

Phenomenal Conservatism and Bergmann's Dilemma

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we argue that Michael Huemer's (PC) phenomenal conservatism—the internalist view according to which our beliefs are *prima facie* justified if based on how things seem or appears to us to be—doesn't fall afoul of Michael Bergmann's dilemma for epistemological internalism. We start by showing that the thought experiment that Bergmann adduces to conclude that (PC) is vulnerable to his dilemma misses its target. After that, we distinguish between two ways in which a mental state can contribute to the justification of a belief: the direct way and the indirect way. We identify a straightforward reason for claiming that the justification contributed indirectly is subject to Bergmann's dilemma. Then we show that the same reason doesn't extend to the claim that the justification contributed directly is subject to Bergmann's dilemma. As (PC) is the view that seemings or appearances contribute justification directly, we infer that Bergmann's contention that his dilemma applies to (PC) is unmotivated. In the final part, we suggest that our line of response to Bergmann can be used to shield other types of internalist justification from Bergmann's objection. We also propose that seeming-grounded justification can be combined with justification of one of these types to form the basis of a promising version of internalist foundationalism.

1. Introduction

The claim that many of our beliefs are epistemically justified because they are based on our *seemings*—i.e. ways things seem or appear to us to be—looks *prima facie* plausible. For example, I have a reason for believing that the cat is on the chair because it *seems* visually so to me. I have a reason for believing that I went home by car because I *seem* to remember driving home. I have a reason for believing that $2+2=4$ because this *seems* intuitively correct to me. Michael Huemer's *phenomenal conservatism* aims to account systematically for the justifying force of seemings.¹ The

¹ Phenomenal conservatism is most commonly associated with Huemer's work. Others epistemologists—such as Jim Pryor (2000) and John Pollock (1986)—have proposed similar views, though less general than phenomenal conservatism. For a list of philosophers who have defended phenomenal conservatism or a similar view see Moretti (2015: §1).

defining principle of Huemer's view says that:

(PC^P) If it seems to [a subject] *S* that *P*, then, in the absence of defeaters *S* thereby has some degree of justification for believing that *P*. (Huemer 2007: 30)²

Most phenomenal conservatives hold that *S*'s having a seeming that *P* is a matter of *S*'s having a certain sort of *experience*, which has propositional content *P* but is unanalyzable in terms of belief. According to this popular conception, all experiences constituting seemings are essentially characterized by *felt veridicality*—i.e. the feel of a mental state whose propositional content reveals how things really are (cf. Tucker 2013: §1.1). (PC^P) is customarily read as a principle about *propositional*, rather than doxastic, justification (see for instance McGrath 2013: 233).³ Note the 'thereby' in (PC^P), which signals that *S*'s justification for *P* is based on *only S*'s seeming that *P*. In other words, according to (PC^P), in absence of defeaters, *S*'s seeming that *P* provides *S* with some degree of *non-inferential* justification for believing *P*. That is to say, in absence of defeaters, *S*'s seeming that *P* supplies *S* with some justification for believing *P* that is not based on justification for *believing* any other proposition (cf. Huemer 2013: §1c).

(PC^P)'s philosophical appeal seems to rest on at least three reasons:⁴ first, (PC^P) supplies a rationale for many of our ordinary epistemic practices. In ordinary circumstances we might have more or less explicit beliefs about, say, the trustworthiness of our experiences or the reliability of our faculties, but our reasons for holding many of our ordinary beliefs don't seem to include the reasons we have for these additional beliefs. Instead, we seem to entertain many of our ordinary beliefs just because of how things *appear* to us to be. Furthermore, we usually attribute perceptual

² The superscript '^P' in '(PC^P)' indicates, as clarified below, that this principle concerns *propositional* justification. Huemer (2001) defends a stronger version of (PC^P) according to which, for any proposition *P*, if it seems to *S* that *P*, *S* has prima facie justification for *fully* believing *P*.

³ *S* has *propositional* justification for a proposition *P* just in case *P* is epistemically worthy of being believed by *S*, because *S* has a reason for doing so, whether or not she actually believes *P* for that reason or at all. On the other hand, *S* has *doxastic* justification for *P* just in case *S* has propositional justification for *P* and *S* bases her actual belief that *P* on the reason she has for believing *P*.

⁴ Huemer has also articulated a few arguments in defence (PC^P). For a critical overview see Moretti (2015: §3).

reasons for entertaining beliefs to beings—such as small children—that couldn't possibly entertain the thought that their sensory faculties are reliable.

A second reason why (PC^P) is attractive is that it affords us the means to respond to a celebrated sceptical objection targeting the internalist views that assume that the justification for any belief is always based on some other *belief*. Positions of this type have been argued to fall afoul of *Agrippa's trilemma*: imagine that a subject *S*'s justification for her belief that *P* rests on *S*'s belief that *Q*, and that *S*'s justification for her belief that *Q* rests on, say, *S*'s belief that *R* and *S*'s belief that *S*, and so on. In other words, imagine that *S*'s justification for her belief that *P* depends on *S*'s having a *chain* of justified beliefs with one or more branches. If it is assumed that the justification for any of *S*'s beliefs always rests on some other belief of *S*, there are prima facie only three ways in which each branch can be structured: *S* has no justification for the last belief in the branch; *S* has justification for each belief in the branch but the branch is circular; *S* has justification for each belief in the branch but the branch never ends. It has been argued that none of these options is really tenable or capable of securing justification for *S*'s initial belief that *P*. For this reason, epistemological internalism has been charged with leading to scepticism. If (PC^P) also describes an internalistically admissible way to acquire justification, the internalist has a fourth option: she can contend that the last beliefs in the branches are justified (at least to some degree) by special mental states of *S*—i.e. seemings—*that don't need in turn to be justified*. This dismisses sceptical concerns.

The third reason why (PC^P) looks philosophically appealing is that it provides a *unified* account of non-inferential justification of beliefs of different types—various philosophers have appealed to (PC^P) or very similar principles to explain non-inferential justification of, for instance, perceptual, mnemonic, a priori, introspective, moral and religious beliefs.⁵

⁵ For reference to relevant literature see Moretti (2015: §1).

Phenomenal conservatism has an *internalist* character because, roughly, seeming-based justification appears to be determined only by factors that are internal to the subject's cognitive perspective. Bergmann (2006) has launched a powerful attack against epistemological internalism in general. In a nutshell, Bergmann claims that epistemological internalism essentially requires that a subject *S*'s justification for believing a proposition *P* must be based on *S*'s *awareness* of a justification contributor. That *S* must be aware of a justification contributor is, according to Bergmann, ambiguous between two different readings. The problem is that this awareness requirement is, if interpreted in one way, incapable of giving the internalist what she wants, whereas impossible to satisfy, if interpreted in the other. Bergmann (2013) argues that phenomenal conservatism falls afoul of this general objection.

