

From *Epistemic Internalism* to *Facts*

Term Paper for Alvin Plantinga's Epistemology Course

If the sense which perceives sight were different from sight, we must either fall into an infinite regress, or we must somewhere assume a sense which is aware of itself.

--Aristotle (*De Anima*, III.2)

§1. Introduction

My plan is to mark out a pathway from *epistemic internalism* to the existence of *facts*.

The surface goal is to reveal an ontological implication of internalism. There is a second, perhaps more important goal, which is to show how having facts in hand allows an internalist to satisfy a primary motivation for her view without requiring that one be aware (or potentially aware) of *that* which makes her belief justified. If this secondary goal is met, then an internalist may motivate her view without endorsing a standard internalist requirement.

The plan will unfold as follows. The first order of business is to describe what internalism *is*—the core components and motivation of the view. I'll then lay out an argument for the existence of *facts* based upon the assumption that internalism is true. Finally, I'll show how this ontological implication of internalism may help internalists fine-tune their view.

§2. What is Internalism?

There is controversy over just what internalism comes to.¹ But for our purposes, we don't need to get things exact. Michael Bergmann has paid considerable attention to the

¹ See Richard Fumerton, "The Internalism/Externalism Controversy," *Philosophical Perspectives* vol. 2 (1998): 443-59.

question of how internalism ought to be characterized, and he offers the following as a rough characterization: if any belief has certain virtues (or properties) in virtue of which it counts as *justified*, then the one who has such a belief is (or can be) *aware* of those virtues. What's central to the view, according to Bergmann, is *awareness*.²

I'll say more about what awareness is supposed to be shortly. But for now, notice that Bergmann characterizes internalism as a view about *justification*. One might prefer to describe *distinct* internalist views for each desirable property that a belief may have. For example, internalism with respect to *warrant*—that property, whatever it is, that makes the difference between knowledge and mere true belief—may be characterized as the view that a belief is warranted for a subject only if the subject is (or can be) aware of *that* in virtue of which the belief is warranted. For the purposes of this paper, however, I shall focus on internalism with respect to *justification*.

How should we characterize *justification*? Well, that is the *very question* under dispute by internalists and externalists. Yet, if there is a genuine disagreement over the *nature* of justification, rather than a merely verbal disagreement over which epistemic property we should *call* 'justification', or a methodological disagreement over which epistemic properties we should *care* about, then internalists and externalists ought to be able to say at least *something* about the thing over which they disagree. Bergmann thinks there *is* genuine disagreement and that it is over a property—what he calls, *ordinary justification*—that's "more objective than subjective deontological justification (understood as epistemic blamelessness) and yet insufficient for warrant."³ In this paper, I won't need to suppose that justification is insufficient for warrant. What I require is just

² Michael Bergmann, *Justification Without Awareness: A Defense of Epistemic Externalism* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 266.

that a necessary condition for a belief's being justified is that it has a certain positive epistemic property *J* that contributes, in a way that may be hard to precisely specify, to the *likelihood* of that belief's being true. Internalists and externalists alike typically require that justified beliefs be *truth-conducive*, or likely to be true.⁴ So, I will assume that justification requires some such condition. *Epistemic internalism* then is the view that the instantiation of *J* by a belief *B* crucially depends upon the subject of *B* being *aware* (or potentially aware) of something related to the instantiation of *J*.

The characterization of internalism on the table fits with what's called *access internalism*. Access internalists think that if one has a justified belief, then one has *cognitive access* to the grounds or justification of that belief. If, as I shall assume, *cognitive access* is to be analyzed in terms of *awareness* or *potential awareness*, then *access internalism* meets my characterization of internalism.

There are a couple additional views about the nature of justification that often go under the label "internalism." One is that epistemic justification is to be analyzed in terms of fulfilling one's intellectual duties or responsibilities.⁵ The other is that justification for believing various propositions supervenes on one's mental states.⁶ However interesting and provocative these theories of justification may be, I shall focus my attention on the view that awareness is necessary for justification.

³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴ Examples of Internalists who explicitly require that justified beliefs be *truth-conducive* (in some sense) include Timothy and Lydia McGrew and Laurence Bonjour. Externalists include Alvin Plantinga and Alvin Goldman.

⁵ Plantinga regards the view that justification is aptness for epistemic duty fulfillment to be the view of justification that is central to paradigm internalists. See Plantinga, *Warrant the Current Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 25.

