

A DILEMMA FOR INTERNALISM?

Thomas M. Crisp

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Internalism about epistemic justification (henceforth, ‘internalism’) says that a belief B is epistemically justified for S only if S is aware of some good-making feature of B, some feature that makes for B’s having positive epistemic status: e.g., evidence for B. Externalists with respect to epistemic justification (‘externalists’) deny this awareness requirement. Michael Bergmann (2006a, 2006b) has recently put this dilemma against internalism: awareness admits of a strong and a weak construal; given the strong construal, internalism is subject to debilitating regress troubles; given the weak construal, internalism is unmotivated; either way, internalism is in serious trouble.

I argue for two claims in this paper. First, Bergmann’s dilemma argument is unmotivated: he’s given no good reason for accepting one of its crucial premises. And second, Bergmann’s dilemma argument is unsound: the crucial premise in question is false. This is an interesting result, for Bergmann’s recent work in epistemology¹ comprises one of the most formidable defenses of externalism extant in the literature. At the heart of his defense of externalism is his dilemma argument. If I’m right that that argument fails, there’s trouble for his larger project.

I begin by setting out the dilemma argument more carefully.

I. THE DILEMMA STATED

Let us follow Bergmann in thinking of a theory of justification as internalist only if it endorses this

Awareness Requirement: S's belief B is justified only if (i) there is something X that contributes to the justification of B—e.g., evidence for B or a truth-indicator for B or the satisfaction of some necessary condition of B's justification—and (ii) S is aware (or potentially aware) of X (2006b, 9).

We have here a necessary condition on internalism. I join Bergmann in declining to give a sufficient condition.

What can be said on behalf of internalism? Bergmann proposes (2006b, 12) that the principal reason for thinking it true is contained in Laurence Bonjour's famous clairvoyant examples and accompanying analysis (e.g., Bonjour 1985, 41ff), the upshot of which is this:

If the subject holding a belief isn't aware, or at least potentially aware, of what that belief has going for it, then, from her perspective, it can only be a matter of dumb luck that that belief is true (if true). But then she has no business holding it; her belief is unjustified.

Bonjour's presentation of this point is couched as an objection to externalism. Bergmann calls it the Subject's Perspective Objection—the SPO, for short (2006b, 12). I'll do likewise.

A final bit of terminology. Awareness of a justification-contributor, says Bergmann, can be either *strong* or *weak* (2006b, 13). Strong awareness involves conceiving of the justification-contributor to a belief B as being in some way justificatorily relevant to B. Weak awareness is awareness of a justification-

contributor that doesn't involve such conceiving. You get different versions of the Awareness Requirement (and thus different versions of internalism) depending on whether you read it in terms of strong or weak awareness.

We've enough on board now for careful statement of Bergmann's dilemma argument (2006b, 13-14):

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

The key premises (and two horns) of the dilemma are (3) and (4). Below I'll object that Bergmann hasn't adequately motivated (3). Let us look then at his argument for (3).

He begins by dividing strong awareness into various types (2006b, 14). *Doxastic* strong awareness of a justification-contributor X for belief B is

awareness of X involving belief that X is justificatorily relevant to B—that X contributes in some way to the justification of B. *Nondoxastic* strong awareness is strong awareness that is not doxastic. *Actual* strong awareness of X is a matter of actually being aware of it, *potential* strong awareness, a matter of being able on reflection alone to be aware of it. The distinctions cross-cut one another: there is actual doxastic strong awareness, actual nondoxastic strong awareness, potential doxastic strong awareness and potential nondoxastic strong awareness.

Bergmann’s argument proceeds, then, by successive interpretation of the Awareness Requirement in terms of these four types of strong awareness, arguing at each stage that internalism so interpreted is subject to vicious regress.