Bergmann (2013: 160) endorses the mainstream view among phenomenal conservatives according to which seemings are, not beliefs (or inclinations to believe), but experiences with felt veridicality. In his attempt to reject internalism, Bergmann explicitly concentrates on *doxastic* justification (cf. 2006: 4). The most natural version of (PC^D) that applies to doxastic justification would probably be a principle like this:

(PC^D) A person *S*'s belief that *P* is prima facie justified to some degree if it is based on its seeming to *S* that *P*.⁶

However, Bergmann doesn't take (PC^D) or a very similar conditional to be the defining principle of phenomenal conservatism (in its doxastic variant), as one might expect. Bergmann claims that phenomenal conservatism is an internalist position only if it *requires* that a subject justified in believing something be aware of a relevant justification contributor. From this he infers or seems to infer that phenomenal conservatism is an internalist position only if its *defining principle* requires that a subject justified in believing a proposition be aware of a relevant justification contributor.

⁶ The superscript 'D' in '(PC^D)' indicates that this principle concerns *doxastic* justification. Note that (PC^D) is true *if and only if* it is true that if it seems to *S* that *P*, in absence of defeaters *S* has some degree of justification for believing that *P*, whether or not *S* actually believes *P* on the basis of her seeming that *P* or at all. This is the same as saying that (PC^D) is true *if and only if* (PC^P) is true. Huemer (2013: §1c) appears to endorse—at least implicitly—this biconditional.

Since (PC^D) just states a *sufficient* condition—and thus in fact *requires* nothing—for *S*'s justification for *P*, Bergmann (2013: 154) concludes that (PC^D) cannot be considered to be the defining principle of phenomenal conservatism, if the latter is an internalist position. Accordingly, Bergmann takes the central principle of phenomenal conservatism to be the following *biconditional* version of (PC^D), which does impose a requirement on *S*'s justification for *P*:

(PC^{D*}) A person *S*'s belief that *P* is *prima facie* justified to some degree if and only if it is based on its seeming to *S* that *P*.

We grant Bergmann's assumption that a position is internalist only if it requires that a subject justified in believing a proposition be aware of a relevant justification contributor. However, it seems to us that from this assumption it doesn't follow that phenomenal conservatism is internalist only if *its defining principle* requires that a subject justified in believing a proposition be aware of a relevant justification contributor. What appears to us to follow is rather this: phenomenal conservatism is internalist only if a subject possessing the justification for believing a proposition described by its defining principle is required to be aware of a relevant justification contributor. More precisely, the phenomenal conservative is an internalist only if she accepts that:

(INT_{PC}) *S*'s belief that *P* is *prima facie* justified to some degree by *S*'s seeming that *P* only if *S* is aware of her seeming that *P*.

Since the phenomenal conservative can accept this proposition whether she accepts (PC^D) or (PC^{D*}), *pace* Bergmann, it appears to be false that (PC^D) cannot be the defining principle of phenomenal conservatism, if the latter is an internalist position. Quite the opposite, there is a reason why (PC^D) appears to be preferable to (PC^{D*}) in this role. (PC^{D*}), but not (PC^D), entails the claim that *all* epistemic justification is based on seemings, which looks implausible even to advocates of phenomenal conservatism.⁷ Furthermore, as the reader will be able to verify in the next section,

⁷ Bergmann (2013: 154, n4) claims that some passages in Huemer's papers can be interpreted as suggesting that Huemer himself would endorse (PC^{D*}). However, it is rather unclear how, for instance, *inferential* justification could turn out to be seeming-based justification. Huemer (2013: 1c) himself emphasizes that it is controversial even among supporters of phenomenal conservatism whether or not a *variation* of phenomenal conservatism could account for inferential justification.

whether the phenomenal conservative sticks to (PC^D) or (PC^{D*}) seems to be substantially irrelevant for the applicability and effectiveness of Bergmann's dilemma. For all these reasons in the remainder of the paper we will take (PC^D) to be the defining principle of phenomenal conservatism.

Our paper essentially aims to respond to Bergmann's objections to phenomenal conservatism. We will proceed as follows. In §2 we introduce Bergmann's general argument against epistemological internalism—namely, his dilemma—and explain why it apparently applies to phenomenal conservatism. In §3 we argue that the thought experiment that Bergmann uses to show that phenomenal conservatism is vulnerable to his dilemma misses its target and thus gives no reason in support of Bergmann's claim. In §4 and its subsections we distinguish between two ways in which a mental state can contribute to the justification of a belief: the direct way and the indirect way. After that, we identify a straightforward reason for claiming that the justification contributed indirectly is subject to Bergmann's dilemma, and we show that the same reason doesn't extend to the claim that the justification contributed directly is subject to Bergmann's dilemma. We argue that, in accordance with (PC^D), seemings contribute justification directly. We conclude that Bergmann's claim that his dilemma applies to phenomenal conservatism is unmotivated. In §5 we suggest that our line of response to Bergmann can be used to shield other types of internalist justification from Bergmann's objection. We also propose that seeming-grounded justification can be combined with justification of one of these types to form the basis of a promising version of internalist foundationalism.

2. Bergmann's dilemma and phenomenal conservatism

We now introduce Bergmann's *general* argument against epistemological internalism and explain why it seems to apply to phenomenal conservatism as well. According to Bergman, an essential

condition that any internalist notion of epistemic justification should meet is the *awareness requirement*, which could be stated as follows:

(AW) S 's belief B is [prima facie] justified [to some degree] 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 .

(Bergmann 2006: 9)

(AW) derives its motivation substantially from two intuitions: the first is that S 's belief B would not be doxastically justified to any degree for S if this belief were not different, from S 's point of view, from a “stray hunch” or “arbitrary conviction”. The second intuition is that the minimal requirement to be satisfied to make this difference is that S be aware of the existence of some X relevant to the justification or truth of B . (Cf. 2006: 11-12). We find Bergmann's claim that internalist justification must *satisfy a principle like (AW)* quite plausible; thus, in this paper we will not question it.

