

## McDowell and the New Evil Genius

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0. Many epistemologists—both internalists and externalists—regard the “New Evil Genius Problem” (Lehrer & Cohen 1983) as constituting an important consideration in favour of (one or another version of) epistemological internalism, and as requiring a substantial qualification in (one or another version of) epistemological externalism. According to these epistemologists, for any non-object-dependent proposition  $p$ , and for any time  $t$ , you cannot be more justified, at  $t$ , in believing that  $p$  than your recently envatted physical duplicate is.<sup>1</sup> In other words, these epistemologists accept what we call the “New Evil Genius view”:

(NEG) The extent to which  $S$  is justified at  $t$  in believing that  $p$  is just the same as the extent to which  $S$ 's recently envatted duplicate is justified at  $t$  in believing that  $p$ .

Our epistemological intuitions are supposed to apprise us of the truth of the New Evil Genius view, or (NEG), as we'll henceforth refer to it.

(NEG) is widely accepted both by internalist and by externalists. In fact, there have been very few opponents of (NEG). Timothy Williamson (e.g., 2000) rejects (NEG), for reasons that have by now received a great deal of scrutiny.<sup>2</sup> John McDowell also rejects (NEG), but his reasons have not received the scrutiny they deserve. This is in large part because those reasons have not been well understood. We believe that McDowell's challenge to (NEG) is important, worthy of fair assessment, and maybe even correct. In this paper, we explain McDowell's challenge to (NEG), and also explain how McDowell can address a seemingly fatal objection to his view.

1. We begin by setting out a big problem in understanding McDowell's view. The problem begins to emerge if we ask: is McDowell an epistemological internalist, or an epistemological externalist? Of course, this question requires clarification. Contemporary epistemology bears witness to several different “internalism-externalism” disputes concerning justification (never mind knowledge). For instance, consider the following three theses:

- (1)  $S$ 's epistemic justification for believing that  $p$  is constituted solely by  $S$ 's mental states.
- (2)  $S$ 's epistemic justification for believing that  $p$  is constituted solely by facts that  $S$  can know by reflection alone.
- (3)  $S$ 's epistemic justification for believing that  $p$  is constituted solely by properties that  $S$  has in common with her recently envatted physical duplicate.

Each of theses (1), (2), and (3) is a version of internalism. The denial of each of these theses is a version of externalism. And so there are, it seems, at least three different “internalism-externalism” disputes.

In fact, there are many more than three different disputes: if we replace “is constituted by” with “supervenes solely upon” in theses (1), (2), and (3), we get three different internalist theses, each of which defines another “internalist-externalist” dispute. And we can ring other changes on (1), (2), and (3) by, for instance, replacing “epistemic justification for believing that  $p$ ” with “epistemic reason to believe that  $p$ ”, or by specifying that “epistemic justification” is to be understood as propositional, or as doxastic, justification, or by specifying whether the justification at a particular time  $t$  is supposed to be constituted only by states, facts, or properties at  $t$ , and so on. By ringing such changes on (1), (2), and (3), we can specify literally hundreds of “internalist-externalist” disputes. Many of these disputes are actual, and many of them are not adequately distinguished from one another.

Now parties to such debates have long recognized that theses (1) and (2) above are logically independent—neither entails the other. (See Alston 1986, Conee & Feldman 2001.) But what is not so commonly recognized is that theses (2) and (3) are also logically independent. Of course, neither (2) nor (3) *formally* entails the other. But is there not some metaphysical necessitation relation between them nonetheless? If (2) is true, then must not (3) be true also? Here is an argument from (2) to (3):

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|-------|--|
| (2)   | $S$ 's epistemic justification for believing that $p$ is constituted solely by facts that $S$ can know by reflection alone.                            |
| (R)   | The only facts that $S$ can know by reflection alone are facts that would also obtain in $S$ 's recently envatted duplicate.                           |
| <hr/> |  |
| (3)   | $S$ 's epistemic justification for believing that $p$ is constituted solely by properties that $S$ has in common with her recently envatted duplicate. |

Notice also that if (3) is true, then so is (NEG): if epistemic justification is constituted *solely* by properties that  $S$  has in common with her recently envatted duplicate, then the extent to which  $S$  is justified in believing that  $p$  at time  $t$  is just the same as the extent to which her recently envatted duplicate is justified in believing that  $p$  at time  $t$ . So, if the inference from (2) and (R) to (3) is sound, then so is the longer inference to (NEG).