I am interested here in just one of these interpretations, the potential doxastic strong awareness interpretation. (Were I friend of the Awareness Requirement, it’s the one I’d plump for.) How to think, then, about the Awareness Requirement interpreted in terms of potential doxastic strong awareness? Bergmann proposes that, so interpreted, it amounts to this

Potential Doxastic Strong Awareness Requirement (PDSAR): S’s belief B is justified only if (i) there is something, X, that contributes to the justification of B, and (ii) S is *able on reflection alone* to be aware of X in such a way that S justifiedly believes that X is in some way relevant to the appropriateness of holding B (2006b, 16).

All is straightforward here but for clause (ii)’s laying it down that, for some justification-contributor X, one must be able on reflection alone to *justifiedly* believe that X is justificatorily relevant. Why *justifiedly* believe and not just believe *simpliciter*? Because, says Bergmann, “if the internalist has the intuition

that merely having a justification-contributor isn't enough—that the subject must also *believe* [or be able, on reflection alone, to come to believe] that she has a justification-contributor—it seems highly doubtful that the internalist will be impressed by the *mere belief* (no matter how unjustified or insane) that the thing of which she is aware is a justification-contributor” (2006b, 15). I suspect one could put pressure on Bergmann's reasoning here, but I'll move on; I've other fish to fry.

Such then is the version of the Awareness Requirement got by reading it in terms of potential doxastic strong awareness. Bergmann argues next that it gives rise to vicious regress, as follows (2006b, 14-16): Given PDSAR, in order for S to have justified belief B, S must be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that

P₁: X₁ is justificatorily relevant to B,

for some justification-contributor X₁ to B. But according to PDSAR, to be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe P₁, S must be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that

P₂: X₂ is justificatorily relevant to her belief that X₁ is justificatorily relevant to B,

for some justification-contributor X₂ to S's belief that X₁ is justificatorily relevant to B. But given PDSAR, to be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe P₂, S must be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that

P₃: X₃ is justificatorily relevant to her belief that X₂ is justificatorily relevant to her belief that X₁ is justificatorily relevant to B,

for some justification-contributor X₃ to S's belief that X₂ is justificatorily relevant to her belief that X₁ is justificatorily relevant to B, and so forth.

We have our regress. And, says Bergmann, it's vicious (2006b, 16): Given PDSAR, S justifiedly holds B only if she is able, on reflection alone, to justifiedly believe that P_n , for any P_n in the foregoing series. Note well: there's no requirement here that S be able to believe *every* proposition in the series; the regress induced by PDSAR isn't vicious by dint of requiring infinitely many beliefs. It's vicious, rather, because it requires that, for *any* proposition in the series, S be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe it. But as you move along the propositions in the series, they get increasingly complex. Plausibly, at some point not very far into the series, there comes a proposition no human could grasp, much less justifiedly believe. So plausibly, S does not justifiedly hold B, for any human S and belief B. So PDSAR's regress implies radical skepticism and is thus vicious.

II. THE DILEMMA IS UNMOTIVATED

So far Bergmann's regress argument against PDSAR. I shall now argue that his argument fails. Let B be some belief I hold. As Bergmann correctly notes, given PDSAR, I'm justified in holding B only if I'm able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that

P_1 : X_1 is justificatorily relevant to B,

for some justification-contributor X_1 to B. So far so good. Next Bergmann argues that, given PDSAR, to be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe P_1 , I must be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that

P_2 : X_2 is justificatorily relevant to my belief that X_1 is justificatorily relevant to B,

for some justification-contributor X_2 to my belief that X_1 is justificatorily relevant to B. But this is mistaken. It's enough given PDSAR that I'm able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that

P_2^* : X_2 is justificatorily relevant to B_1 ,

where ' B_1 ', we may suppose, is a directly referring term whose referent is my belief that P_1 and X_2 is some justification-contributor to B_1 . PDSAR says that B_1 is justified for me only if, for some justification-contributor X to B_1 , I am able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that X is justificatorily relevant to B_1 . But it *doesn't* say I need to think of B_1 under the description 'my belief that X_1 is justificatorily relevant to B'. I do everything required by PDSAR if I'm able on reflection alone to justifiably believe that P_2^* .