According to Bergmann, the claim (ii) that S is aware of X , in (AW), can be interpreted in two alternative ways. The crux of his argument is that both interpretations prove equally fatal for internalism. This is what Bergmann calls the internalist's dilemma (cf. 2006: 13-14). On the first interpretation, (AW) requires of S that she be aware of X in—to use Bergmann's words—the *strong sense* of ‘being aware of’. This means that S must be actually aware—or at least able to be aware on reflection alone—of the justification-contributor X in such a way that S conceives of X as relevant to the justification or truth of B ⁸ (cf. 2006: 14-16). On the second interpretation, (AW) requires of S that she be aware of X in—to use again Bergmann's expression—the *weak sense* of ‘being aware of’. This means that S must be aware of the justification-contributor X but *not* conceptually of the fact that X is relevant to the justification or truth of the belief B . This type of awareness doesn't necessarily require S to *conceive* of X in some way or another: S may be aware of X in this sense by simply having a relation of non-conceptual acquaintance with X , or, when X is the right sort of

⁸ The expression ‘ X is relevant to the justification of truth of B ’ is used by Bergmann—and we follow him in this use—as a generic way to refer to *epistemic relevance*. This expression could thus be replaced by others such as ‘ X is evidence for B ’ or ‘ X is a truth-indicator for B ’ and so on. (Cf. Bergmann 2006: 15, n23).

justification-contributor, by simply having X consciously. If S does conceive of X in some way, S is weakly aware of X only if S doesn't conceive of X as something relevant to the justification or truth of B . (Cf. 2006: 19). According to Bergmann, either interpretation of 'is aware of' in (AW) raises insurmountable problems to those who accept internalist notions of justification. If 'is aware of' is interpreted by the internalist in the first sense—as requiring S 's strong awareness of X —this launches a vicious infinite regress leading to the sceptical conclusion that no belief could ever be (internalistically) justified to any degree for S .⁹ If 'is aware of' in (AW) is interpreted by the internalist in the second sense—as only requiring S 's weak awareness of X —the internalist's notion of justification will fall afoul of the Subject's Perspective Objection (SPO). The (SPO) says that the satisfaction of the specified conditions for justification¹⁰ cannot prevent S 's beliefs from being just accidentally true from S 's perspective,¹¹ and thus from being actually unjustified for S to any degree. (Cf. 2006: 12 and 19-21).

In this paper we focus on the weak reading of 'is aware of' and argue—against Bergmann—that the claim that the phenomenal conservative cannot opt for this horn of the dilemma is unmotivated. For this reason, we will not dispute Bergmann's claim that the strong reading of 'is aware of' launches a vicious infinite regress leading to scepticism.¹² Let us then examine in some detail why—according to Bergmann—the weak reading horn of his dilemma proves inhospitable to

⁹ At least if S is a cognitively limited subject as we are. The reader should be careful not to confuse *this* infinite regress with the infinite regress constituting one of the options of Agrippa's trilemma, considered in the previous section.

¹⁰ Note that the (SPO) was first explicitly formulated by Bonjour (1985: 41-43) but directed against *externalist* notions of justification.

¹¹ Let be (NA) the claim that the truth of S 's belief B is *not accidental* from S 's point of view. It is somewhat unclear how (NA) should be intended. Bergmann (2013: 168) explicitly addresses this question, and considers five different conditions each of which would count, if accepted, as necessary and sufficient for the truth of (NA). Precisely: (I) S is aware of X and X in fact indicates B 's truth; (II) S is aware of X and S epistemically should believe that X indicates B 's truth; (III) S doesn't believe that B is formed in an unreliable way (so that it's unlikely to be true); (IV) It's false that S epistemically should believe that B is formed in an unreliable way (so that it's unlikely to be true); (V) S is aware of X and S believes that X indicates B 's truth (or at least conceives of X as being relevant to B 's truth or justification). Bergmann argues—convincingly in our view—that the internalist cannot interpret (NA) in ways (I)-(IV). Bergmann also contends that the internalist should accept (V) as a condition both necessary and sufficient for the truth of (NA). We find it reasonable that the internalist should accept (V) as a condition *only* sufficient for the truth of (NA). In this paper we indicate two additional and different ways in which something of which S is aware can prevent the accidental truth of S 's belief B from S 's perspective.

¹² Rogers and Matheson (2011) and Crisp (2009) deny that this regress is vicious. See Bergmann (2013: 165)'s response. We do not take position on this dispute in this paper.

the internalist. Suppose X contributes to the justification of S 's belief that P because, among other things, X is relevant to the truth of P (imagine for instance that X reliably indicates that P is true). On the weak reading of 'being aware of' in (AW), S 's being justified in believing that P requires of S that she be aware of X but *not* in such a way that S also (potentially) conceives of X as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P . Thus the internalist who attempts to occupy the second horn of Bergmann's dilemma ought to claim that it is a condition necessary for the justification of S 's belief that P that S be aware of X , but that it is not a condition necessary for it that S (potentially) conceives of X as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P . If so—according to Bergmann—the internalist holds a notion of justification that entails that S 's belief that P can be justified even when the truth of P is just accidental from S 's point of view. For even if X is relevant to P 's justification or truth (for instance because X reliably indicates that P is true), and even if S is aware of X , the truth of her belief that P is accidental from S 's perspective if S doesn't (potentially) conceive of X as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P . Thus, if the internalist opts for the weak reading of 'being aware of' in (AW), the internalist's notion of justification will fall afoul of the (SPO).

Let's now turn to phenomenal conservatism. As we have seen in §1, the phenomenal conservative is an internalist only if she accepts:

(INT_{PC}) S 's belief that P is prima facie justified to some degree by S 's seeming that P only if S is aware of her seeming that P .

Accepting the above conditional has in fact the effect that S 's justification based on a seeming that P satisfies the general awareness requirement imposed by (AW)—namely, its condition (ii) that S be aware of the justification contributor X —in the specific case in which X is S 's seeming that P .

To show that phenomenal conservatism falls afoul of his dilemma, Bergmann needs thus to show that, on the strong reading of 'is aware of' in (INT_{PC}), attempting to satisfy the request that S

be aware of her seeming that P yields a lethal infinite regress, and on the weak reading of ‘is aware of’ in (INT_{PC}), the internalist’s notion of seeming-based justification is stricken by the (SPO).

Bergmann (2013: 164-166) actually argues that, on the strong reading of ‘is aware of’ (which requires S to conceive of or being able to conceive of her seeming that P as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P), S cannot be aware of her seeming that P . For if S attempted it, S would be caught in a vicious infinite regress. On the other hand, to substantiate the claim that on the weak interpretation of ‘is aware of’ phenomenal conservatism is hit by the (SPO), Bergmann (2013: 171-172) adduces a thought experiment in which a subject S is *incapable* of conceiving of her actual seeming that P as relevant to the justification or truth of the belief that P . The scenario envisaged by Bergmann verifies the following four claims: (i) S has a seeming that P ; (ii) due to cognitive malfunctioning S is *incapable* of conceiving of her seeming that P as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P , (iii) S forms the true belief that P independently of her seeming and without any actual reason for doing it, and (iv) intuitively, the truth of S ’s belief that P is accidental from S ’s own perspective. According to Bergman, this thought experiment supports the general conclusion that S ’s mere weak awareness of her seeming that P is unable to guarantee that the truth of S ’s belief that P is non-accidental from S ’s point of view. Interpreted as requiring S to be just weakly aware of her seeming that P , the internalist’s notion of seeming-based justification would then fall afoul of the (SPO).