Virtually all epistemologists would accept (R), and so accept the inference from (2) to (3), and so to (NEG). This is why our intuitions about the epistemic properties of our recently envatted duplicates are so commonly thought to be relevant to assessing the truth of (2): the thought is that (2) is true only if (NEG) is true.

We believe that the first step towards understanding McDowell's rejection of (NEG) is to see that he rejects (R), and so would also reject the inference above from (2) to (3), and so to (NEG).

McDowell can thus accept both (1) and (2)—and so be an internalist in at least two senses of the term—while still rejecting (R), (3), and (NEG). For McDowell, as we read him, our beliefs are justified (when they are justified) only by virtue of our own mental states, and only by virtue of facts that are reflectively accessible to us. But some of these justifying factors—though they are reflectively accessible to us, and though they involve nothing other than our own mental states—are nonetheless not such that we could share them with our recently envatted duplicate. (We will henceforth refer to these justifying factors that are reflectively accessible to us, and that involve nothing other than our own mental states, as our “reasons”. Empirical reasons are reasons constituted by our sensory and/or perceptual experiences.)

McDowell (1998a) allows, for example, that one’s empirical reason for believing a certain external world proposition,  $p$ , might be that one *sees that*  $p$  is the case. *Seeing that* is factive, however, in that seeing that  $p$  entails  $p$ . However, McDowell also holds that such factive reasons can be nevertheless reflectively accessible to the agent—indeed, he demands (though not in quite these words) that they be accessible for they must be able to serve as the agent’s reasons. In criticizing what he calls the “hybrid conception of knowledge”, McDowell writes:

In the hybrid conception, a satisfactory standing in the space of reasons is only part of what knowledge is; truth is an extra requirement. So two subjects can be alike in respect of the satisfactoriness of their standing in the space of reasons, although only one of them is a knower, because only in her case is what she takes to be so actually so. But if its being so is external to her operations in the space of reasons, how can it not be outside the reach of her rational powers? And if it is outside the reach of her rational powers, how can its being so be the crucial element in an intelligible conception of her knowing that it is so—what makes the relevant difference between her and the other subject? Its being so is conceived as external to the only thing that is supposed to be epistemologically significant about the knower herself, her satisfactory standing in the space of reasons. (McDowell 1998a, 403)

This passage requires some interpretation. First, we interpret the expression “outside the reach of [an agent’s] rational powers” in such a way that, for some fact  $p$  to be “outside the reach of [an agent’s] rational powers” is for  $p$  to be unable to serve as an agent’s reason for belief. Second, there is a question about why McDowell takes it to follow from  $p$ ’s not being able to serve as an agent’s reason for belief that it cannot be an epistemologically significant feature of the agent herself. We suggest that McDowell is willing to make this inference because he holds the following view: for  $p$  to be able to serve as an agent’s reason for belief, the agent must be able to know that  $p$ , and know it by reflection alone. Furthermore—we take McDowell to hold—only what the agent can know by reflection alone can be an epistemologically significant feature of the agent herself. Here is some textual support for the latter attribution to McDowell:

I agree with [Elizabeth Fricker] that we lose the point of invoking the space of reasons if we allow someone to possess a justification even if it is outside his reflective reach. (McDowell 1998b, 418)

Since McDowell does invoke the space of reasons, he must think that there is some point to doing so, and so he must think that someone cannot possess a justification that is “outside his reflective reach”. Furthermore, we assume that for something to be “outside [the agent’s] reflective reach”, in McDowell’s terms, is for the agent not to be able to know it by reflection alone. So the agent’s justification—or what we’re calling her “epistemic reason”—must be such that she can know it by reflection alone.