But note this crucial fact about P_2^* : it's no more complex or difficult to grasp than P_1 . Bergmann correctly points out that PDSAR initiates a regress: justified belief that P_1 requires that I be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe some further proposition. But he wrongly suggests that the regress involves propositions of increasing complexity. Since P_2^* isn't any more complex than P_1 , so far anyway, the regress induced by PDSAR is not one that involves increasing complexity.

Perhaps we should look a bit further into the regress, though. Maybe complexification happens as we move further in.

According to PDSAR, I'm able on reflection alone to justifiably believe that P_2^* only if I'm able on reflection alone to justifiably believe some further proposition. Bergmann suggests I must be able on reflection alone to believe that

P_3 : X_3 is justificatorily relevant to my belief that X_2 is justificatorily relevant to my belief that X_1 is justificatorily relevant to B, for some justification-contributor X_3 to my belief that X_2 is justificatorily relevant to my belief that X_1 is justificatorily relevant to B. But not so. It's enough given PDSAR that, for some justification-contributor X_3 to my belief that P_2^* , I'm able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe

P_3^* : X_3 is justificatorily relevant to B_2 , where ' B_2 ', we may suppose, is a directly referring term whose referent is my belief that P_2^* and X_3 is some justification-contributor to B_2 .

Note once again that P_3^* is no more complex than P_2^* or P_1 . So far forth, no increase of complexity. It should be clear, moreover, that further iterations will yield the same result. PDSAR induces regress alright, but not one involving increasing complexity of its constituent propositions.

What to make of this? Where does this leave us vis-à-vis premise (3) of Bergmann's regress argument? Well, Bergmann argued on behalf of (3) that PDSAR induces regress, and that the regress is vicious owing to the increasing complexity of the propositions comprising it. The first conjunct is right: PDSAR does indeed induce regress. But the second conjunct is wrong: the regress involves no increase of complexity. Since the alleged increase of complexity along the steps of the PDSAR-induced regress was Bergmann's only reason for claiming it vicious, I conclude he's given us no reason for thinking it vicious and thus no reason for accepting premise (3) of his argument. His dilemma argument is unmotivated.

Well, so I say. One might well wonder, though, whether there's some simple, well-motivated repair to PDSAR sufficient to reinstate Bergmann's argument.ⁱⁱ Recall that, according to Bergmann, the main motivation for internalism's Awareness Requirement, and for PDSAR, is the Subject's Perspective Objection (SPO): roughly, the idea that, if the subject holding a belief isn't aware or potentially aware of what a belief has going for it, epistemically speaking, then from her perspective, it can only be a matter of dumb luck that the belief is true (if true), and she has no business holding that belief—her belief is unjustified. One possibility here is that the SPO implies a stronger version of PDSAR, a version on which justified belief that P_1 requires more than ability on reflection alone to justifiedly believe P_2^* , P_3^* and the like, a version along the lines of this

Revised Potential Doxastic Strong Awareness Requirement (RPDSAR):

S's belief B that P is justified only if (i) there is something, X, that contributes to the justification of B, and (ii) S is *able on reflection alone* to be aware of X in such a way that S justifiedly accepts the proposition expressed by X is in some way relevant to the appropriateness of holding the belief that P,

where 'P' here is a schematic letter replaceable by any meaningful declarative sentence. Given RPDSAR, I'm able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that

P_1 : X_1 is justificatorily relevant to B,

for some justification-contributor X_1 to B, only if I'm able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe something like Bergmann's

P_2 : X_2 is justificatorily relevant to my belief that X_1 is justificatorily relevant to B,

for some justification-contributor X_2 to my belief that X_1 is justificatorily relevant to B. Given RPDSAR, notice, it's not enough for justified belief that P_1 that I be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe

P_2^* : X_2 is justificatorily relevant to B_1 ,

for some directly referring term ' B_1 ' whose referent is my belief that P_1 .