Jason Rogers and Jonathan Matheson (2011: 60-63) have argued that a number of internalist notions of justifications escape Bergmann’s dilemma. They suggest that phenomenal conservatism doesn’t succumb to the weak reading horn of the dilemma. They contend that if the justifier X of S ’s belief that P is S ’s seeming that P , then it is intuitively plausible that S ’s mere weak awareness of that seeming—i.e. S ’s mere *having* it—guarantees on its own that the truth of S ’s belief that P is not accidental from S ’s point of view (cf. 2011: 60-63). We believe that Rogers and Matheson’s contention is correct. This paper is essentially dedicated to back it by showing that when S ’s belief

that P is based on S 's seeming that P , it is *unmotivated* to require that S should be strongly aware of her seeming that P in order for the truth of S 's belief that P to be non-accidental from S 's viewpoint.

3. Bergmann's thought experiment is ill-conceived

In this section we argue that Bergmann's thought experiment to supports the claim that S 's mere weak awareness of her seeming that P is unable to guarantee that the truth of S 's belief that P is non-accidental from S 's viewpoint misses its target, and thus it gives *no reason* for supposing that this claim is true.

Let's us examine Bergmann's thought experiment more closely. Bergmann suggests that in very special circumstances, a subject S could have a seeming that P (with its *unaltered* characteristic phenomenology of revealing how things really are) and at the same time be simply incapable of recognizing any connection between the seeming that P and the truth of her belief that P due to a severe cognitive malfunction. Bergmann suggests that S 's having a seeming that P can be compared to S 's being told by someone that P . People normally take testimony that P as a reason to think that P is true, but it's possible for a person to be damaged in such a way that she has no tendency whatsoever to take testimony that P as a reason for believing that P . Likewise, according to Bergmann, it would be possible for S to be damaged in such a way that she is absolutely incapable of conceiving of a seeming that P as a reason for believing that P even if that seeming occurs in S 's mind with its characteristic feeling of revealing how things really are (cf. 2013: 172, n21). Drawing from these considerations, Bergmann envisages a situation in which S is affected by the cognitive malfunction just described, she has a seeming that P and, at the same time, *holds the true belief that P only for a silly motive or for no reason at all*. In such a case, S has a conscious seeming that P and yet it is strongly intuitive that—we agree with Bergmann on this point—it is only an accident from S 's perspective that her belief that P is true (cf. 2013: 171-172 and 173-174).

Let's suppose that the situation envisaged by Bergmann is possible. What does this example actually teach us? It only teaches us that if a subject S is just weakly aware of a seeming that P , believes that P but bases her belief that P on neither her seeming that P nor on any other source of epistemic justification, then it is an accident from S 's perspective that her belief that P is true. Thus Bergmann's example gives us no reason for claiming that S 's weak awareness of her seeming that P cannot prevent S 's belief that P from being accidentally true from S 's own perspective when S 's belief that P is based on her seeming that P .¹³ Since (PC^D) entails that S 's belief that P is prima facie justified to some degree for S if based on S 's seeming that P —which is not the case in Bergmann's thought experiment—Bergmann's example can hardly show that if the phenomenal conservative opts for the weak reading of 'being aware of' in (INT_{PC}), her notion of justification will fall afoul of the (SPO).

4. Seemings don't require strong awareness

In this section and its subsections we give further reasons for believing that when S 's belief that P is based on S 's seeming that P , it is *unmotivated* to require that S should be strongly aware of her seeming that P in order for the truth of S 's belief that P to be non-accidental from S 's viewpoint. We proceed as follows: we start by distinguishing between the *direct* and the *indirect* contribution of a subject S 's mental state X to the justification of S 's beliefs. Then we argue that Bergmann's requirement—according to which S must be strongly aware of X in order for the truth of the belief that P not to be accidental from S 's point of view—appears rationally motivated when X contributes *indirectly* to the justification of the belief that P but it doesn't appear rationally motivated when X contributes *directly* to it. After this, we argue that although S 's seeming that P can contribute to the

¹³ Bergmann could try to meet this objection by retreating to the claim that S 's weak awareness of her seeming that P cannot prevent the *proposition that P* from being accidentally true from S 's own perspective. Bergmann's thought experiment, however, is irrelevant for this different conclusion. In this example, S bases her belief that P on no reason; so what is clear about S is just that it is an accident, on her part, that she comes to *believe* a truth while forming the belief that P . The example, in other words, leaves unsettled the question about whether S 's epistemic situation is such that the truth of the *proposition that P* is also an accident from her point of view.

justification of the belief that *P* also indirectly, phenomenal conservatism is the view that *S*'s seeming that *P* contributes *directly* to it. We infer from this that the claim that *S*'s weak awareness of *S*'s seeming that *P* doesn't suffice to prevent her belief that *P*, based on that seeming, from being accidentally true from *S*'s perspective is unmotivated. We conclude that there are no compelling reasons to believe that the phenomenal conservative cannot escape the vicious infinite regress described by Bergmann without running afoul of the (SPO).

4.1 Direct and indirect contribution of a mental state to the justification of a belief

Phenomenal conservatism is the view according to which a specific *mental state* of a subject *S*—i.e. *S*'s seeming that *P*—contributes to the justification of *S*'s belief that *P*. Showing that Bergmann's dilemma applies to phenomenal conservatism requires then to grant that the justification-contributor *X* of which *S* must be aware in order to have internalist justification can be a mental state of *S*.

When this much is granted, it's important not to lose sight of an ambiguity surrounding the claim that *S*'s mental state *X* contributes to the justification of *S*'s belief that *P*. For any mental state *X* and any belief *P* of a subject *S*, *X* can contribute to the justification of *S*'s belief that *P* *directly* or *indirectly*. In particular:

- (DJ) *X* *directly* contributes to the justification of *S*'s belief that *P* just in case, in absence of defeaters, *S* is doxastically justified (at least to some degree) in believing that *P* on the basis of *X*.
- (IJ) *X* *indirectly* contributes to the justification of *S*'s belief that *P* just in case, in absence of defeaters, *S* is doxastically justified (at least to some degree) in believing that *P* on the basis of *S*'s introspective belief that *X* occurs in her mind.¹⁴

¹⁴ (IJ) should probably be refined. For *S*'s introspective belief that provides the basis for *S*'s belief that *P* can plausibly be, not just the belief that *X* occurs in *S*'s mind, but a different introspective belief about *X* whose content entails the content of the first belief. For instance, one could say that *S*'s pain indirectly contributes to the justification of *S*'s belief that (*P*) *the effect of the anesthetic is quickly fading away* if, in absence of defeaters, *S* is doxastically justified (at least to some degree) in believing *P* on the basis of *S*'s introspective belief that (*Q*) *S*'s pain is quickly increasing. Clearly, *Q* entails the proposition that pain occurs in *S*'s mind. For easy of presentation and because the refinement wouldn't substantially change our arguments (the reader can easily verify in), we prefer to leave (IJ) unaltered.