We should note that various texts leave it unclear whether McDowell accepts (2) or merely the following slightly weaker thesis:

(2’) If *S* has factive reasons for believing that *p*, then *S*’s epistemic justification for believing that *p* is constituted solely by facts that *S* can know by reflection alone.

But no matter whether McDowell accepts (2) or (2’), he will be committed to rejecting (NEG). To see why, consider the following argument:

(2’) If *S* has factive reasons for believing that *p*, then *S*’s epistemic justification for believing that *p* is constituted solely by facts that *S* can know by reflection alone.

(R) The only facts that *S* can know by reflection alone are facts that would also obtain in *S*’s recently envatted duplicate.

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(3’) If *S* has factive reasons for believing that *p*, then *S*’s epistemic justification for believing that *p* is constituted solely by properties that *S* has in common with her recently envatted duplicate.

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(NEG’) If *S* has factive reasons for believing that *p*, then the extent to which *S* is justified at *t* in believing that *p* is just the same as the extent to which *S*’s recently envatted duplicate is justified at *t* in believing that *p*.

Now, we could read McDowell as accepting (2’), but still rejecting (R), (3’), and (NEG’). Since (NEG) entails (NEG’), McDowell’s rejection of (NEG’) commits him to rejecting the popular (NEG). So whether McDowell accepts (2) or the weaker (2’), he is still committed to rejecting (NEG). Given that we’re interested in explaining and defending McDowell’s rejection of (NEG), we intend to show that this rejection is explicable and defensible even if McDowell holds the stronger thesis (2).

McDowell’s position clearly challenges the traditional epistemological picture that has (R) at its core. On the one hand, it insists that the agent (at least the knowledgeable agent) be able reflectively to access the factors that make her justified in her beliefs. This requirement seems to make his view internalist. On the other hand, however, it also demands that in certain cases one’s epistemic standing requires that certain “outer” facts obtain other than the truth of the believed proposition, and this seems to make his view externalist. Once (R) is rejected, however, these two aspects of the view are no longer in conflict. McDowell’s acceptance of reflectively accessible factive

reasons—particularly where these reasons concern empirical propositions—entails that the facts that one can know by reflection are not restricted to the “inner” in this way, and can instead, as it were, reach right out to the external world, to the “outer”. One has reflective access to facts that would not obtain of one’s recently envatted duplicate, on McDowell’s picture. If this is correct, it suggests that the popular epistemological distinction between “inner” and “outer” which derives from (R) should be rejected, or at least our understanding of it should be radically revised.

It is their prior commitment to (R) that has ensured that commentators on McDowell’s position have failed fully to engage with his view. For example, when Crispin Wright (2002) reads McDowell, he doesn’t take the factivity of empirical reasons seriously, only the reflective access requirement. Accordingly, on his reading, what one has reflective access to are simply non-factive empirical reasons, and thus McDowell ends up offering a fairly familiar form of epistemic internalism. In particular, Wright argues that, strictly speaking, the grounds that are reflectively accessible to one are not factive empirical reasons, but rather disjunctive reasons of the following general form (in the case of seeing that): either one sees that  $p$ , or one is in a delusional state. Naturally, this disjunction does not entail any empirical fact, since for the entailment to follow one would first need to be able to discharge the second disjunct, something which Wright thinks is impossible because of the possibility of sceptical scenarios which are indistinguishable from everyday life. On this reading, then, McDowell is just a classical internalist who emphasizes the importance of reflectively accessible reasons without allowing such reflective access to apply to factive empirical reasons.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, a prior commitment to (R) has prompted others to regard McDowell as offering a straightforward version of epistemic externalism. John Greco (2004), for example, takes McDowell’s discussion of the factivity of reasons seriously but downplays, as a result, his claim that such reasons can be reflectively accessible. Consider the following passage:

According to McDowell, genuine perception gives one “a satisfactory standing in the space or reasons,” whereas mere illusion does not. In other words, genuine perception, but not illusion, gives rise to positive epistemic status. But on McDowell’s view, the difference between genuine perception and mere illusion is not something that is knowable by introspection alone. Hence, McDowell’s view entails EE [*epistemic externalism*]. (Greco 2004, 8)