Clearly enough, RPDSAR, like PDSAR, induces regress. But unlike PDSAR, RPDSAR's regress involves increasing complexity as you move along the steps of the regress. RPDSAR's regress is vicious for just the reasons Bergmann gives. If the SPO suggests or implies RPDSAR, Bergmann's argument is reinstated. After all, the point of his argument was to show that the Awareness Requirement underwritten by the SPO is subject to debilitating regress troubles. If the Awareness Requirement underwritten by the SPO comes to something like RPDSAR, his argument goes through.

The question, then: Does the SPO underwrite RPDSAR (or something in the near neighborhood)? Does the SPO offer some reason for thinking RPDSAR (or something close) true? Not that I can see. Suppose I take you to be an expert on quantum physics. You propose to explain some proposition p regarding quantum physics to me, where p , let us suppose, is extremely complex. It's so complex, let us suppose, that I'm incapable of grasping any proposition more complex than p . I am, however, capable of grasping p , and after Herculean efforts of concentration, I manage to understand it and form belief B_p that p .

Now, suppose I'm able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that

P₄: your testimony and the fact that you're an expert is good evidence for that horrendously complex proposition I just accepted on your say so. But owing to p's complexity, I'm *not* able on reflection alone to justifiably believe RPDSAR's

P₅: X is justificatorily relevant to my belief that S_p, where 'S_p', suppose, expresses p and X is some justification-contributor to my belief B_p. I'm not able to justifiedly believe P₅ because I'm not able to get P₅ before my mind: it's too complicated. It's more complicated than p, and by hypothesis, p is as complicated a proposition as I'm able to grasp. Still, I can get P₄ before my mind and am able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe it. Now, there's this question: Does my inability to justifiably believe P₅ render me such that, from my perspective, it can only be a matter of dumb luck that B_p is true if true? Put differently, does my inability to satisfy RPDSAR's requirement on justified belief put me into conflict with the SPO? Surely not. From my perspective, I have good evidence for B_p. To be sure, were I to represent that fact to myself, it'd have to be via belief that P₄ rather than belief that P₅. But why should that matter? So long as I can justifiably believe that P₄, it's no matter of dumb luck, from my perspective, that B_p is true (if true).

As best I can tell, then, the SPO offers no support whatsoever to RPDSAR. True enough, if the SPO implies RPDSAR or the like, Bergmann's regress argument goes through. But it doesn't. By my lights anyway, the SPO gives no reason at all for thinking RPDSAR (or the like) true. If I'm right, my above objection stands. Bergmann claims the Awareness Requirement underwritten by the SPO is subject to debilitating regress troubles. But he hasn't shown this. It's

open to friends of the SPO and its Awareness Requirement to plump for a PDSAR read of that requirement. Though Bergmann correctly notes that PDSAR leads to regress, he has given no good reason for thinking that regress vicious. Thus he has given no good reason for accepting premise (3) of his dilemma argument, and the dilemma argument is unmotivated.

III. THE DILEMMA IS UNSOUND

But is the PDSAR-induced regress vicious? Well and good, Bergmann hasn't shown it vicious, but is it? I argue next that it isn't.

I suppose that you have hands and that you believe as much. Call your belief that you have hands HANDS. Now, why do you accept HANDS? What's your evidence for it? Likely your main evidence is a certain hard-to-describe phenomenology, the sort of phenomenology that goes with experiencing oneself as having hands. Call the bit of phenomenology on which you base HANDS 'P_{HANDS}'. Then this, I take it, is true:

(A) P_{HANDS} is justificatorily relevant to HANDS.

If you accept (A), and I shall suppose you do, there's this question. Why do you accept it? That is, what's your evidence for *it*? This is a tough question. It's not immediately clear what evidence there could be for (A). Likely, about all you can say here is something like: "Well, it seems obvious to me; I'm not sure what else to say." If you can say at least that much, though, you're not without evidence for (A). For if it seems obvious to you that (A), you have the *intuition* that (A) and your intuition that (A) counts as evidence for your belief that (A).

