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ACQUAINTANCE AND THE PROBLEM OF THE SPECKLED HEN

ABSTRACT. This paper responds to Ernest Sosa's recent criticism of Richard Fumerton's acquaintance theory. Sosa argues that Fumerton's account of non-inferential justification falls prey to the problem of the speckled hen. I argue that Sosa's criticisms are both illuminating and interesting but that Fumerton's theory can escape the problem of the speckled hen. More generally, the paper shows that an internalist account of non-inferential justification can survive the powerful objections of the Sellarsian dilemma and the problem of the speckled hen.

The regress argument shows that if there are justified beliefs then the evidential chain of each justified belief either (i) terminates in a justified basic belief or (ii) connects in a non linear fashion to a coherent set of beliefs or (iii) continues without end. These options correspond to foundationalism, coherentism, and infinitism.¹ Although each position faces unique difficulties, it is widely thought that foundationalism is the most plausible theory.²

There are, however, two arguments that when run successively constitute a serious challenge to the existence of justified basic beliefs. The first argument – the Sellars' dilemma – attempts to show that there are no justified basic beliefs. For assuming basic beliefs are justified by some experience that experience either has propositional content or it does not. If the experience does not have propositional content then it does not justify the belief. But if the experience has propositional content then a further reason is required for thinking that the content is accurate or correct. One foundationalist response to this dilemma is to argue that there is a unique relation of acquaintance that a person can bear to (among other things) the truth-maker of his belief, and this

relation can be used to provide a suitable response to the dilemma by rejecting the claim that if the experience has content then some further reason is required for thinking the content accurate. A second argument, however, can be run on the heels of this kind of response to the Sellars' dilemma. This argument is known as the problem of the speckled hen. The problem of the speckled hen concerns foundationalist analyses of the relation that provides for justified basic beliefs. The problem affects theories that claim that S is non-inferentially justified in believing p if S has an experience with content c and S has the appropriate belief with content c. The speckled hen case shows that it is possible for S to meet those conditions but fail to have a justified belief.

Richard Fumerton, in his book *Metaepistemology and Skepticism*,³ develops an acquaintance theory that he uses for an account of non-inferential justification. Fumerton explicitly notes that his acquaintance theory escapes the Sellars' dilemma because "acquaintance is not *by itself* an epistemic relation."⁴ Ernest Sosa, in his recent book with Laurence Bonjour, argues that Fumerton's acquaintance theory falls prey to the problem of the speckled hen.⁵

In this paper I argue that Fumerton's acquaintance theory does not fall prey to the speckled hen. Sosa's argument is interesting and challenging. Furthermore it helps to clarify Fumerton's acquaintance theory – and more generally any internalist theory of non-inferential justification. I think, however, that Sosa's argument appeals to a seductive but false premise.

Fumerton's acquaintance theory is designed to provide an account of non-inferential justification for an internalist theory of epistemic justification. His account is that S has a non-inferentially justified belief p iff S is acquainted with (i) p, (ii) the thought that p, and (iii) the relation of correspondence holding between the thought that p and p.⁶ Call this account (NIJ).⁷

Fumerton notes that the conditions of (NIJ) reflect the following desiderata of an account of non-inferential justification: condition (i) requires that S is acquainted with the truth-maker of S's belief; condition (ii) requires that S is

acquainted with the truth-bearer of S's belief; and condition (iii) requires that S is acquainted with the relation of correspondence that holds between S's thought that p (the truth-bearer) and p (the truth-maker). It may seem that this requires S to have too many beliefs, but note that acquaintance is not a doxastic relation. If condition (ii) is satisfied then S bears a non-doxastic relation to S's own belief that p.

In a brief section of his recent book Sosa argues that Fumerton's acquaintance theory falls prey to the problem of the speckled hen. It takes some care to reconstruct the details of Sosa's argument. Sosa begins with a case that is designed to show that the first two conditions of (NIJ) are met and then he presents an argument that the third condition is also met. At the initial stage Sosa asks us to consider the case in which a person sees a black triangular image against a white background and believes that there is a black triangular image in one's visual field. Is it the case that this person is acquainted with the black triangular image and the belief that there's a black triangular image?

