies as non-mentalism. At least, it does so if we assume, as I discuss in footnote 34, the standard understanding of mentalism. On the standard understanding, the relevant mental states are narrow or non-factive. Interestingly, if we permit factive mental states, Williamson's view qualifies as mentalism. By contrast, there appears to be no understanding of mentalism on which Gibbons' view qualifies as a form thereof. I thank an anonymous referee for encouraging me to discuss whether accessibilism is compatible with a form of externalism.

39 It is worth asking whether Gibbons-style accessibilism can capture the intuition behind the new evil demon problem for reliabilism. By my lights, it cannot. When we imagine a world in which a demon severs the reliable connection between experience and true belief which obtains in the normal world, the common intuition is that we are justified to believe the same propositions in both worlds. But in severing the reliable connection between experience and true belief, the demon also changes the facts about which things are easily knowable. So, on Gibbons-style accessibilism, it is *false* that we are justified to believe the same propositions in both worlds. Hence, rather than enjoying its support, this kind of view would need to explain away the intuition behind the new evil demon problem.

40 For precedence, see Schroeder (2008). I prefer this toy theory. Consider the more traditional view that it is appropriate to hold a person responsible to a reason only if she is in a position to know it by reflection alone. By my lights, this view encourages a psychologically unrealistic picture of the reasons one can take into account in one's reasoning. For reasons knowable by reflection alone are all and only facts about one's own mind. But it appears that many of the reasons we take into account in our reasoning are propositions concerning the world, not our own minds. The toy theory in question allows this, for many of our beliefs and experiences have contents which concern the world.

And consider the view that it is appropriate to hold a person responsible to a reason so long as it is easily knowable. By my lights, this view falters in exactly the kind of case Gibbons highlights. Especially if we think of blame as resentment or indignation, it does not seem appropriate to blame the person who believes she will soon be eating a cream cheese omelet for failing to respond to the unseen note on the fridge *unless* we think she is blameworthy for failing to check the fridge for notes. But she is blameworthy for failing to check the fridge only if she has reasons which could guide her to check in the first place, and guide her in a more immediate sense than the yet unseen note could guide her. Presumably, to have a reason which can guide in this more immediate sense requires some kind of mental difference. For this reason, I suspect it is not appropriate to hold one responsible to all easily knowable reasons, as some do not make this kind of difference. By contrast, to have a particular proposition as the content of a belief or experience is for such a mental difference to be in place.

In short, concerning reasons it is appropriate to hold one responsible to, the toy theory maintains *both* that these reasons can be about the outside world, and that persons mentally the same have the

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this kind of picture, the facts about which things are accessible to S are a subtype of the facts about which mental states S has. So, on this picture, if the facts about which things are accessible determine justification, then mental facts determine justification, too.

The moral is that whether accessibilism explains mentalism depends on the shape accessibilism takes. And insofar as deontologism is accessibilism's *raison d'être*, this shape depends on what it takes to appropriately hold a person responsible to a reason. But that is a question for another day.[41]

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same reasons. Of course, modulo the nuances in footnote 34, facts about the outside world can vary independently of the mind. This is why, on the toy theory, reasons about the world are not *facts* about the world. Instead, they are *propositions* about the world, some of which are false. Hearkening back to an issue discussed in footnote 9, the idea that non-facts can be potentially motivating reasons is, I take it, non-standard. But further discussion of this point shall have to wait for another day.

41 I trace to a discussion with Jim Van Cleve my first coming to believe that some definitions of accessibilism are ambiguous in the manner discussed in this paper. For invaluable discussion and feedback on drafts of this paper, I thank Janet Levin, Jim Van Cleve, Mark Schroeder, and, most of all, Ralph Wedgwood. I would also like to thank the audience members of a colloquium session at the Pacific APA, 2016, for helpful discussion of an ancestor of this paper. In addition, I would like to thank Jesse Wilson, Jonathan Wright, Joe Horton, Abelard Podgorski, Kenneth Silver, and Nicholas Laskowski for feedback on ancestors of this paper.

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MICHAEL HATCHER is a graduate student at the University of Southern California. His research interests are in epistemology, action theory, and philosophy of mind.

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