Let me say a few words here about what intuition is and why your intuition that (A) is plausibly thought of as evidence for your belief that (A). I follow Bealer here in thinking of the intuition that p as a conscious episode in which it seems to one that p .ⁱⁱⁱ So consider the proposition that $2+1=3$. If you're like me, there's a sort of luminous obviousness to it, a hard-to-describe "seeing" or seeming to be true. Now consider the proposition that $21353 \times 23 = 491119$ and satisfy yourself by calculation that it's true. If you're like me, you believe it to be true, but there isn't the same sort of seeing or seeming to be true as with the proposition that $2+1 = 3$. The sort of seeing or seeming that goes with propositions like *that* $2+1=3$, and *that modus ponens is valid* is what I am calling intuition. Intuition, notice, is different than belief: you can believe that p without having the intuition that p .^{iv} I believe that $21353 \times 23 = 491119$, but I don't have any intuitions about it. In the other direction, you might well have the intuition that p without believing that p . Bealer suggests it still seems to him that the naïve comprehension axiom of set theory is true, though he no longer believes it (Bealer 1996, 6). The crucial point, then: intuition that p , its seeming to one that p , is different than belief that p .

Intuition that p is evidence that p . If you believe that p on the basis of intuition that p , your intuition that p is evidence, albeit defeasible evidence, for your belief. Why think so? Well, isn't it obvious? Isn't it obvious that if p seems intuitively obvious to you, you've good, albeit defeasible, reason for accepting it? I should think so; I should think this about as obvious an epistemic principle as they come in this area of philosophy. If argument is wanted, though, that intuition that p is evidence for belief that p , I offer this.^v If intuition that p is *not*

evidence for belief that p , then it is difficult to see how most mathematical, philosophical, and moral beliefs could be justified, for most such beliefs are held on the basis of intuitions. I believe, for example, that racism is wrong. I believe this because when I consider various situations involving racist behavior, I can “just see” that such behavior is wrong; it seems *obvious* to me that it is. My belief that racism is wrong is based on clear intuitions I have about these situations. Analogously, I believe mathematical induction is a valid method of proof. I believe this because when I consider what mathematical induction involves, I can “just see” that it is truth preserving; its validity seems *obvious*. My belief that mathematical induction is valid is based on this intuition. Analogously, I believe that knowledge is not justified true belief. I believe this because when I consider the various Gettier cases, it seems obvious to me that, in those cases, there is justified true belief without knowledge. My belief that knowledge is not justified true belief is held on the basis of intuitions I have about the various Gettier-style cases. Most, maybe all, of my moral, mathematical and philosophical beliefs are thus rooted in intuition. I am not alone here. We all hold mathematical, philosophical, and moral beliefs on the basis of intuition. If intuition is not a source of evidence, it is difficult to see how these beliefs could be justified. But manifestly, many of them *are*. Manifestly, we are justified in thinking that racism is wrong, that mathematical induction is valid, that knowledge is not justified true belief, and so forth. A nice explanation of this is that intuition is a source of evidence.

Returning then to your belief that

(A) P_{HANDS} is justificatorily relevant to HANDS ,

where HANDS, again, is your belief that you have hands, and P_{HANDS} is the “being appeared to handly” phenomenology on which you base your belief that you have hands, I suggested above that if (A) seems obviously true to you, then you are not without evidence for your belief that (A). For if (A) seems obviously true to you, you have the *intuition* that (A) and, as I have been arguing, your intuition that (A) counts as evidence for (A).

If I’m right about this, then this is true:

(B) Your intuition that (A)—its seeming obvious to you that (A)—is justificatorily relevant to your belief that (A).