Consider the following examples. (1) a pain in \mathcal{S} 's leg justifies \mathcal{S} 's belief that \mathcal{S} has a pain in her leg. (2) \mathcal{S} 's pain in her leg justifies \mathcal{S} 's belief that the effect of the anesthetic is over. In both cases it seems correct to say that \mathcal{S} 's pain contributes to the justification of a belief of \mathcal{S} . Yet it also seems correct to say that in (1) \mathcal{S} 's pain contributes differently than in (2). In (1) \mathcal{S} 's pain is the basis—and so contributes directly to the justification—of \mathcal{S} 's belief that \mathcal{S} feels pain in her leg. In (2) \mathcal{S} 's pain is not the basis of \mathcal{S} 's belief that the effect of the anesthetic is over. In this case, \mathcal{S} infers the proposition that the effect of the anesthetic is over from the proposition that she feels pain in her leg; hence \mathcal{S} 's belief that the effect of the anesthetic is over is based not on the pain itself but on \mathcal{S} 's introspective belief that \mathcal{S} feels pain in her leg.¹⁵ Even so, we can say that \mathcal{S} 's pain contributes to the justification of \mathcal{S} 's belief that the effect of the anesthetic is over; this is true, however, only in the *indirect* sense that \mathcal{S} 's belief that the effect of the anesthetic is over is *directly* justified by \mathcal{S} 's belief about the existence of the pain in her leg.

Below we give further examples of mental states that contribute directly or indirectly to the justification of beliefs. For ease of presentation, hereafter we will freely switch back and forward from saying that \mathcal{S} 's mental state X directly (indirectly) contributes to the justification of \mathcal{S} 's belief that P to saying that \mathcal{S} 's mental state X is, or contributes as, a direct (indirect) justifier of \mathcal{S} 's belief that P .

In many cases, (a) one and the same mental state X of a subject \mathcal{S} can be a direct justifier of a belief of \mathcal{S} and an indirect justifier of *another* belief of \mathcal{S} . Furthermore, for many mental states of \mathcal{S} —e.g. for beliefs—it normally happens that (b) if the mental state X contributes directly (indirectly) to the justification of \mathcal{S} 's belief that P , X *cannot* also contribute indirectly (directly) to the justification of the *same* belief. However, for some mental states (including \mathcal{S} 's *seemings*) it is normally the case that (c) if X contributes directly (indirectly) to the justification of a belief of \mathcal{S} ,

¹⁵ In this case, \mathcal{S} 's introspective belief that she feels pain contributes *directly* to the justification of \mathcal{S} 's belief that the effect of the anesthetic is over. Furthermore, \mathcal{S} 's pain contributes *directly* to the justification of \mathcal{S} 's introspective belief that she feels pain.

then X can also contribute indirectly (directly) to the justification of the very same belief of \mathcal{S} . If X happens to be all at once a direct and an indirect justifier of the same belief, it is important not to confuse X 's contribution *as* a direct justifier with X 's contribution *as* an indirect justifier.

Here are examples of cases of type (a), (b) and (c). This is a case in which one and the same mental state X of a subject \mathcal{S} can directly contribute to the justification of a belief of \mathcal{S} and indirectly contribute to the justification of *another* belief of \mathcal{S} . Suppose Sally has the justified belief that (M) her ex-boyfriend will soon be moving out of London because, say, she was told by a common friend that he accepted a job in Moscow. Sally's belief that M can *directly* contribute to the justification of her belief that (R) she will no longer see her ex-boyfriend around in London. For Sally can easily infer R from M , thereby acquiring doxastic justification for believing R on the basis of her belief that M . Sally's very same justified belief that M can *indirectly* contribute to the justification of her different belief that (T) she still thinks of her ex-boyfriend. For Sally can easily form the justified *introspective belief* that she has the belief that M , and infer T from the proposition that she has the belief that M , thereby acquiring doxastic justification for believing T .

Suppose a subject \mathcal{S} is provided with ordinary background information. Then, typically, if a belief that E of \mathcal{S} is able to contribute *directly* (*indirectly*) to the justification of another belief that P of \mathcal{S} , the belief that E won't also be able to contribute *indirectly* (*directly*) to the justification of \mathcal{S} 's belief that P . This is so because, typically, when it is true that \mathcal{S} 's belief that P is justified on the basis of \mathcal{S} 's justified belief that E , it is *not* also true that \mathcal{S} 's belief that P could be justified on the basis of \mathcal{S} 's justified introspective belief that \mathcal{S} has the belief that E , and vice versa. Sally's case confirms what just said. Sally's belief that R is justified on the basis of her belief that M , but Sally's belief that R could not be justified—at least not on ordinary background information—if it were based on her justified introspective belief that she has the belief that M . So Sally's belief that M

directly contributes to the justification of her belief that *R*, but it is unable to contribute indirectly to the justification of the same belief *R*.¹⁶

Yet, as anticipated, it may also be the case that one and the same mental state *X* can contribute directly and indirectly to the justification of the *same* belief. This can happen, for instance, when *X* is a belief. As an example, consider again Sally's case but suppose now that her background information departs from ordinary background information because it also includes the proposition that if someone has the belief that *M*, then *R* is true. Again, if Sally believes that *M*, she can easily form the justified introspective belief that she has the belief that *M*. Thus, if Sally infers *R* from the proposition that she has the belief that *M*, Sally acquires doxastic justification for believing *R*. In this case Sally's belief that *M*—above and beyond being able to *directly* contributing to the justification of her belief that *R*—can also *indirectly* contribute to it.

Suppose now that *X* is not a belief but a *seeming*. In normal circumstances a seeming that *P* can contribute to the justification of the same belief that *P* both directly and indirectly. Take for example *S*'s seeming that (*Y*) there is something yellow nearby. *S*'s seeming that *Y* can *directly* contribute to the justification of her belief that *Y*. For if *S* believes that *Y* on the basis of her seeming that *Y*, in absence of defeaters *S*'s belief will be justified to some extent. Consider furthermore that people's ordinary background *information* includes the assumption that if it seems that *Y*, then it is normally the case that *Y*. Thus, if *S* has the seeming that *Y*, she can easily form the justified reflective belief that she has the seeming that *Y*. Hence, if *S* infers *Y* from the proposition that she has the seeming that *Y*, *S* acquires some doxastic justification for believing that *Y*. This means that ordinarily *S*'s seeming that *Y* can also *indirectly* contribute to the justification of her belief that *Y*. Clearly this is not always the case. If *S*'s background information did not contain the assumption that if it seems that *Y*, it is normally the case that *Y*, *S*'s seeming that *Y* couldn't *indirectly* contribute

¹⁶ There are exceptions. Take for instance the disjunctive proposition (*D*) that [*P* or *S* has the belief that *P*]. If based on *S*'s justified belief that *P*, *S*'s belief that *D* is justified. Thus *S*'s belief that *P* can directly contribute to the justification of *S*'s belief that *D*. Yet *S*'s belief that *D* is obviously justified also if it is based on *S*'s justified introspective belief that *S* has the belief that *P*. Thus *S*'s belief that *P* can also *indirectly* contribute to the justification of *S*'s belief that *D*.

to the justification of S 's belief that Y . In this case, however, S 's seeming that Y could still contribute directly to the justification of S 's belief that Y . For S 's seeming that Y directly contributes to the justification of S 's belief that Y in virtue of its *characteristic phenomenology*, which wouldn't be touched by this change in S 's background information. (More on this in what follows).