In an earlier section Sosa distinguishes between two kinds of awareness – e-awareness and n-awareness. N-awareness (or noticing-awareness) is an explicit conscious awareness that involves a specific belief about one's experience. If, for example, S is n-aware of the triangular image then S has the occurrent belief that *there is a triangular image*.

E-awareness (or experiential awareness) is conscious awareness of one's experience. A person experiences many things that he is not n-aware of. Nevertheless, the person is aware *simpliciter* of the items of his experience. Further, e-awareness does not involve any occurrent belief about one's experience.⁸

Sosa assumes that e-awareness of some item is sufficient for being acquainted with that item.⁹ This assumption is not unattractive. For it is often objected that the acquaintance relation is mysterious. It, however, must be conceded that Sosa's argument works only if one grants this assumption. I will argue below that there are two problems with denying Sosa's assumption. These problems lend credibility to the assumption that e-awareness is sufficient for acquaintance.

Consequently, a response to Sosa's argument should proceed along different lines.

Since in Sosa's initial case S is e-aware of her belief that there is a black triangular image in her visual field and S is e-aware of the black triangular image, S meets the first two conditions of (NIJ). Sosa then asks: "Does the correspondence between S's belief and the content of S's belief figure in S's consciousness?"¹⁰ Sosa writes,

Well, if one had two images *I* and *I'*, both triangular, would it not figure in one's consciousness that the two are isomorphic, or at least would not their *shape-sameness* be given? That would seem to be also constitutive of one's consciousness at the time. And, if so, it could also plausibly be held that the correspondence of B [the belief] to E [the experience], both items in one's consciousness at a given time, would also figure in one's consciousness at that time. And so, if it is enough, for one to be "acquainted" with an item, that it figures in one's consciousness (at its surface, perhaps) at the time, then all that is required for one to satisfy Fumerton's three conditions is that *E* and *B* figure in one's consciousness and that *B* correspond to *E*. But this runs against the problem of the speckled hen.¹¹

I have reconstructed Sosa's argument as follows:¹²

- (1) For any item that figures in S's consciousness, S is acquainted with that item.
- (2) S has an experience *E* with content *c*, and S has the related belief *B* whose content is *c*. So,
- (3) S is acquainted with *E* and *B* [in virtue of *E* and *B* figuring in S's consciousness].
- (4) *B* corresponds to *E*.
- (5) If S's experience of two identical triangles is sufficient for the same-shaped character of those triangles to figure in S's consciousness, then the correspondence of *B* to *E* figures in S's consciousness.
- (6) S's experience of two identical triangles is sufficient for the same-shaped character of those triangles to figure in S's consciousness. So,
- (7) Given (NIJ) S's belief *B* is non-inferentially justified.

Sosa claims that (7) runs afoul of the speckled hen. Let 'E' stand for the experience of a 48-speckled hen and 'B' stand for

the belief that one's visual image of the hen contains 48-speckles and 'c' the content *hen with 48-speckles*. In this case S's belief is not justified,¹³ though if Sosa is right it meets all the conditions of (NIJ). Thus, we should reject (NIJ).

First note some aspects of this argument. Premise (2) and (4) are generalizations of Sosa's initial case involving the experience of seeing a black triangle against a white background and believing that *that's a triangle*. (3) follows from (1) and (2) in virtue of E and B figuring in S's consciousness. The conclusion (7) follows from the premises. Therefore, if the conclusion is to be resisted, either (1), (5), or (6) must be rejected.

Concerning (6) we are to imagine an experience of two triangles *I* and *I'*. Is it the case that an experience of *I* and *I'* is sufficient for their same-shaped character to figure in S's consciousness? This question can be divided into two sub-questions. First, do the two triangular images *I* and *I'* figure in S's consciousness? Second, is this experience sufficient for their same-shaped character to figure in S's consciousness?