Now, take some time to reflect carefully on (B). Does *it* seem true to you? I trust it does; it’s fairly obvious. If it does, you’re in this situation: you believe that (B) and (B) seems true to you; you have the intuition that (B).

Now, take a short break from this thought experiment; let a few moments pass....

To resume: Immediately before the break you just took, I was directing your attention to a proposition p such that you believed that p and had the intuition that p . Don’t worry much about exactly which proposition p was; it doesn’t matter for present purposes. What matters is that you clearly remember that, just before the break, I had directed your attention to a proposition p and pointed out to you that you believed that p and had the intuition that p . Call the belief I was directing your attention to ‘BELIEF’ and the corresponding intuition ‘INTUITION’, and reflect carefully on

(C) INTUITION was justificatorily relevant to BELIEF.

Does it seem true to you? It should. If you've followed me thus far, (C) should seem as obviously true as anything we've seen so far. If it does, you're in this situation: you believe that (C) and (C) seems true to you; you have the intuition that (C). Now, once again, take a short break; think about other things for a bit... OK, now return to the start of this paragraph, follow its instructions, and repeat the process as many times as you like. When boredom sets in, see the next paragraph for analysis.

Our thought experiment went like this. You started with a garden-variety, justified belief, HANDS. According to PDSAR, you were justified in accepting HANDS only if there was some justification-contributor X to HANDS such that you were able, on reflection alone, to justifiedly believe that X was justificatorily relevant to HANDS. And, there was: there was that bit of phenomenology, that “being appeared to handly” phenomenology we called ‘P_{HANDS}’, such that you were able, on reflection alone, to justifiedly believe (A), the proposition that P_{HANDS} is justificatorily relevant to HANDS.

(I say you *justifiedly* believed (A), that your belief that (A) was justified. But why think so? You believed that (A), true enough, but why think your belief was *justified*? Well, your belief was supported by intuitive evidence—you had a clear intuition that (A)—and, I take it, nothing in your total evidence *defeated* your intuitive evidence for (A). That is, nothing in your total evidence suggested that, in this case, intuition that (A) was misleading. But in general, if you have strong intuitive evidence for a belief B and your intuitive evidence for B is not defeated by the rest of your total evidence, you are justified in holding B. So you were justified in believing that (A).)

So far, then: according to PDSAR, your belief HANDS was justified only if there was some justification contributor X to HANDS such that you were able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that X is justificatorily relevant to HANDS. And there was, as evidenced by the fact that you were able on reflection alone to form justified belief that (A). Of course, by PDSAR, you were able to justifiedly believe that (A) only if there was some justification contributor Y to your belief that (A) such that you were able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that Y was justificatorily relevant to your belief that (A). But once again, there was: there was your intuition that (A). You were able, on reflection alone, to justifiedly believe that *it* was justificatorily relevant to your belief that (A), as evidenced by the fact that you justifiedly believed (B), the proposition that your intuition that (A) was justificatorily relevant to your belief that (A).

You justifiedly believed (B), according to PDSAR, only if there was some justification contributor Z to your belief that (B) such that you were able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe that Z was justificatorily relevant to your belief that (B). And, once again, there was: there was your intuition that (B). You were able, on reflection alone, to justifiedly believe that *it* was justificatorily relevant to your belief that (B), as evidenced by the fact that you justifiedly believed (C), the proposition that your intuition that (B) was justificatorily relevant to your belief that (B).

And so on, for as many iterations as you took the time to carry out. The result of the thought experiment is that you were able to move arbitrarily far into a PDSAR-induced regress for HANDS. Obviously enough, there was nothing special about HANDS that enabled you to do this; you could have done it with

any of your justified beliefs. I take the upshot of this to be that PDSAR's regress is not vicious. PDSAR induces regress because of its requirement that, for each justified belief B one holds, one be able to form a certain sort of justified meta-belief about B. (Bear in mind, PDSAR doesn't require that one actually form the relevant meta-belief, only that one be able to form it.) The regress is vicious only if there is some reason to think we are unable to form the relevant meta-beliefs. But as we've just seen, forming the relevant justified meta-beliefs for our justified beliefs is not difficult; most anyone could do it. I conclude therefore that PDSAR's regress is not vicious.