The distinction between a mental state X 's contribution *as* a direct justifier and *as* an indirect justifier is crucial for our present purposes. For whether or not S ought to be strongly aware of X —in Bergmann's sense—in order to receive from X justification capable of preventing her belief that P from being accidentally true from her own perspective seems to depend on whether X 's contribution is direct or indirect.

4.2 Indirect contribution requires strong awareness

In this section we show that when S 's mental state X is an indirect contributor to the justification of S 's belief that P , S needs to be strongly aware of X if the truth of P is not to be accidental from her point of view. We start by highlighting an important feature of *inferential* acquisition of belief.

Suppose that S is justified in believing that P , and that S infers Q from P , thereby forming the true belief that Q . Suppose, however, that S does not conceive (or, worse, S is unable to conceive) of the truth of P as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that Q . In this case—independently of whether the truth of P is relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that Q —it is strongly intuitive that the truth of S 's belief that Q is accidental from S 's perspective. Here is an example of an inference that, although it leads from a true premise to a true conclusion, is unable to prevent the subject's belief in the conclusion from being accidentally true. Imagine that Sam acquires the justified belief that (K) Andrea's mouth is replete with white spots on a reddened background—i.e. Koplik's spots—and let H be the proposition that Andrea has contracted the measles. The truth of K is highly relevant to the justification or truth of H . However, Sam may still infer one proposition from the other and come to believe the truth of H accidentally, if Sam just ignores or has no

justification for supposing that K 's truth is relevant to the justification or truth of H . If Sam came to believe H on the basis of her justified belief that K , while ignoring or having no justification for supposing that the truth of K is relevant to the justification or truth of H , Sam would come believe the true, yet only accidentally.

These considerations lead us to formulate the following principle of inferential belief acquisition:

(INF) When S 's belief that P is based on S 's belief that E , the truth of S 's belief that P is non-accidental from S 's point of view if and only if S is justified in believing that E , and S justifiedly conceives of (or is at least able to justifiedly conceive of) the truth of E as relevant for the justification or truth of her belief that P .¹⁷

(INF) casts light on why, when a mental state X contributes *indirectly* to the justification of S 's belief that P , S needs to be strongly aware of X in order for the truth of the belief that P not to be accidental from her own point of view.

Let X be a mental state of S , and suppose that X contributes indirectly to the justification of S 's belief that P . In accordance with (IJ), in this case S bases her belief that P on, not X , but her introspective belief that (E^*) X occurs in S 's mind. On (INF), the truth of S 's belief that P is non-accidental from S 's perspective only if S is justified in believing that E^* , and S justifiedly conceives of (or is at least able to justifiedly conceive of) the truth of E^* as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P . As—to repeat— E^* is the proposition saying that X occurs in S 's mind, this can be the case only if, to begin with, S is justified in believing that X occurs in S 's mind—hence only if S is aware of X . Moreover, this can be the case only if S justifiedly conceives of (or is able to justifiedly conceive of) the truth of the proposition that X occurs in S 's mind as relevant to the

¹⁷ (INF) bears an interesting similarity to Richard Fumerton's Inferential Internalism (II), which is the principle saying that "in order to be justified in believing P on the basis of E , one must have justification for believing, not only E , but also the proposition that E makes P probable. (Fumerton 2006: 39). (INF) and (II), in particular, are arguably equivalent if we make the assumption that S 's belief is justified in the sense of (II) if and only if its truth is not accidental from S 's perspective. For a recent discussion of Fumerton's principle (II), and of alternative principles of inferential justification, see Tucker (2012). Tucker contends that S 's higher-level awareness of the link between E and P needs to be neither justified nor doxastic in order for S to have inferential justification for believing P on the basis of S 's belief that E .

justification or truth of S 's belief that P . In conclusion, when X contributes indirectly to S 's justification for the belief that S , (INF) imposes that S be aware or at least potentially aware of X in such a way that S conceives of the truth of the proposition that X occurs in S 's mind as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P , if the truth of the latter belief is not to be accidental from S 's own perspective. Thus (INF) imposes that S —as claimed in general by Bergmann—be *strongly* aware of X .

4.3 The requirement of strong awareness for direct contribution is unmotivated

Let's now turn to the case in which a mental state X of S is a *direct* contributor to the justification of S 's belief that P . Note, to begin with, that—along with (IJ)—if a mental state X^* contributes *indirectly* to the justification of S 's belief that P , and O is the proposition describing the occurrence of X^* in S 's mind, S 's belief that P is *based* on S 's introspective belief that O . Hence, when X^* contributes indirectly to the justification of the belief that P , S 's mental state X coinciding with S 's belief that O —in accordance with (DJ)—contributes *directly* to it. When—or to the extent to which— S 's belief that O contributes directly to the justification of S 's belief that P , S just bases her belief that P on her belief that O and *not* (also) on her belief that she has the belief that O .¹⁸ For this reason the application of (INF) offers no motivation for the requirement that S should be *strongly* aware of her belief that O in order to prevent S 's belief that P from being accidental from

¹⁸ As we have seen, when X is one of S 's mental states, and X directly contributes to the justification of S 's belief that P , X is normally unable, on S 's ordinary background information, to contribute also indirectly to the justification of the same belief that P . S 's background information may however depart from the ordinary one, and X can be at the same time a direct and an indirect contributor to the justification of S 's belief that P . When X *directly* and *indirectly* contributes to the justification of S 's belief that P , it is false that S just bases her belief that P on her belief that O and *not* (also) on her belief that she has the belief that O . For since X contributes also *indirectly* to the justification of S 's belief that P , S also bases her belief that P on her belief that she has the belief that O . In order to keep either contribution of X to the justification of S 's belief that P distinct, in this case we say that *to the extent to which* X contributes directly to the justification of S 's belief that P , S just bases her belief that P on her belief that O and *not* (also) on her belief that she has the belief that O .

her point of view.¹⁹ When—or to the extent to which—*S*'s belief that *O* contributes directly to the justification of *S*'s belief that *P*, all that follows from (INF) is that *S*, in order for her belief that *P* not to be accidentally true from her own perspective, should simply have the justified belief that *O* and justifiedly conceive of (or at least be able to justifiedly conceive of) the truth of *O* as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that *P*. In sum, when *X** indirectly contributes to the justification of *S*'s belief that *P*, *S*'s mental state *X* coinciding with *S*'s belief that *X** occurs in her mind directly contributes to the justification of *S*'s belief that *P*; and the sole condition that must be satisfied, if the truth of *S*'s belief that *P* is not to be accidental from her point of view, is that *S* should be strongly aware of *X** (and not also of *X*.)