⁶ See Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, "Internalism Defended" in *Epistemology: Internalism and Externalism*, ed. Hilary Kornblith (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).

It's time to say something about *awareness*. Bergmann considers two kinds of awareness: *doxastic awareness* and *non-doxastic awareness*. If a subject *S* is *doxastically* aware of something, then *S* has a certain *belief* about it.⁷ Bergmann argues against the coherence of any view that requires that justified beliefs depend upon doxastic awareness. His argument is this. If one requires that a justified belief depend upon doxastic awareness, then one faces a regress that appears to prevent any belief from being justified. For, if one requires *actual* doxastic awareness, then *every* justified belief would have to depend for its justification upon a distinct and more complicated belief having to do with the thing one is doxastically aware of; and if one requires *potential* doxastic awareness, then if one can form any justified beliefs, then one should be *able to* form infinitely many justified beliefs. Since Bergmann finds both consequents impossible, he believes that the view that justification requires doxastic awareness is incoherent.⁸

Non-doxastic awareness appears to be on firmer ground. Bergmann finds no reason to think that requiring it for justification entails impossible consequents. The usual complaints against making it a requirement on justification are that it's unmotivated or that it's a mystery just what non-doxastic awareness is supposed to be.

Let's consider these complaints in turn. To provide a good (non-pragmatic) motivation for requiring non-doxastic awareness is to provide a good reason to think that epistemic internalism is true. It is beyond the scope of this paper to argue for epistemic internalism. But having a handle on what internalism is supposed to *do* may give us a firmer grip on what internalism to *be*. After gathering data from the texts of leading

⁷ A notable example of an internalist theory that requires *doxastic* awareness is what William Alston calls "perspectival internalism"—roughly, the view that if one's belief is justified, then one has knowledge or a justified belief concerning *that* which confers justification on that belief. See Alston, "Internalism and Externalism in Epistemology," *Philosophical Topics* vol. 14 (1986): 179-221.

internalists, Bergmann suggests that the primary motivation for internalism is that if one lacks awareness of what one's belief has going for it, then it is an *accident from one's perspective* that one's belief is true. The belief is, therefore, not justified. So, a primary motivation for internalism is to account for the justification of one's belief in terms of what one can tell from one's first-person perspective.

Non-doxastic awareness then allows one to tell *from one's perspective* the epistemic virtues of a belief, but it isn't *itself* a belief. So far, I've exchanged the mystery of *awareness* for the mystery of *perspective*. To further elucidate the concept of non-doxastic awareness, I'll briefly describe two of its essential features and then offer a scenario in which someone is aware of something.

First, non-doxastic awareness is *direct*. That is, it relates a subject to an object of awareness without requiring that the subject be aware of (or have some epistemic attitude toward) something *else*—such a sense datum or phenomenal experience. Second, it is *sui generis* and *irreducible*. A subject's awareness isn't to be analyzed in terms of non-epistemic factors or in terms of doxastic states. For example, *being aware of x* is not analyzed in terms of being in a cognitive state that's *caused by x*.⁹ The relation that ties a subject to the thing of which a subject is aware is a *sui generis* epistemic and cannot be analyzed in terms of other familiar relations (e.g. causal, or doxastic). I believe it's this feature of awareness which has inclined many philosophers to be skeptical about whether there is any such relation.

⁸ Bergmann, *Justification without Awareness*, 14-19.

⁹ By contrast, consider Robert Audi's account of *perception*. According to Audi, perception of *x* requires among other things that one be in a phenomenal state that was caused by *x*. See Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 15.

To see why one might countenance non-doxastic awareness, consider the following scenario. You are walking to your car while thinking hard about a philosophy article that you've read recently, Russell's *On Denoting*. While you are doing so, a bird flies across your field of vision. But you are so focused on your thoughts that you don't form any *beliefs* about the bird or your visual field. If you formed any beliefs at all during the time the bird was in your field of vision, they were beliefs having to do with Russell's article. In this scenario, there appears to be a non-doxastic epistemic relation (awareness) that you stand in to the bird or the bird-like experience.