Although Greco is right to suggest that McDowell does not think that one can tell, just by introspection, that one is the victim of a radical sceptical hypothesis, he is wrong to think that on McDowell’s view it therefore follows that sometimes one’s knowledge, where it is supported by a factive empirical reason, must also be supported by further non-reflectively accessible facts. Instead, McDowell’s thesis is that all that is required for knowledge in these cases is that one forms one’s belief in the target proposition on the basis of one’s (possession of the) reflectively accessible factive

reason.<sup>4</sup>

As with Wright's discussion of McDowell, (R) is lurking in the background here. Greco's guiding thought seems to be that since one cannot tell the difference between possessing a factive empirical reason and merely seeming to possess such a reason (perhaps because one has been radically deceived), it follows that the epistemic standing of one's belief rests upon the combination of what is reflectively accessible (the disjunctive proposition that one is either, say, seeing that  $p$  or in a delusional state) plus the relevant non-reflectively accessible fact obtaining (that one is not in a delusional state). Whereas Wright takes McDowell demands for reflectively accessible empirical reasons seriously, and thus downplays the factive dimension of these reasons, Greco takes the factivity of the reasons at face value and therefore holds that for McDowell the epistemic standing of one's true belief rests on further non-reflectively accessible facts obtaining.

On neither reading, however, do we accurately capture McDowell's view, and this is because McDowell rejects (R). If we are to evaluate McDowell's position it is essential that we notice this feature of his view.

2. So, as we read him, McDowell accepts (1) and (2), but he rejects (R), (3), and (NEG). We take it that one key worry that commentators may have about McDowell's grounds for rejecting (R)—a worry which may prompt them to suppose that McDowell can't possibly hold the position that, in fact, he does hold—is that McDowell's grounds for rejecting (R) seem to generate a counterintuitive result, one that mirrors the much discussed "McKinsey-style" *reductio* of the combination of a standard version of content externalism and the thesis that we have privileged access to the contents of our own thoughts.<sup>5</sup> Showing that this counterintuitive result does not follow from McDowell's view should therefore be useful in helping many epistemologists to take his position more seriously. In this section, we will first explain McDowell's grounds for rejecting (R), and then we will set out the counterintuitive McKinsey-like result that may be thought to follow from those grounds.

So, first, what are McDowell's grounds for rejecting (R)? Consider again the contention that one's reasons are always reflectively accessible to one. The natural way to interpret this claim is as saying that one is always in a position to know, by using only one's reflective capacities, such as introspection and *a priori* reasoning, what one's reasons are. Call this the *reflective accessibility of reasons* thesis:

(RAR) One is in a position to know, by using only one's reflective capacities, what one's reasons are for believing that  $p$ .

This thesis is quite popular. What is unusual is McDowell's conjoining (RAR) with the claim that there exist factive empirical reasons, such as that one sees that  $p$ . Call this the *factivity of reasons* thesis:

(FAR) There are factive empirical reasons for beliefs about the external world.

Now, (RAR) and (FAR) jointly imply the distinctive McDowellian thesis (McD):

(McD) One is in a position to know, by using only one's reflective capacities, what one's reasons are for believing that  $p$ —even when those reasons are (as they sometimes are) factive empirical reasons.

But this last claim is incompatible with (R)—since one's factive empirical reasons are reasons that one does not share with one's recently envatted duplicate. We think that McDowell's reason for rejecting (R) is that it conflicts with (McD), the conjunction of (RAR) and (FAR). To understand McDowell's view, we need to recognize that he accepts both (RAR) and (FAR), and so accepts (McD).

