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In defense of internal justification

Abstract

In this paper I present the basic ideas behind two conceptions of epistemic justification that are most often contrasted in contemporary epistemology: internalism and externalism. Internalism, as defined and defended by philosophers such as M. Steup, R. Feldman and E. Conee, goes back to Plato's idea that justification has to ground a belief in the believer, or provide a believer with reasons for accepting his belief. This places a heavy demand – a demand that is most probably unfulfillable - on the cognizer: one needs to know that his belief is justified in order to have knowledge. On the other hand, externalism, the most famous advocator of which is A. Goldman, tries to escape this demand by placing the justification entirely out of cognizer's reach: in the reliability of the process that generated a belief. Although both of these positions have problems of their own and do not manage to provide us with a satisfactory account of justification, it is argued that internalism does more justice to the notion of justification and to the role we assign to it.

Key words:

externalism, internalism, justification, reliablism

1. Introduction

There are several ways to talk about justification in epistemology. Most often, epistemologists discuss different theories of justification, such as foundationalist or coherentist theory, but my aim in this paper is to look at this issue from the more general level, and that is the level of internalism/externalism debate¹. A very interesting discussion is going on between Alvin Goldman and Matthias Steup and in this paper I would like to examine the main characteristics of each stand in order to see the advantages and disadvantages of each. I will try to argue that

¹ The notion of justification comes from Plato and his famous *Teteet*, in which Plato claims that a believer needs to have something that will ground his belief and make it more stable. This idea, of grounding the belief in the believer is the springboard for internalism, because it makes the justification fall within the internal cognitive sphere of the cognizer. Traditionally, this is the way that epistemologists treat justification. But things have changed after Gettier showed that justification, internally conceived, does not guarantee knowledge. Due to the fact that internally grounded belief can still fall short of knowledge, some took the externalist stand and claimed that justification has to do not with internally accessible factors, but with the outside world, i.e. with the factors that are external to the cognizer and have to do with the casual origin of the belief and with the factors that generated it. The consequence of this turn was the development of two conceptions of justification (internalist and externalist) and two conceptions of knowledge (again internalist and externalist). Those who accept internalist perspective are usually the advocators of foundationalism or coherentism, while externalists, accepting some kind of truth-tracking theory of knowledge, or theories based on safety/sensitivity conditions advocate reliabilism. In this paper, however, I do not want to deal with that, I want to reexamine the main rational behind internalism and externalism.

although internalist conception of justification is burdened with problems, nevertheless it copes better with our epistemic aims.

Traditionally, from Plato, the role of justification was to render true belief into knowledge. The most appropriate way to do that was to claim that having justification is what gives a cognizer a right to hold that belief, or that the justification is supposed to tie the belief to the believer, in a sense that belief became grounded or well established. The idea was that believer must have some reasons or explanations for holding that belief. Therefore, justification was a matter of internal factors. In post Gettier era, however, it became clear that believer can have reasons for holding a false belief, or that the reasons constituting justification are accidental, and therefore not good enough for conveying knowledge. This led some to conclude that justification must in a way come from the outside, that is, justification has to do with factors that do not depend on the cognizer's perspective, but have to do with ensuring that S's belief has a high objective probability of being true. This is externalist credo. Externalists generally agree that a belief is justified if the process that caused it was reliable. Since in this sense reliability is something that is external to the cognizer, it is no longer required that cognizer gives reasons for holding a belief. All in all, a cognizer can be completely ignorant of factors that make his belief justified.

This is in a nutshell what debate is all about². So basically both sides agree that having merely true belief is not good enough in a sense that it doesn't amount to having knowledge. The question remains as to which further conditions need to be satisfied in order for a true belief to be knowledge. These further conditions are usually regarded as justification. But it seems now that the notion of justification is a rather

² For a more detailed discussion on the issue, see Audi 1993; BonJour and Sosa 2003; Kornblith 2001; Steup 2001, Bergman 2006.

complicated one and unless specified a bit, can hardly do what it is required to do.

2. Internalism

The starting point of internalism is the following idea: if the role of justification is to ensure that belief is not accidentally true, then cognizer must have access to those factors that determine justification – the so called justifiers. Since cognizer cannot have access to something that is in any way external to his perspective (such as objective reality), the only thing that is available to him is his own internal cognitive sphere, that is, his mental states. Therefore, factors that can have justificatory role have to be internal; because that is the only thing that cognizer can become aware of and can have access to. Because of this requirement, some epistemologists talk about internalism accessibilism or internalism mentalism³. Since both of these accept the claim that justification is a matter of internal factors, I will not make a distinction between these two positions.

Recent discussions on internalism identify two main internalist conceptions of justification: evidentialism and deontologism⁴. I will now turn briefly to these two.

³ The idea behind these terms is that whatever confers the justification must somehow be accessible to the cognizer, and the most obvious candidates are his mental states. For a great summary of different formulations of main internalist credo see Feldman and Conee 2001 and Bergman 2006.