The answer to the first question is yes. Given the distinction between e-awareness and n-awareness, the subject is e-aware of two triangular images. To the second question, it is not obvious that this experience is sufficient for their same-shaped character to figure in S's consciousness. For S may experience images of triangles that are same-shaped but given that the triangular images are not displayed as identical their same-shaped character may not figure in S's consciousness. For instance, the same-shaped triangles may be displayed at different angles (e.g., one triangle is turned at an odd angle).

This problem, however, can be gotten around. Sosa can stipulate that the experience of *I* and *I'* are experiences of isomorphic triangles viewed at the same angle in the same lighting, etc. When that is read into (6) it is reasonable to suppose that (6) is true.¹⁴ The argument, therefore, concerns premises (1) and (5).

Premise (1) states that for any item that figures in S's consciousness, S is acquainted with that item. The status of (1) is

difficult to assess given that acquaintance is claimed to be a *sui generis* relation.¹⁵ The natural response to Sosa's argument is to deny (1). There are, however, two difficulties with denying this premise.

The first problem relates to the mystery of acquaintance. What is the acquaintance relation? Presumably acquaintance will not be a fundamental relation in a completed physics. If it is not a fundamental physical relation then it should yield to an analysis in terms of more basic physical relations.¹⁶ It may be objected, however, that acquaintance is a fundamental psychological relation as, for example, the reference relation may be a basic psychological relation. But absent an argument for this, the acquaintance relation should be developed and explained within the theoretical space for such an account. Introducing a new undefined primitive relation does not come without ontological cost. A virtue of Sosa's discussion is his distinction between e-awareness and n-awareness which serves to clarify the possible space in which an account of the acquaintance relation may be developed.

Suppose it is denied that e-awareness is sufficient for acquaintance. One may attempt to strengthen the requirements for acquaintance by requiring that one be n-aware of an item to be acquainted with it. Since n-awareness is e-awareness coupled with an explicit belief about the item of awareness, this move requires that persons have explicit beliefs about their experiences in order to be acquainted with items of awareness. The problem with this thought is twofold. First, since acquaintance is supposed to provide the basis for justification – upon which even non-inferential justification will ultimately be grounded in – persons will lack justification for the majority of their beliefs. This result follows from the plausible claim that persons lack explicit beliefs about the majority of their conscious states. Second, and more serious, n-awareness implies a conscious judgment by the subject. Since judgments involve the application of concepts to experience, identifying acquaintance with n-awareness re-invites the Sellarsian dilemma. If it is denied that acquaintance is not

explicated by either n-awareness or e-awareness then the mystery objection becomes more pressing.

The second problem with denying Sosa's assumption concerns the problem of reliability. Suppose it is claimed that one is not acquainted with the property of one's visual image containing 48 speckles even though one is e-aware of that. The problem then is to explain why this is the case.¹⁷ The most plausible explanation is that S cannot reliably distinguish 48-speckled images from non-48 speckled images.¹⁸ This would then give us the general claim that S is acquainted with a property *p* only if S can reliably distinguish bearers of *p* and bearers of non-*p*.

This explanation, however, would devastate (NIJ) if adopted, for it introduces an externalist element into the heart of (NIJ), and (NIJ) is a thoroughly internalist theory. But apart from the fact that this explanation cuts against Fumerton's theory, an appeal to reliability will not work in general to explain acquaintance.

Suppose S can reliably distinguish Fs from non-Fs. Further suppose that S has the belief that *a is F* and that S has an experience with the content *a is F*. Moreover suppose S bases her belief that *a is F* on her experience E with the content *a is F*.¹⁹ Does it follow that S's belief that *a is F* is justified?