Although it's debatable whether this situation is really possible—whether a bird could be in one's "visual field" without one forming any beliefs about it—the scenario above is designed to illustrate what it would be like to stand in a non-doxastic epistemic relation to an object. However, those attracted to adverbial theories of perception may reply that what I've illustrated is not what it's like to be *aware of something*, but rather what it's like to be in a state of *being appeared to* in a certain way. For example, when the bird is in your "visual field," you exemplify the property of *having a visual experience as if there were a bird*—of *being appeared to birdly*. This may be correct. I only wish to point out that for an internalist who thinks that awareness is direct and irreducible, a *way of being appeared to* is just *what it's like* to be directly aware of something. Awareness is the fundamental relation, and a *way of being appeared to* is to be analyzed in terms of *it*.¹⁰

¹⁰ That awareness is fundamental to certain experiences may explain why many internalists (for example, Locke and Hume, as well as contemporary philosopher, Michael Tooley) have been attracted to a *sense data* theory to account for the objects of awareness during non-veridical experiences, such as hallucination. The idea is that if my experience during a hallucination is identical to one of my veridical experiences, then there is a *something*, a sense data, of which I'm aware in the hallucination which is identical to the thing of which I'm aware during the veridical experience. But for a defense of direct

§3. From Internalism to Facts

So much for what epistemic internalism *is*. I'll now argue that if it's *true*, then there are facts, and that facts are distinct from propositions and states of affairs. Facts, as Russell and Armstrong believed, form their own ontological category.¹¹ They are not types of propositions, say those that are true. Facts can be characterized as those entities that *make* propositions true: They are truth-makers. Minimally, this means that for every true proposition *P*, there is a fact (or are many facts), such that *P* is true if and only if that fact exists (or the many facts exist). I'll leave it open whether or not facts are *structured* (have parts or constituents) or are ontologically simple. The facts that $2+2=4$ or that *Josh is kissing Rachel* are examples of what I am calling 'facts'. In general, a fact can be thought of as a truth-maker in which entities stand in relations to other entities. What I shall argue is that if internalism is true, then there are such entities. The argument is as follows:

1. Necessarily, for any belief *B*, if *B* is justified for a human subject *S*, then $\exists x$, such that
 - a. *S* is directly aware of *x*.
 - b. *B* is based upon *S*'s being aware of *x*.
 - c. That *S* is aware of *x* is a *truth-indicator* for *B*.
2. Possibly, if $\exists x$ (*x* is a *fact*), then (a) – (c) are true with respect to a belief that *Josh is kissing Rachel*.
3. Necessarily, if $\sim\exists x$ (*x* is a *fact*), then (a) – (c) are not true with respect to any belief that *Josh is kissing Rachel*.
4. Therefore, necessarily, if any belief that *Josh is kissing Rachel* is justified, then $\exists x$ (*x* is a *fact*).
5. There is a belief that *Josh is kissing Rachel* which is justified (my own).

awareness of properties of the external world, see the Mark Johnston, "Obscure Object of Hallucination," *Philosophical Studies* 120 (2004): 113-183.

¹¹ See Bertrand Russell, *Logical Atomism* (Chicago: Open Court, 1985); David Armstrong, *A world of States of Affairs* (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

6. Therefore, $\exists x$ (x is a *fact*)

Each premise requires elaboration and defense. Let's start with (1). It expresses a necessary condition on internalist justification. A justified belief requires awareness, and that awareness must somehow be a *truth-indicator* for (contribute to the likelihood of) the belief formed on the basis of it. "What is a *truth-indicator*?" you ask. Here's my answer. Proposition P is a *truth-indicator* for proposition $Q =_{\text{def}} \Pr(P, Q) \gg 0.5$, where $\Pr(A/B)$ is the objective probability that A is true if B is true. Truth-indicators indicate a significantly greater than 50% chance that a certain proposition is true.¹²

Notice that *every* proposition is a truth-indicator for every *necessarily true* proposition. For example, the probability that $2+2=4$ is greater than 0.5 if the proposition that *Externalism is all the rage these days* is true, since the probability that $2+2=4$ is equal to 1 no matter *what else* is the case. Thus, the proposition that *Externalism is all the rage these days* is a truth-indicator for the proposition that $2+2=4$. Similarly, the proposition that I'm aware of something—no matter what it happens to be—is a truth-indicator for the proposition that $2+2=4$.