Objection: "You say most anyone could form the relevant justified meta-beliefs for our justified beliefs. But is that right? Could my six-year-old justifiedly believe the above-discussed propositions? For example, could my six-year-old justifiedly believe that

(A) P_{HANDS} is justificatorily relevant to HANDS?

I doubt it. Likewise with the other propositions discussed above. It's not true, then, that most anyone could form the relevant justified meta-beliefs for our justified beliefs. At any rate, it's not true that most anyone could form the meta-beliefs you discuss above. Maybe philosophers and the philosophically inclined can form them but many, many people couldn't. Perhaps you've given some reason for thinking that philosophers and the philosophically inclined can traverse arbitrarily far into PDSAR-induced regresses for their justified beliefs, but it's dubious that children and the philosophically disinclined could do so. The upshot: PDSAR and its regress looks to imply that children and the philosophically disinclined have no justified beliefs. Since children and the

philosophically disinclined plainly *do* have justified beliefs, we still have that PDSAR's regress implies an implausible skepticism, your arguments to the contrary notwithstanding."

By way of reply, the objector thinks only philosophers and the philosophically inclined capable of forming justified belief in propositions like those expressed by

(A) P_{HANDS} is justificatorily relevant to HANDS, and

(B) Your intuition that (A)—its seeming obvious to you that (A)—is justificatorily relevant to your belief that (A).

I doubt this. I recently asked my four-year-old how she knows she has hands. Her response:

"Because, I can feel them!"

Pretty clearly, she was thinking of certain tactual and kinesthetic sensations as relevant to knowing she had hands. If it's not exactly (A) she had in mind, it was something close by.

Or consider how utterly commonplace it is in non-philosophical contexts for the expression 'It's obvious' to arise in connection with the question 'How do you know?' (try Googling the two phrases), as in:

A: How do you know?

B: I just do; it's obvious.

It's hard to make sense of such a reply, though, unless the one who utters it is presupposing that its being obvious to one that p is relevant to whether one knows that p. Something not far from (B) is lurking in the background of any such exchange.

I doubt, then, that only philosophers and the philosophically inclined are capable of forming justified belief in propositions like (A) and (B). Though couched in philosophically pretentious terms, the ideas underlying (A) and (B) are run-of-the-mill: Sensory experience of one's hands is reason to believe one has hands; that something seems obvious is reason for thinking it's so. These are mundane truths, grasped by old and young, sophisticated and unsophisticated.

I stand by my claim, then: forming justified meta-beliefs of the sort required by PDSAR is not difficult; most anyone could do it. PDSAR's regress is not vicious.

If so, though, it follows that premise (3) of Bergmann's dilemma argument is false. It says that internalism, read in terms of a strong awareness requirement, is subject to vicious regress problems leading to radical skepticism. But as best I can tell, PDSAR-style internalism has no such problem.

By way of conclusion, then, I have argued for two claims. First, Bergmann's dilemma argument is unmotivated: he's given no good reason for accepting one of its crucial premises. And second, the argument is unsound: the crucial premise in question is false.^{vi}

ⁱ See, e.g., his (2004a), (2004b), (2006a), (2006b), and (2006c).

ⁱⁱ Thanks for helpful comments here by an anonymous referee.

ⁱⁱⁱ See, e.g., Bealer (1987, 1992, 1996a,b, 1998, 1999, 2002).

^{iv} Cf. Bealer (1996a, 5-6).

^v For more detailed argument, see, e.g., Bealer (1987, 1992, 1996a,b, 1998, 1999, 2002), Bonjour (1998), Nagel (1997) and Pust (2000).

^{vi} Thanks to BLINDED for helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

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