Consider the following case. S can reliably distinguish 48-speckled images from non-48-speckled images. Further S has the belief that her visual image contains 48-speckles and S has an experience of a 48-speckled image. Moreover, S bases her belief that her visual image contains 48-speckles on her experience of the 48-speckled image. S does not know, however, that 48-speckled images look like *that*. It turns out that, by some curious fact, hens with greater than 10-speckles only have 48-speckles. S is unaware of this fact but since 48 is her favorite number, whenever she has a visual image of a hen with more than 10 speckles she forms the belief that it has 48-speckles. I submit that S is not justified in her belief.²⁰

This objection illustrates that reliability does not solve the problem of the speckled hen. Thus merely adding reliability

to an acquaintance theory will not yield a satisfying solution. This should motivate us to look for a deeper explanation for why S is not acquainted with the property of her visual image containing 48-speckles. What is needed is some rationality-conferring relation between belief and experience, and this is what an acquaintance theory (and more generally an internalist theory of non-inferential justification) aims to capture.²¹

So there are two problems with denying Sosa's assumption and that leaves premise (5) as the only other viable culprit. (5) states that *if S's experience of two identical triangles is sufficient for the same-shaped character of those triangles to figure in S's consciousness, then the correspondence of B to E figures in S's consciousness.* I think this premise is the real culprit in Sosa's argument and that there is good reason to think it false. To see this consider Bonjour's discussion of Sosa's critique of the given. Bonjour explicitly connects his apprehension theory with Fumerton's acquaintance theory. Bonjour writes in a note that the view he advocates in response to Sosa is "essentially the same view that Fumerton has in mind in the account that Sosa discusses."²²

Bonjour claims that S has a justified foundational belief "when [S] directly sees or apprehends that one's experience satisfies the description of it offered by the content of the belief."²³ He gives the following example:

Suppose... that I am standing directly in front of and looking at (with good lighting) a large abstract painting, containing a fairly large number of geometrical shapes of various sizes and colors, and bounded by a sharply delineated, rectangular black frame, where the resulting visual image is entirely contained within my visual field. The proposition is suggested... that within the black rectangle in my visual field is a dark green, ... equilateral, ... triangular shape of sufficient size to be easily discernible. At first, given the size and complexity of the painting, I am unsure whether or not the proposition is true, but after some hunting around I spot such a shape and proceed to form the corresponding belief, a belief that, I am claiming, is thereby justified.²⁴

Bonjour notes that "it is essential to having a specific belief about the character of experience that one understand what

an experience would have to be like in order to satisfy the description embodied in the belief.”²⁵ In the above case the subject meets the requirement. The subject understands that the experience of the dark green equilateral triangular shape corresponds to the suggested proposition. Bonjour thus formulates this as the requirement that one is able to apprehend the fit or agreement between the aspect of the experience and the content of the belief.²⁶

Notice that Bonjour’s extra requirement resembles the third condition for (NIJ) – one must be acquainted with the correspondence between the fact (or property) and one’s belief about the fact (or property). In Bonjour’s example it seems reasonable that one is acquainted with the belief and the experience (and thus meets the first two conditions of (NIJ)). The subject lacks, however, an initial acquaintance with the correspondence between the belief and the experience. This response suggests that premise (5) of Sosa’s argument is false. S is not able to tell that her belief corresponds to her experience.

Bonjour’s example gives us a reason to think that (5) is false. S can be e-aware of the belief with content *c* and e-aware of the experience with content *c* but yet not be able to tell that the belief corresponds to the experience. What more is required? At least that S is e-aware of the correspondence between the belief and the experience. E-awareness of the correspondence between B and E does not follow from being e-aware of B and being e-aware of E. Thus even though (in Sosa’s original case) S’s experience of two identical triangles is sufficient for the same-shaped character of those triangles to figure in S’s consciousness, it does not follow that S is e-aware of the correspondence of B to E.

It may be objected that since correspondence is an intrinsic relation between a belief and an experience, it follows that S is e-aware of the correspondence between the belief and the experience.²⁷ In Sosa’s brief discussion of the triangle case he may have in mind some sort of closure requirement on e-awareness. If S is e-aware of X and Y and there is some relation R such that R(X,Y) then S is e-aware of R(X,Y).

Since correspondence is an intrinsic relation between a belief and an experience, if S is e-aware of the belief and the experience, S is e-aware of the correspondence between the belief and the experience.