Yet, surely if beliefs are justified in virtue of what one is aware of, then not just any old thing of which one is aware will contribute to the justification of one's belief. It matters *what* one is aware of. What this reveals is that on my definition of *being a truth-indicator for*, conditions (a) – (c) aren't always *sufficient* for internalist justification. I could be aware of something, say a flash of light, such that my being aware of it is a

¹² I might have said that if x is a *truth-indicator* for y , then one who is aware of x is in the right epistemic position to infer y . But then I would have to say what I mean by *right epistemic position*. Unfortunately, I know no way of doing *that* without already having an account of justification in hand. Since 'truth-indicator' is a term used in my partial account of justification, it will not help us to define 'truth-indicator' by using the term, 'justification'.

truth-indicator for the proposition that $2+2=4$ and yet my belief that $2+2=4$ is not justified. So, there should be additional awareness requirements for at least some beliefs. For example, perhaps in the case of beliefs about necessary propositions, one must be aware of the *truth-maker* for those propositions or of a truth-maker that's very similar to the truth-maker for those propositions. But I don't want to beg the question in favor of the existence of truth-makers (facts). So, I'll leave it an open question what additional conditions must be satisfied for a belief to count as justified for an internalist. What I require for my argument is that at the very least, if a belief is justified, then there is a truth-indicator for it that's of the form "S is aware of X".

The second premise states that it's possible for conditions (a) – (c) to be met for a belief having the propositional content that *Josh is kissing Rachel* if there are facts. The point of the premise is to state that facts allow beliefs formed on the basis of awareness to be justified. Facts fit the bill, so to speak. But the way I've stated the premise has the awkward result that *either* there are facts—which is the conclusion of the argument—*or else* the premise is trivially true. To see this, consider that if facts are *impossible*, then every conditional whose antecedent affirms the existence of facts is true. It then follows that the conditional in (2) is true. If, on the other hand, facts are *possible*, then, it seems that they would *actually* exist. It would be very odd for there to be some worlds in which propositions have truth-makers but for the actual world to not be one of them. So, either facts exist or else (2) is trivially true. I don't see that this result is bad news for my argument. It just shows that arguing that facts "fit the bill" is only needed for my argument if it is granted that facts are possible and yet *not granted* that the possibility of facts entails that there actually be any.

Let's suppose that facts are possible but not grant that the possibility of facts entails that there actually are any. If there are things that we are aware of, then it seems that facts, if they are possible, could be objects of awareness. If, for example, the fact that *I am feeling happy* were to exist, that fact would seem to be something of which I could be aware. However, even if one feels somewhat uneasy about accepting that facts, if there were any, could be objects of awareness, that person should feel far more uneasy about the alternative, as I shall argue. That is, my plan is to show that if there were no facts of which we can be aware, then no one could ever be justified in their ordinary beliefs about the relations objects stand in to one another (e.g. that *Josh kissing Rachel*).

If we grant the possibility that there are facts of which one can be aware, then the conclusion that facts would allow beliefs to satisfy (a) – (c) is not far off. Consider the belief *B* that *Josh is kissing Rachel*. Call its propositional content be *P*. Now if *some* true propositions enjoy truth-makers, then surely *every* one does. So, if there are facts, then there are one or more facts that serve as a truth-maker for *P*.

I won't require that there be just *one* fact for each proposition that makes the proposition true. Perhaps some propositions are made true by several facts working together. For example, perhaps the proposition that *Sally is taller than John* is made true by the facts that *Sally is 6 feet tall*, that *John is 4 feet tall*, and that $6 > 4$. Alternatively, perhaps there is a fact, namely, that *Sally is taller than John*, which exists too and which is the truth-maker for the proposition that *Sally is taller than John*. In either case, if there are facts that serve as truth-makers, it is plausible that there are one or more facts that serve as a truth-maker for *P*.

Now the proposition P^* that *P's truth-maker exists* is a truth-indicator for P , since necessarily, if P^* is true, then so is P . The proposition A that *I'm aware of P^** is also a truth-indicator for P , since necessarily if A is true, then so is P . Furthermore, any proposition on which A is probable is a truth-indicator for P . Therefore, if I can be aware of the truth-maker for P or of any truth-maker for a proposition on which P is probable, then any belief formed on the basis of my being aware of that truth-maker satisfies (a) – (c). Since it seems reasonable to suppose that I, or at least *someone*, can be aware of a truth-maker (or truth-makers) for a proposition on which P is probable, I conclude that conditions (a) – (c) can be met for a belief that P if there are facts.¹³

What if there are no facts? According to (3), if there are no facts, then (a) – (c) are not true with respect to any belief having the propositional content that *Josh is kissing Rachel*. I will argue for (3) by considering alternatives to facts of which one might be aware and show that none of them can allow (a) – (c) to be satisfied. The candidates that I'll consider are these: substances, properties, relations, propositions, states of affairs, and any combination of the above.