A concrete example may help at this juncture. Imagine Sam wakes up in the morning and finds out that he is incapable of remembering where he had dinner last night: his latest memories before the supposed time of his dinner arrive at about 5pm, when he left his apartment looking for his car. There is then a memory gap of a few hours. Sam consults immediately his physician. The diagnosis is that he suffers from short-time amnesia caused by lack of testosterone. As a cure, Sam will assume testosterone tablets for a few days to restore the normal concentration of this hormone in his brain. At that point he will be able to remember where he dined last night. Sam starts taking the tablets. After a few days, the vivid memory of having had dinner at a Thai restaurant with a friend suddenly pops up in Sam's mind. Call *X** this mental state of Sam. As *X** pops up, Sam forms the introspective belief that (*O*) he has *X**, and bases on her belief that *O* the belief that (*T*) the concentration of testosterone in his brain is now normal. Intuitively, by so doing Sam comes justifiably to believe *T*. So, intuitively, *X** *indirectly* contributes to the justification of Sam's belief that *T*. Moreover, given the way in which *S*'s belief that *T* has been formed, it would not seem to be an accident, from Sam's own perspective, if this belief were true. Unless Sam had acquired from the

¹⁹ Suppose, instead, *S*'s based her belief that *P* on her belief that (*E*) she has the belief that *O*. In this case—along with the explanation given in the previous section—(INF) would impose that *S* should be strongly aware of her belief that *O* in order for *S*'s belief that *P* being non-accidental from *S*'s perspective.

diagnosis of his physician justification for believing that the truth of the proposition that O is relevant to the justification or truth of T , however, Sam's belief that T would still have been open to the charge of being accidentally true from his point of view. To see this, imagine that Sam doesn't see his physician initially and thus he has no clue about the link between his short-time amnesia and the lack of testosterone in his brain. If Sam formed anyway the belief T on the basis of his justified belief that O , in this case it would plainly be accidental that T is true from his perspective. In order for Sam's belief that T not to be accidentally true, then, Sam must also have justification for conceiving of the truth of O as relevant to the justification or truth of his belief that T . In other words—since O is the proposition saying that Sam has X^* —Sam must be strongly aware of X^* .

Consider now Sam's introspective belief that the mental state X^* occurs in his mind. Whereas Sam's mental state X^* contributes indirectly to the justification of his belief that T , Sam's introspective belief that (O) he has the mental state X^* does the same thing but *directly*. Importantly, the direct contribution of Sam's belief that O to the justification of his belief that T seems able to prevent the accidental truth of the belief that T from Sam's perspective independently of whether he is *strongly* aware of his belief that O . All that follows from (INF) is that Sam, in order for his belief that T not to be accidentally true from her own perspective, should simply have the justified belief that O and justifiedly conceive of (or at least be able to justifiedly conceive of) the truth of O as relevant to the justification or truth of his belief that T .

We think that the conclusions reached in the above example can be generalized in two important ways. To begin with, it seems to us natural and intuitively plausible that they can be generalized to any case in which the direct justifier is a *belief*—i.e. to any case in which S 's justified *belief* that Q directly contributes to the justification of S 's belief that P , whether or not Q describes the occurrence in S 's mind of some mental state *indirectly* contributing to the justification of S 's belief that P . When—and to the extent to which— S 's justified belief that Q directly contributes to the justification of S 's belief that P , S bases her belief that P on her belief that Q . Along with (INF),

then, S can acquire a justification for believing P that pre-empts the accidental truth of her belief that P from her point of view if just S is justified in believing that Q , and S justifiedly conceives of (or is at least able to justifiedly conceive of) the truth of Q as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P . The satisfaction of these conditions requires of S , in particular, that she be aware of her belief that Q —call this belief X —in just the weak sense that S should *have* X . For if S didn't have X , S could not be justified *in believing* that Q is true. Importantly, the satisfaction of the conditions above does not require of S that she also conceive of or only potentially conceive of (let alone with justification) X as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P . Thus, quite generally when X is a belief and X is S 's basis for the belief that P , X 's *direct* contribution to the justification of the belief that P prevents this belief from being accidentally true from S 's perspective just on the condition that S be *weakly* aware of X .

Let's turn to the second generalization. It appears to us intuitively plausible that the conclusions reached in Sam's example could also be extended to the case in which S 's mental state X directly contributing to the justification of S 's belief that P is not itself a belief—i.e. to the cases in which X is not a belief, and S is justified in believing P on the basis of X . For it seems to us plausible that the generalization considered before—i.e. that S need not be strongly aware of her *belief* X when X directly contributes to the justification of her belief that P , in order to prevent the truth of S 's belief that P from being accidental from her point of view—is just a special case of the more general claim, according to which, *whether or not X is a belief*, S need not be strongly aware of X , when X directly contributes to the justification of her belief that P , in order to prevent the truth of her belief that P from being accidental from her point of view. Our guiding intuition is the following: when—or to the extent to which— X directly contributes to justification of S 's belief that P , S does not base her belief that P on the introspective belief that X occurs. Consequently, it is difficult to see why S , if her belief that P is not to count as accidentally true from her perspective, should be required to be strongly aware of X —namely, in particular, why S should be required to

justifiedly believe (or at least to be able on reflection alone to justifiedly believe) that the truth of the proposition saying that X occurs in his mind is relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P . For the sole circumstance in which this requirement is clearly motivated appears to be when S bases her belief that P , not on X itself, but on the introspective belief that X occurs in her mind.²⁰

Whenever X contributes directly to the justification of S 's belief that P , and X does prevent S 's belief that P from being accidentally true from the point of view of S , we should then expect to find some factor explaining why this happens that is operative at the sole condition that S *merely have* X . Let us begin by inspecting the case in which the direct contributor X is a belief—say, S 's belief that E . In this case, in order for the truth of the belief that P to be non-accidental from S 's perspective, (INF) requires (1) that S be justified in believing that E , and that (2) S justifiedly conceive of (or be able to justifiedly conceive of) the truth of E as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P . When the latter two-fold condition is met, we can say that X prevents S 's

²⁰ Philosophers sympathetic to Bergmann's views may grant this but still insist that when X is a mental state of S , and X directly contributes to the justification of S 's belief that P , S must be *strongly* aware of X if her belief that P is not to be accidentally true from her own perspective. The apparently most straightforward line of argument for these philosophers is to appeal to a principle like the following:

(BAS) When S 's belief that P is based on S 's mental state X , the truth of S 's belief that P is non-accidental from S 's point of view only if S justifiedly conceives of (or is at least able to justifiedly conceive of) X as relevant *by itself* to the justification or truth of her belief that P .

Suppose in fact X contributes *directly* to the justification of S 's belief that P . In this case (INF) cannot motivate the requirement that S should be strongly aware of X in the specific sense that entails that S conceives of the truth of the proposition describing the occurrence of X as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P . Yet, in this very case, (BAS) seems to motivate the requirement that S should be strongly aware of X in the different sense entailing that S conceives of X *itself* as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P .