I deny, however, that e-awareness is closed under entailment. If S is e-aware of two persons who have the exact same height but one is seated while the other is standing it does not follow that S is e-aware of the two persons being the same height. If S is e-aware of two logic formulas and in fact the two formulas have the same truth-conditions it does not follow that S is e-aware of the two formulas having the same truth-conditions. E-awareness requires some ability to “tell” whether the feature is present to consciousness.²⁸ Thus it is dubious that e-awareness is closed under entailment.

Suppose it is claimed that premise (5) is false *because* S is not acquainted with the property of her visual image containing 48 speckles and this because S does not know that visual images containing 48-speckles looks like *that*. I think that a defender of (NIJ) cannot adopt this explanation. Here’s why. This response implies that if S lacks some specific knowledge (S does not know that F looks like *that*) then S is not acquainted with F. This, however, turns acquaintance into an epistemic relation and, thus, re-invites the Sellarsian dilemma.

Nevertheless, we should conclude that premise (5) is false. S cannot tell whether her belief that *this image contains 48-speckles* is satisfied by her visual image that contains 48 speckles. S’s visual image does contain 48-speckles. But she cannot determine whether the belief is true. Why? She cannot attend to her visual image in such a way so as to determine whether the belief is true, even though if S could print off (so to speak) her mental image it would contain exactly 48-speckles.²⁹

This conclusion is odd. One wants to say that S is not acquainted with the property of her visual image containing 48-speckles. But this leads to reliability playing a central role in an internalist theory.³⁰ It is clear, nevertheless, that S cannot tell that her belief matches her experience. A plausible

explanation of this is that S is not acquainted with the correspondence between her belief and experience. The oddity of this resides in the claim that S can fail to be acquainted with the correspondence of her belief and experience even though S is directly acquainted with both her belief and her experience. This oddity, however, can be lessened.

Suppose that when S is e-aware of some feature F such that F is determinately present in S's consciousness, S is directly acquainted with F. As such this does not entail that S has a belief that F is present. Suppose also that S has a belief that F is present, and S is directly acquainted with that belief. It can still happen that S may lack the ability to tell that F is present because either S has not attended to her experience, or F is too complex of a feature for S to attend to. When F is a complex feature S may simply lack the ability to attend to F. Imagine the experience of looking a mid-sized dodecagon (under ideal lighting, etc). The image the dodecagon is present to your mind, and its twelve-sided nature is given. If we could print off the image before your mind it would be of a twelve-sided figure.³¹ But one cannot tell just by looking that the figure is a dodecagon. Why? Most persons simply cannot attend to the relevant figure and apprehend that it's a dodecagon. It does not follow that the person is not acquainted with the property of the imaged figure having twelve-sides. Nor does it follow that the person is not acquainted with the belief that this figure has twelve sides. Rather the person is not acquainted with the correspondence between the two.

One last worry: I imagine an objector pressing the following point: what is the relation between reliability and acquaintance? Everything you've said implies that reliability is a necessary condition for acquaintance with the correspondence between the feature and the belief. Does not this threaten that reliability is a necessary condition for acquaintance and thus turn acquaintance into an epistemic relation?

The short answer is no. The longer answer is as follows. Assuming reliability is a necessary condition for acquaintance

with the correspondence between the feature and the belief it does not follow that reliability is a necessary condition for acquaintance (full-stop). In the correspondence case one must be acquainted with the correspondence between the feature and the belief. This correspondence is similar to an identity relation holding between the content of the experience and the content of the belief.³² One observes that *that is thus*, that the feature present to one's consciousness is the same as the content of one's belief. This does imply reliability but that does not affect the relation of acquaintance.³³ Acquaintance is a *sui generis* relation that holds between a subject and a fact or property.³⁴ It does not entail that the subject have any beliefs. Thus reliability is not a necessary condition for acquaintance.