Substances.

¹³ If one thinks that one can't be aware of facts in the *external world*, then there will have to be facts about one's own experiences of which one can be aware such that P is probable given their existence. This is plausible, I think, if awareness is *fundamental* to intentional experiences—if say, intentional experiences just *are* states of awareness. For then it would be impossible for there to be creatures who have the *same* phenomenal experience that I have when I'm aware of the fact that $2+2=4$ or of the fact that *I'm aware of a state of affairs consisting in a yellow ball bouncing* and yet who aren't aware of those *same* facts. For, phenomenal experiences would bring us into direct awareness of facts, and awareness of such experiences would entail awareness of *our awareness* of certain facts. If that's right, then it seems to me that many facts concerning what facts one is aware of would not exist unless it were likely that certain propositions about the external world were true. Unfortunately, a full defense of this claim deserves more attention than I can give here. It suffices to say, however, that the prospect of being aware of facts on which P is probable isn't nearly as dismal as the alternative that one can be aware of an instance of some *other* category on which P is probable, as we shall see.

What substances could I be aware of such that my awareness of them is a truth-indicator for the proposition *P* that *Josh is kissing Rachel*? Perhaps I could be aware of *Josh* and of *Rachel*. But my awareness of those things won't make it likely that the one is *kissing* the other. Josh's kissing Rachel requires that Josh stand in certain *relations* to Rachel, but the very existence of Josh and Rachel or *any other* substance doesn't guarantee or make it at all likely that any of those relations hold. Therefore, my awareness of Josh and of Rachel or of any other substances isn't a truth-indicator for *P*.

Properties.

Timothy and Lydia McGrew believe that some phenomenal experiences are identical to one's grasping (being aware of) the *truth* of a proposition, and so cannot be misleading.¹⁴ It's not easy to see just what sort of thing "the truth of a proposition" is supposed to be. But it *is* easy to see that it can't be a property, such as the property of *being true*. By simply being aware of the property *being true*, one can't thereby tell *which* proposition *has* that property. Thus, being aware of *being true* isn't enough for a belief based upon such awareness to have internalist justification. Being aware of *being true* or any other property isn't enough to satisfy the necessary conditions, (a)-(c), of the justification of a belief that *P* (*Josh is kissing Rachel*). The reason is simply that the mere *existence* of properties or my awareness of them in no way affects the probability that *P* is true. Therefore, there is no property, such that my awareness of it is a truth-indicator for *P*.

Relations.

¹⁴ Timothy McGrew and Lydia McGrew, *Internalism and Epistemology* (Routledge, 2007), 46.

Clearly relations won't help either. No matter what relation I'm aware of, that won't help me to tell anything at all about *Josh* or *Rachel* or which relation, if any, stands between them.

Propositions.

Suppose that I'm aware of the proposition *P*. Should that indicate that *P* is true? Not if it's no less a feat to be aware of *false* propositions than to be aware of *true* ones. Yet, it seems to be quite easy to be aware of false propositions. Consider the proposition that $2+2=3$. I am aware of this proposition by grasping it or bringing it before my mind; and it's false. Clearly, many other examples could be given. Indeed, it seems to me that I'm aware of at *least as many*, if not *more*, false propositions than true ones. I assume that something similar seems to be the case for *you* too. So, it is evident that being aware of *P* or any other proposition isn't a truth-indicator for *P*.

States of affairs.

Some, like David Armstrong, think that states of affairs cannot exist without obtaining.¹⁵ If they are right, then states of affairs can play the role of facts, in which case my argument can be viewed as an argument for facts, whether they are *Armstrong states of affairs* or something else. But if states of affairs—such as the state of affairs of *Josh's kissing Rachel*—can exist without obtaining, then awareness of a state of affairs won't be a truth-indicator for *P*. The reason is that it's just as easy, I think, to be aware of non-obtaining states of affairs (e.g. the state of affairs of $2+2$ *being equal to 3*) as it is to be aware of obtaining ones. Therefore, just as awareness of a proposition isn't, in general, a

¹⁵ See for example, Armstrong, *A World of States of Affairs*.

truth-indicator for that proposition, so too, awareness of a state of affairs isn't a truth-indicator for the proposition that that state of affairs obtains.