It may seem, however, that by accepting (McD) we get the following problem. Suppose that an agent is in possession of a factive empirical reason for believing  $p$ , which we will abbreviate as 'R ( $p$ )':

(A) R ( $p$ )

Given (RAR), it follows that this agent is in a position to know by reflection alone that she has this reason. We will abbreviate this as ' $\diamond K_{AP}$  (R ( $p$ ))':

(B)  $\diamond K_{AP}$  (R ( $p$ ))

The problem should now be apparent: if the agent is even reasonably intellectually sophisticated then it is possible for her to come to know, just by reflection, that if she has a factive empirical reason for believing  $p$ , then  $p$  must be true:

(C)  $\diamond K_{AP}$  (R ( $p$ )  $\rightarrow p$ )

Putting (B) and (C) together with the closure of knowledge under known entailment, however, seems to entail that one could come to know, just by reflection, that the empirical proposition  $p$  is true:

(D)  $\diamond K_{AP}$  ( $p$ )

Intuitively, however, this cannot be the case; how could one ever come to know, *by reflection alone*, facts about the external world? It seems that one cannot accept both (RAR) and (FAR), on pain of absurdity. It is no wonder, then, that those who read McDowell do not take his endorsement of both

(RAR) and (FAR) at face value and instead treat him as emphasising the one thesis over the other.

3. McDowell can rebut this objection. Notice that the conclusion we just argued for is counterintuitive only if the agent concerned is *acquiring* knowledge of the external world via reflection. If, for example, we could show that the agent could gain her reflective knowledge of her own reasons only provided she already had empirical knowledge of the relevant bit of the external world, then this would disarm the argument above. Rather than being a *reductio* of McDowell's view, the argument could be understood as showing that if one *already* has empirical knowledge of the external world, then one is able to discover by reflection that one has such knowledge. But there is nothing obviously absurd about that conclusion.

There is one reading of McDowell (though not one that we endorse, as we explain below), on which this way of disarming the problem is directly available. According to this reading—offered, for example, by Barry Stroud (2002)—it is part of McDowell's view that if one is in possession of a reason for believing  $p$  then this will itself entail that one has the belief that  $p$ . Accordingly, since nothing more is required for knowledge that  $p$  on the McDowellian view than the factive reason for  $p$  and the belief, on this basis, that  $p$ , it follows directly from the possession of the factive reason for  $p$  that one knows  $p$ .

It ought to be clear that on this reading of McDowell he can evade the counterintuitive conclusion of the argument above. After all, according to this interpretation, to say that one can know by reflection that one is in possession of a factive empirical reason is tantamount to saying that one can come to know by reflection that one is in possession of empirical knowledge of the proposition which this reason is a factive reason for believing. If that is right, then it certainly can't be the case that one can use this reflective access in order to acquire reflective knowledge of the target empirical proposition, since the reflective access to the reason already presupposes the empirical knowledge in question.

In other words, assume that one is able to know by reflection alone that one is in possession of a factive empirical reason:

(p)  $\diamond K_{AP} (R (p))$

One cannot be in a position to know by reflection that something is the case if it isn't the case, so it directly follows that one must be in possession of a factive empirical reason:

(q)  $R (p)$

On the view under consideration, however, one cannot have a factive reason for believing  $p$  without believing  $p$  on its basis:

(r)  $B(p)$

And since there is nothing more to knowledge on McDowell's view than the possession of a factive reason and the relevant belief (formed on this basis), it follows that one must have empirical knowledge (which we will abbreviate as 'K') of the target proposition:

(s)  $K(p)$

Accordingly, one cannot come to know an empirical proposition by reflection alone, since in order to have reflective access to the fact that one is in possession of the relevant factive empirical reason, it must already be the case that one has empirical knowledge of that proposition. We can make this point explicit by employing conditional introduction to derive (t):

(t)  $\diamond_{K_{AP}}(R(p)) \rightarrow K(p)$

In words, if one is in a position to know by reflection that one is in possession of a factive empirical reason for  $p$ , then one has empirical knowledge that  $p$ . Of course it doesn't follow from this that one can acquire knowledge that  $p$  by reflection alone.