Lingering questions remain, however, that I cannot address at this moment. I highlight two. First does this response surrender the claim that acquaintance is *sui generis*? If premise (1) is adopted then being e-aware of some feature of one's consciousness is sufficient for being acquainted with that feature. If acquaintance turns out to be analyzable this may be a good thing, for one persistent criticism of an acquaintance theory is that the acquaintance relation is mysterious. The second worry is whether the response I have offered to Sosa's argument re-invites the Sellarsian dilemma. Does apprehending that one's belief corresponds to one's experience require an explicit belief or judgment? If it does then something more must be said to ward off the Sellars' dilemma.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to participants at the University of Rochester Graduate Epistemology Conference (September 2004) for many helpful comments. Also I extend thanks to Trent Dougherty, Richard Feldman, Jonathan Kvanvig, Peter Markie, Justin McBrayer, Dan Mittag, Ram Neta, Timothy Williamson, and an anonymous reviewer for helpful suggestions on an earlier draft of this essay.

NOTES

¹ Peter Klein has pursued this third option in a series of recent papers. See the following papers: J. Tomberlin (1999) (ed.), 'Human Knowledge and the Infinite Regress of Reasons,' *Philosophical Perspectives* 13, 297–325; (1998) 'Foundationalism and the Infinite Regress of Reasons,' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58(4), 919–925; (2000) 'Why Not Informatism?' in *Epistemology: Proceedings of the Twentieth World Congress in Philosophy*, Vol. 5 (ed.), Richard Cobb-Stevens, pp. 199–208.

² For discussion of the significance of this argument see the following papers: William Alston (1976) 'Two Types of Foundationalism' *The Journal of Philosophy* 73(7), 165–185; Laurence Bonjour (1978) 'Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?,' *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15(1), 1–13; Ernest Sosa (1980), 'The Raft and the Pyramid' *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5, 3–25.

³ (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁵ Laurence Bonjour and Ernest Sosa (2003) *Epistemic Justification* Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 129–30.

⁶ Fumerton, p. 75.

⁷ Let "p*s" represent S has the thought that p and 'R^c xy' the two-place relation of correspondence and 'Asp' be the two-place relation of acquaintance. We can then represent Fumerton's claim as follows: (NIJ) S is non-inferentially justified in believing p iff (i) A(s)(p), (ii) A(s)(p*s) and (iii) A(s)(R^c (p*s)(p)).

⁸ Can one be in pain (the very same pain of which one is typically conscious of) and yet lack e-awareness of it? Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this question to my attention. If e-awareness just is the awareness constitutive of conscious experience then this is not possible. However this poses a problem for Sosa's identification of e-awareness with acquaintance; for one can be in pain and lack focal awareness of the pain because the pain is at the periphery of one's consciousness. It seems reasonable that acquaintance with a feature would require at least focal e-awareness of it. I bypass this complication. I will assume that e-awareness of F implies that F is determinately present before one's consciousness. I am undecided as to whether this is incompatible with peripheral e-awareness of F.

⁹ This assumption is contrary to Fumerton's description of the acquaintance relation. Fumerton says that acquaintance is a *sui generis* relation. He writes, "Acquaintance is *not* another intentional state to be construed as a non-relational property of the mind. Acquaintance is a *sui generis* relation that holds between a self and a thing, property, or a fact" (*Metaepistemology and Skepticism*, p. 74).

¹⁰ Sosa, p. 130.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² This is intended as an argument-schema. With appropriate substitution instances it generates a particular argument that given (NIJ) some particular belief is justified.

¹³ The claim that S's belief is not justified rests on the intuition that if S is completely unreliable at distinguishing Fs from non-Fs then S is not justified in believing that *that's an F* solely on the basis of S's experience of F.

¹⁴ This move hides a significant problem for Sosa's overall aim in the triangle case. Sosa seems to intend the triangle case to motivate a closure-requirement on the items of awareness. The closure-principle Sosa may have in mind is as follows: if S is e-aware of X and Y and there is some relation R such that R(X,Y) then S is e-aware of R(X,Y). Thus, if S is e-aware of two triangles T and T* and in fact T and T* are same-shaped then S is e-aware that T and T* are same-shaped. If the closure-principle holds then if S is e-aware of her belief that there is a 48-speckled hen and e-aware of a 48-speckled hen image and in fact the belief corresponds to the image then S is e-aware of the correspondence among the two. I will argue later in the paper that this closure principle is mistaken. I am grateful to Richard Feldman for helping me clearly see this point.

¹⁵ Fumerton, p. 74.