We don't think this strategy will succeed. For it seems to us that the claim that S 's *mental state* X is relevant by itself to the justification or the truth of S 's belief that P —as contrasted with the claim that the truth of the proposition describing the occurrence of X is relevant to the justification or the truth of S 's belief that P —cannot be interpreted in such a way that (BAS) turns out true. Suppose S directly contributes to the justification of S 's belief that P . In this case, there is a clear sense in which X can be described as being relevant to the justification or truth of S 's belief that P , for X *is the mental state upon which* S bases her justified belief that P . However, if to conceive of X as relevant to the justification or truth of S 's belief that P means to conceive of X as *the basis of* S 's justified belief that P , (BAS) is unmotivated. For it is far from clear why S should—in addition to just having X , and basing upon X her belief that P —also conceive of X as the basis of her justified belief that P in order to prevent this belief from being accidental from her point of view. There might be alternative interpretations of the claim that X is relevant to the justification or truth of S 's belief that P capable of producing a more plausible reading of (BAS). Until further notice, however, we feel entitled to dismiss the strategy at issue as unsuccessful.

belief that P from being accidentally true from S 's perspective by *displaying a recognizable symptom* of the truth of P to S .

Displaying a recognizable symptom of the truth of P to S is not the sole way in which a mental state X of S , to the extent to which X contributes as a *direct* justifier of S 's belief that P , can prevent that belief from being accidentally true from S 's perspective. Another way in which X can do so is when X *displays*, not a recognizable symptom of the truth of P , but the *truth of P* itself to S . A key example of this is when X is S 's *seeming* that P .

As we have seen, the assumption that if it seems to one that P , then P is probably true is normally part of a subject S 's background information. It is thus generally true that S 's seeming that P can *indirectly* contribute to the justification of S 's belief that P as long as S comes to entertain the introspective belief that she has the seeming that P . To the extent to which its indirect contribution is concerned, S 's seeming that P can pre-empt the accidental truth of S 's belief that P from S 's perspective only if S is *strongly* aware of that seeming. Namely, only if S has the justified introspective belief that (E) she has the seeming that P , and S justifiedly conceives of (or is able to justifiedly conceive of) the truth of E as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P . However, consider that S 's seeming that P can also—and more centrally does—contribute *directly* to the justification of the belief that P . As far as its *direct* contribution to the justification of S 's belief that P is concerned, S 's seeming that P can pre-empt the accidental truth of S 's belief that P from S 's perspective even if S is *not* strongly aware of the seeming. For upon just *having* her seeming that P —i.e. upon simply being *weakly* aware of her seeming that P — S will experience the distinctive phenomenology of a display of the truth of P . And it is strongly intuitive that S 's experiencing this phenomenology (which is the phenomenology of a disclosure of the fact that P) is a way to make the truth of S 's belief that P non-accidental from her point of view, provided that S bases her belief that P on *that* experience. Hence, S 's simply having a seeming that P and basing

her belief that P on it appears sufficient to pre-empt the accidental truth of the belief that P from S 's perspective.

4.4 Phenomenal conservatism escapes Bergmann's dilemma

Phenomenal conservatism entails that, in absence of defeaters, S 's belief that P is *non-inferentially* justified to some degree if it is based on its seeming to S that P . Remember that saying that the justification bestowed by S 's seeming that P on S 's belief that P is non-inferential is saying that this justification is not based (not even in part) on justification for other *beliefs*. Consider now that when—and to the extent to which— S 's seeming that P contributes *indirectly* to the justification of the belief that P , S 's seeming that P provides S with *inferential* justification for her belief that P . (This is so because in order for S 's seeming that P to contribute indirectly to the justification of S 's belief that P , S must base this belief on her *justified introspective belief* that she has the seeming that P). Hence the view entailed by phenomenal conservatism is that, in absence of defeaters, S 's seeming that P *directly* contributes to the justification of S 's belief that P . This implies—in light of the findings of the above section—that the phenomenal conservative can legitimately take S 's mere weak awareness of a seeming that P to pre-empt the accidental truth of S 's seeming based belief that P from S 's perspective. This is why phenomenal conservatism escapes Bergmann's dilemma.

5. Concluding remarks

As we have indicated in the introduction, a reason why phenomenal conservatism is philosophically attractive is that it affords the means to respond to celebrated sceptical challenges targeting any view of epistemic justification that assumes that the justification for any belief is always based on some other *belief*. Views of this sort have traditionally been charged with leading to scepticism. Suppose S entertains the justified belief that P . If S 's beliefs can be justified only by other beliefs of her, S will have a chain of beliefs, culminating at one end with the belief that P , with one or more

branches. As indicated in the introduction, the sceptic contends that there are only three ways in which any branch can be organized, each of which is unable to ensure justification for \mathcal{S} 's initial belief that P : \mathcal{S} has no justification for the last belief in the branch; \mathcal{S} is deemed to have justification for each belief in the branch but the branch is circular; \mathcal{S} is deemed to have justification for each belief in the branch but the branch never ends. (PC^D) offers a fourth option: the branch ends with a belief of \mathcal{S} that is justified by the way things seem to \mathcal{S} .

Our conclusion that phenomenal conservatism escapes Bergmann's dilemma, above and beyond being interesting in itself, has thus the greater epistemological significance of lending support to a promising form of internalist foundationalism that *combines* (PC^D) with a principle of inferential justification of this type:

(BEL) A subject \mathcal{S} 's belief that P is prima facie justified (to some degree) *if* it is based on \mathcal{S} 's justified belief that E , and \mathcal{S} justifiably conceives of (or is at least able to justifiably conceive of) the truth of E as relevant to the justification or truth of her belief that P .

According to this combined view, our basic beliefs are prima facie justified by the ways things seem to be to us in the way described by (PC^D), and this justification is then *inferentially* transmitted to the rest of our beliefs in the way described by (BEL).

Of course, the conclusion that (PC^D) escapes Bergmann's dilemma would not have this greater significance if (BEL) itself fell prey to the same dilemma. In that case the internalist foundationalist would face the hard choice between claiming that none of \mathcal{S} 's *non-basic* beliefs is (inferentially) justified for \mathcal{S} because of the vicious infinite regress described by Bergmann, and claiming that \mathcal{S} 's (inferential) justification of \mathcal{S} 's non-basic beliefs cannot prevent these beliefs from being accidentally true from \mathcal{S} 's perspective, and thus actually unjustified for \mathcal{S} . A result already established in §4.3 is, however, that (BEL) doesn't fall afoul of Bergmann's dilemma. It would do so if \mathcal{S} , in (BEL), were required to be strongly aware of her belief that E in order to receive from this mental state justification that averts the accidental truth of the belief that P . Yet we have seen

that S is not subject to this requirement when her belief that E belief *directly* contributes to the justification of the belief that P in the way described by (BEL).

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