One might counter that states of affairs are relevantly different than propositions in that necessarily, if one is aware of a state of affairs, then that state of affairs obtains. For example, when I look at my hands, I am aware of the state of affairs of my hands having a certain shape and size. But if that state of affairs didn't obtain, then (perhaps) I couldn't be aware of it. If that's so, then we may make do with states of affairs and do away with facts (as a distinct category).

I don't have a knock-down argument to rule this possibility out definitively. But I do believe that I have a *fairly* strong argument for ruling it out. Recall that non-doxastic awareness is supposed to be *direct* and *irreducible*. It is *direct* in that it relates a subject to an object of awareness without requiring that the subject be aware of something *else*—such a phenomenal experience. It is *irreducible* in that a subject's awareness isn't to be analyzed in terms of additional conditions—such as those having to do with what caused the subject to be in a cognitive state resulting in awareness. Now consider a situation in which a person has a very vivid dream that is phenomenologically indistinguishable from her veridical experience of a *elephant-like figure following after a mouse-like figure*. Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that one can be aware of states of affairs, and that if our dreamer were to have a phenomenal experience *E* just like the one she had in her dream, except that it were veridical, then she would be aware of a state of affairs *S* of an *elephant-like figure following after a mouse-like figure*. In that case, it seems plausible that *E* is *what it's like* (from the inside, so to speak) to be directly aware of *S*, given that awareness doesn't depend upon additional conditions, say, those having to do with causal

inputs leading to one's state of awareness.¹⁶ If that's right, then the dreamer is aware of *S* whenever she has *E*, even in her vivid dream. Yet, while she is dreaming, it is very likely that the state of affairs of which she is aware does not obtain. Therefore, it's possible to be aware of states of affairs that don't obtain.

Of course, one is not normally dreaming or hallucinating. So, perhaps it is still *likely* that if one is directly aware of a state of affairs, then that state of affairs obtains. Maybe so. But it is surely a *contingent* matter that this is how things are. Even if it is true for *us* in *our* world that one is more often aware of states of affairs that obtain than ones that don't, it doesn't follow that a world like ours is at all likely. Plausibly, a significant portion of the worlds contain subjects who are more often dreaming or hallucinating than enjoying direct awareness of obtaining states of affairs. As a result, the probability that *P* is true, given *just* that a subject is aware of the state of affairs of *Josh's kissing Rachel* (or a similar state of affairs) is not, I think, going to be significantly greater than 0.5.¹⁷ Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that there's no state of affairs, such that one's awareness of it is a truth-indicator for *P*.

Mixes of Substances, Properties, Propositions, and States of Affairs.

It's not hard to see that if awareness of any instance of the above categories won't do the trick (that is, allow for a belief to meet conditions (a) – (c)), then neither will awareness of any combination of instances of the above categories. If I were aware of the substances, *Josh* and *Rachel*, that wouldn't help me to see that Josh is *kissing* Rachel. If I were additionally aware of the kissing relation, that would in know way help me to see

¹⁶ For a defense of a view along these lines, see Johnston, "Obscure Object of Hallucination," *Philosophical Studies* 120 (2004): 113-183.

¹⁷ It may be that worlds in which one is normally only aware of those states of affairs that obtain are worlds in which one's awareness of states of affairs is not a result of one's *will* or *subconscious* but is

that that relation holds between Josh and Rachel. If I were additionally aware of the proposition that *Josh is kissing Rachel*, as well as the state of affairs of *Josh's kissing Rachel*, as well as the properties *being true* and *obtaining*, my awareness of such things would in no way help me to see that the proposition that *Josh is kissing Rachel* has the property of *being true* or that the state of affairs of *Josh's kissing Rachel* has the property of *obtaining*. Therefore, my (or anyone else's) awareness of mixes of substances, properties, relations, propositions, and states of affairs is never a truth-indicator for the proposition that *Josh is kissing Rachel*.

Perhaps there is some *other* category of thing besides the categories considered which could do the trick. For example, I didn't talk about these categories: events, tropes, wholes, and masses. Awareness of wholes, masses, or tropes clearly isn't a truth-indicator for the proposition that *P*. Given my account of *facts* as truth-makers, events are just types of facts (facts that exist at times), given that they can serve as truth-makers for propositions. There may be other categories to consider, but I believe that we've considered enough to draw the conclusion that only things that can serve as truth-makers (facts) can allow for awareness to be a truth-indicator for *P*.