¹⁶ The analysis would be an a posteriori analysis that yields a surprising identity claim.

¹⁷ I assume that S's experience of the 48-speckled hen is such that it is true that S's experience (S's visual image) contains 48 speckles. It may be denied that S's experience of speckled hen has a determinate number of speckles. Ernest Sosa presents an argument against this claim that I take to be conclusive (see Sosa p. 131ff).

¹⁸ One may insist that S is acquainted with P iff P is self-presenting. The problem, then, is to explain why P is self-presenting. One could reply that it is just a brute fact that P is self-presenting. However, as I note above appeal to reliability seems to be a much more plausible explanation.

¹⁹ The basing relation I have in mind is *roughly* the following: S bases her belief that p on E iff S is disposed to give E as the reason for her belief.

²⁰ The reliabilist will most likely respond to this objection by requiring a counterfactual analysis of reliability. This will involve tracking accounts on which the process used to arrive at the belief gets it right in suitably close worlds. In worlds in which there are a bunch of 11 speckled hens running around the subject would not get it right. I note three problems with such a move. First for the purposes of this thought experiment it can be stipulated that such worlds (worlds with a bunch of 11 speckled hens) are quite remote (keep the facts about hens fixed in the thought experiment). Suppose it is an unknown consequence of the fundamental physical laws that hens have either 48-speckles or less than 11 speckles.

In this case the counterfactual analysis yields the wrong result – in close worlds the subject still gets it right. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion. Second, there is a general problem with counterfactual analyses of anything famously noted by Robert Shope (see ‘The Conditional Fallacy in Contemporary Philosophy,’ *The Journal of Philosophy* 75(8), 397–413, 1978). The reliabilist owes us a principled explanation of how – if at all – they escape Shope’s problem. Third, there is a general problem with the reliabilism whether or not it adopts a counterfactual analysis (and it must adopt such an analysis). The objection in the main text presents a problem for reliabilism, a problem that arises because the experience does not make the belief intelligible for the subject. The general problem for reliabilism is trying to capture the intuitions that surround this intelligibility requirement without using associated intentional concepts (e.g., awareness, belief, noticing). I doubt that this sort of project can be successfully accomplished; it seems that as long as intelligibility does not play a central role in one’s account of justification there will be counterexamples to it. The counterexample presented in the main text is just one instance of this general problem affecting reliabilism.

²¹ I have not argued that reliability is not necessary for acquaintance. I return to the role of reliability for an acquaintance theorist towards the end of the paper.

²² Bonjour, p. 193. Bonjour notes that he does not find the notion of acquaintance “perspicuous” (see Bonjour’s discussion about acquaintance in sec. 4.4).

²³ Bonjour, p. 191.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 192.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 193. Bonjour insists that this apprehension is not identical to n-awareness. One simply sees that *that* is thus.

²⁷ If the belief and the experience have the same content then that very fact holds whether or not the subject notices that fact. This is roughly the sense of “intrinsic relation” intended.

²⁸ It is difficult to unpack what this ability amounts to, especially given that people have different abilities to discriminate among objects.

²⁹ Attention does play a crucial role in the third condition of (NIJ) and it is interesting whether the third condition could be reformulated using attention instead of acquaintance, but this is not my present purpose.

³⁰ And this is problematic because if reliability is required for epistemic justification then one cannot determine by reflection alone whether one’s belief is justified.

³¹ This may be denied in some cases. But all the argument needs is that this can happen.

³² I do not say “is an identity relation” because the content of experience often, if not always, exceeds the content of belief.

³³ Moreover since the reliability at issue rides piggyback (so to speak) on an identity judgment it does not pose an externalist threat. A person can determine whether an identity judgment of the form *that is thus*, comparing a belief to a visual image, is true by reflection alone.

³⁴ Note, however, that Sosa's assumption is that e-awareness is sufficient for acquaintance. If the argument of this paper is correct, then acquaintance need not be a *sui generis* relation. It may turn out that being acquainted with a property is just being e-aware of that property. For the purposes of my argument I intend to leave this issue open.

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