4. There are problems for such a reading of McDowell, however, for without a gap between one's factive reasons and one's (knowledgeably held) belief, it is hard to understand one's factive reasons as one's reasons *for* one's (knowledgeably held) belief, rather than just being equivalent to one's knowledgeably held belief.<sup>6</sup> In any case, McDowell's view is clearly that one can be in possession of a factive empirical reason for believing a proposition and yet not believe that proposition (see, for example, McDowell 2002, 277-8). Given that this is the case, we need to see if there's another way to block the seemingly counterintuitive consequence of the conjunction of (RAR) and (FAR).

The resolution of this problem lies in the fact that in order for the agent in our example above to make the inference to the conclusion  $p$ , she will need to form the belief that  $p$  (if she has not already formed it in advance of the inference). This, in combination with her possession of a factive empirical reason for believing that  $p$ , and her forming her belief that  $p$  rationally on the basis of that reason, will guarantee that our agent meets all the conditions for empirical knowledge that  $p$ . Again, then, we can show that, even if the agent does acquire knowledge of the external world by going through the process of reflecting upon her factive reasons and making the necessary inferences, the

knowledge that she thereby gains is empirical. An agent who performs the McKinsey-style inference in question satisfies sufficient conditions for having empirical knowledge of the conclusion, even if it happens to be causally relevant to her gaining that empirical knowledge that she engaged in some reflection.

To elaborate: suppose that our protagonist has gained reflective knowledge (which we will abbreviate as ‘ $K_{AP}$ ’) that she is in possession of a factive empirical reason for believing  $p$ , and has also gained reflective knowledge of the relevant entailment:

- (a)  $K_{AP} (R (p))$
- (b)  $K_{AP} (R (p) \rightarrow p)$

The problematic inference now immediately follows:

- (c)  $K_{AP} (p)$

Notice, however, that it follows from (a), via the factivity of knowledge, that the agent has the empirical factive reason in question:

- (d)  $R (p)$

Moreover, if the agent makes the inference from (a) and (b) to (c), she will have the belief in the target proposition  $p$  (this is entailed by the knowledge at issue in (c)—she cannot have such knowledge without believing that  $p$ ):

- (e)  $B (p)$

Furthermore, since the agent’s belief that  $p$  arises out of her recognition of the support the factive empirical reason gives for the target proposition  $p$ , her belief that  $p$  will be based on this factive empirical reason. So the agent believes that  $p$ , and this belief is justified since she holds it on the basis of a factive empirical reason. Moreover, since the supporting reason is factive, it follows that the belief is true, and hence the agent has a justified true belief in  $p$ . Finally, since the agent’s justification consists of a belief that is based on a factive empirical reason, there is no way for Gettier-style problems to intervene here to prevent the agent from knowing that  $p$ , since what justifies her belief also guarantees that the belief is true. Thus, the agent has a justified, true, unGettiered belief that  $p$  that is based on a factive *empirical* reason.<sup>7</sup> But this is sufficient for her to have *empirical* knowledge of the target proposition  $p$ , and therefore:

- (f)  $K (p)$

Thus we can conclude, using conditional introduction, that if one has reflective knowledge that one is

in possession of a factive empirical reason, and one also has reflective knowledge that this reason entails the proposition for which it is a reason, then it follows that one has *empirical* knowledge of the target proposition:

$$(g) \quad (K_{AP}(R(p)) \ \& \ K_{AP}(R(p) \rightarrow p)) \rightarrow K(p)$$

But it follows from this that, on the present interpretation of McDowell's view, one does not acquire knowledge of the external world by reflection *alone*. That's because the conditions that are necessary for one to make an inference of the McKinsey-like form described above are also sufficient for one to possess such knowledge empirically. So either one makes the McKinsey-style inference, in which case one satisfies sufficient conditions for possessing empirical knowledge of the truth of the conclusion; or one does not make the McKinsey-style inference, in which case one does not gain knowledge of the truth of the conclusion by reflection alone. Either way, on McDowell's view one cannot gain knowledge of the external world by reflection alone.