To wrap up, consider (5): there is a belief that *Josh is kissing Rachel* which is justified. There have been occasions in which I've witnessed Josh kissing Rachel and thereby formed the belief that *Josh is kissing Rachel*. I don't believe it's controversial that my belief was justified. Therefore, I think most everyone would agree that the belief that *Josh is kissing Rachel* is one which is (or has been) justified.

rather a result of certain *facts* impinging upon one's consciousness. Without *facts*, however, it doesn't seem possible for one's awareness of states of affairs to be a truth-indicator for *P*.

Given premises (1) – (5), the conclusion that there are facts follows. To sum up, the basic argument is this. It's not possible for the belief that *Josh is kissing Rachel* to be justified if there are no facts, but it is possible for it to be justified if there are facts. Since the belief that *P* is justified, it follows that there are facts.

§4. Implications

If internalism is true, then there are facts. Those who wish to simplify their ontology may count my argument as a mark against internalism.

I believe that there is a more important implication, which I'll turn to now. With facts in hand, we can account for how awareness of a fact can contribute to the probability of a certain belief being true. For an internalist, this suggests that one's awareness of a fact can be a *justifier* for a belief, where a justifier is that which contributes to the justification of a belief. Now *normally*, if one is aware of a fact *F*, then one can *also* be aware of the fact that *one is aware of F*. For example, if I'm aware of the fact that *the reddish spot is bigger than the greenish spot*, I can also be *aware* of the fact that I'm aware that *the reddish spot is bigger than the greenish spot*. As a result, one can normally be aware of the justifier for one's belief.

But there are surely cases in which awareness of the justifier of one's belief is not possible. For example, we might imagine an evil demon arranging things so that for any belief, if I try to focus on the justifier of that belief, I am instantly destroyed. Therefore, it isn't necessarily the case that if I'm aware of a truth-maker for a proposition, then I have the potential to be aware of my awareness of that truth-maker. Yet, it seems that one could form justified beliefs even if a demon were to systematically prevent one from being aware of *one's awareness* of any facts. The lesson I draw is that what internalists

should insist on is not awareness or even *potential* awareness of the justifiers of one's beliefs. What they should insist on is just that one's justified beliefs be based upon one's awareness of truth-makers for their beliefs.¹⁸ Put another way, what one should be able to tell from one's perspective is that the propositional content of one's belief is likely to be true. The thought that this ability is necessary for a belief to be non-accidental from one's perspective (and so justified) is, I believe, the primary motivation for internalism.

Sure, one can ordinarily *also* tell that one's belief has this nice feature of *being such that one can tell that its propositional content is likely to be true*. But one need not notice this feature or even be able to notice it for the belief to *have* that feature. I suspect that this nice feature is exactly what internalists are trying to describe when they are trying to describe *justification*. I suggest, therefore, that with facts in hand, internalists can fine-tune their view so that justification requires awareness, but not awareness of a justifier.

§4. Conclusion

I've identified a pathway from the view that awareness is required for justification to the existence of facts. To conclude, consider how the value of awareness might fit with an externalist conception of knowledge. There are various epistemic goods that a belief might enjoy, and perhaps *being based upon awareness* is one of them. For those who are attracted to externalists goods (such as *being formed as the result of proper functioning system* or *being formed by a reliable belief forming process*), notice that awareness isn't incompatible with them. Alvin Plantinga, for example, can, if he wishes, keep his *proper*

¹⁸ Fumerton, in his review of Bergmann's book, *Justification without Awareness*, gestures in this direction when he suggests that what's required for justification isn't access to the justifier but rather, access to a truth-maker. See Fumerton, "Review of Justification without Awareness," *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2007).

function account of warrant and knowledge and yet also adopt an account of *justification* like the one developed in this paper. It may be a very good thing if one's belief results from a properly functioning and/or reliable cognitive system, but perhaps it is *also* a very important epistemic good (perhaps one which is even necessary for knowledge) if one's belief results from *seeing* (being *aware* of) a fact of the matter.¹⁹

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¹⁹ Much thanks to Nathan Ballantyne for his very helpful comments.