5. In summary, many contemporary epistemologists would accept that the following two-stage inference is truth-preserving:

- (2)  $S$ 's epistemic justification for believing that  $p$  is constituted solely by facts that  $S$  can know by reflection alone.
- (R) The only facts that  $S$  can know by reflection alone are facts that would also obtain in  $S$ 's recently envatted duplicate.
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- (3)  $S$ 's epistemic justification for believing that  $p$  is constituted solely by properties that  $S$  has in common with her recently envatted duplicate.
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- (NEG) The extent to which  $S$  is justified at  $t$  in believing that  $p$  is just the same as the extent to which  $S$ 's recently envatted duplicate is justified at  $t$  in believing that  $p$ .

Thus, they assume that anyone who accepts (2) must accept (NEG). But this is not so. McDowell accepts (2), and is in this sense an internalist, but he rejects (R), (3), and (NEG), and therefore also rejects (NEG). Why does McDowell reject (R)? Because its denial is entailed by the conjunction of (RAR) and (FAR).

This conjunction has been thought to lead to an absurd result. As we have argued, however, on either reading of McDowell the absurd result that's been alleged to follow from the conjunction of (RAR) and (FAR) in fact does not follow from that conjunction. If we are right that this counterintuitive result has prompted commentators not to take McDowell's avowed epistemological view seriously, then showing that these two theses do not generate this problem should go some way towards showing that McDowell offers a coherent alternative to standard forms of internalism and also to standard forms of externalism.<sup>8</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> We specify that the duplicate is *recently* envatted in order to allow for sameness of intentional content, even given the truth of standard versions of semantic externalism.

<sup>2</sup> For a recent discussion of Williamson's view in this regard, see Joyce (2004).

<sup>3</sup> We think that the presence of the sceptical problem here confuses the issue, since even if one grants that one could have reflective access to factive empirical reasons, it is a further question whether this concession enables McDowell to adequately respond to the sceptical problem. Accordingly, by running the two issues together it can seem that the problem is the existence of reflectively accessible factive empirical reasons, rather than the applicability of such reasons to the sceptical problem. For an argument against a McDowellian employment of empirical factive reasons in response to the sceptical problem, see Pritchard (2003).

<sup>4</sup> Of course, it has to be the case—and will be the case, if she has the relevant knowledge—that the agent is not in a delusional state, but the point is that the obtaining of this fact, while entailed by the agent's knowledge, is not a pre-requisite of the agent's knowledge but merely a logical consequence of it. That is, one can know that *p* simply in virtue of being in the possession of a reflective accessible factive reason for *p* and believing *p* on this basis—that the existence of this knowledge entails further facts that are not reflectively accessible to the subject does not show that this knowledge *rests on* further non-reflectively accessible facts.

<sup>5</sup> See McKinsey (1991). For a collection of recent articles on this *reductio*, see Nuccetelli (2003).

<sup>6</sup> Suppose, for example, that one says that one knows a certain proposition, *p*, and one is asked, 'How do you know *p*?'. Although there is a sense in which saying in response to this, 'I can see that *p*', is a little like simply re-iterating that one knows *p*, note that this assertion does add further information—namely, that you gained the knowledge via your sight. Furthermore, this information about the source of your knowledge also appeals to a certain *pedigree* of the knowledge—depending upon the proposition at issue, seeing that *p* can be a better way of coming to know that *p* than, say, hearing that *p*. Thus, the citing of a factive reason is normally seen as offering epistemic support for a knowledge claim, rather than simply repeating that claim in a different form.

<sup>7</sup> There are two ways in which a justified true belief could be Gettiered. The first involves having a true belief on the basis of grounds that don't guarantee its truth; while the second involves having a true belief, and possessing grounds that guarantee the truth of this belief, but not properly basing the true belief on those grounds. It should be clear the agent we are concerned with here will not be subject to either of these styles of Gettier challenges. She is immune to the first type of Gettier challenge because her factive reason for believing *p* guarantees the truth of *p*; and she is immune to the second type of Gettier challenge because her belief that *p* is based on the factive reason that she has for believing *p*.

<sup>8</sup> Thanks to Michael Brady, Jessica Brown, Sandy Goldberg, Adrian Haddock, and Alan Millar for discussion of issues related to the topic of this article. Thanks also to two anonymous referees from *Noûs*.