⁴ This division however is not shared by all the epistemologists working on justification. Michael Bergmann thinks that deontologism is not to be included among internalistic conceptions. See Bergman 2006.

2.1. Evidentialism

Evidentialism rests on the thesis that justification consists in having evidence and it is influenced by the principle first formulated by Clifford, according to which “It is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence”⁵. In order for a belief to be justified, there has to be some kind of evidence that makes that belief well grounded. This idea is usually expressed by the following principles:

- (i) Feldman: Believing *p* is justified for *S* at *t* iff *S*'s evidence at *t* supports *p*. Alternatively, *S*'s belief that *p* at time *t* is justified (well founded) iff (i) believing *p* is justified for *S* at *t*; (ii) *S* believes *p* on the basis of evidence that supports *p*⁶.
- (ii) Steup: A person's evidence consists of her evidential states: mental states that have their source in sense experience, introspection, memory and logical

⁵ Taken from Feldman 2003, 42. This attitude is often used to support reductionism in discussions regarding testimony, where it is claimed that a testimony of others can only be accepted if supported by some kind of evidence. The alternative is to trust blindly.

⁶ Feldman, 2003, 45,46. Feldman and Conee are among the most ferocious advocates of internalism and their arguments usually, although not necessarily, derive from evidentialism. See Feldman and Conee 2001; Feldman 2003. Obviously, evidentialism has problems of its own to face. The most pressing one is the question of 'how much evidence' one should have in order to claim that he is justified, or better yet, how hard should one look for further evidence before he can justifiably accept the belief. Another important issue that an evidentialist should settle is the problem of proper interpretation of one's evidence, that is, the possibility of misinterpreting it etc. But these issues ask for a treatment on their own and are beyond the scope of this paper.

intuition. Only evidential states can play the role of justifiers⁷.

What actually does evidence consist in? Steup believes it consists of perceptual, introspective, intuitive and memorial experience about p. Feldman thinks it includes all the relevant information at the specific moment, which includes memorial, introspective and perceptual beliefs, that is, the evidence a person has consists of the data the person has to go on in forming beliefs. All the evidence that a person has must support p if p is to be justified, and if the evidence doesn't support a proposition, than a person should refrain from believing that proposition. In that sense, Bergmann postulates the following principle: "S's belief that B is justified iff B is a fitting response to S's evidence".⁸⁹

2.2. *Deontological conception*

Deontological conception of justification is derived from ethical discussions. Just like in the field of ethics we can talk about actions being right or wrong and claim that it is a person's duty to do what is morally right, some people now believe that in epistemology we can also claim that people have to believe what is epistemologically right, that it is their duty to form beliefs in epistemologically responsible way. According to Steup, S is

⁷ Steup 2001,137.

⁸ Bergmann, 2006, 110. Bergmann himself rejects evidentialism, claiming that the fact that evidentialism accepts necessity thesis (according to which the fittingness of doxastic response B to evidence E is an essential property of that response to that evidence) makes the position mistaken.

⁹ For a more elaborated account see Kelly, „*Evidence*“; Steup, „*Epistemology*“.

justified in believing p at t iff it is epistemically responsible of (or permissible for) S to believe that p at t ¹⁰.

Obviously, deontologists will have hard time explaining what a duty is or how is one to know that he fulfilled it. But that shouldn't blur the rationale behind deontological conception: what is important for justification is to form beliefs responsibly – for example, examining evidence (in favor or against something), looking for reasons and thinking about it, relying on positive track record etc – rather than relying on wishful thinking, luck, guessing, prejudice etc.

2.3. Motivation for internalism

Motivation for accepting internalism is best explained in Feldman and Conee's discussion, where they give a set of examples and try to show that when we are to explain the differences in justification between two beliefs, we can always look at the mental states of the cognizers. For example, if we have an expert and novice looking at the woodpecker and trying to identify the bird, it is their internal cognitive states that make the difference. An expert has reasons for claiming it is the

¹⁰ Steup 2001. Terms that usually go along with this conception are praise and blame, or praise-worthy and blame-worthy. The idea is that a person can (justifiably) hold a belief only in case he is praise-worthy, meaning that he formed his belief in accordance with his duty. That in turn makes him epistemically responsible. However, not all internalists accept deontologism. Feldman and Conee reject it, claiming that it is wrong to ground internalism on such terms as praise and blame (see Feldman and Conee 2001). Steup however claims that deontological concept can nicely accommodate evidentialism, because it is a duty of a responsible cognizer to base his belief on proper evidence. What is most troubling about deontologism is the fact that it is hard to explain how is one to know when his duty is fulfilled.

woodpecker, he has all the relevant information about the woodpecker and knows what differentiates it from other, similarly looking birds. Novice, on the other hand, can only guess and if he were asked to give reasons, he wouldn't have any actual data to rely on. Feldman and Connee conclude: "every variety of change that brings about or enhances justification either internalizes an external fact or makes a purely internal difference."¹¹

Another important motivation for accepting internalism has to do with how we perceive ourselves as rationale (and even responsible) agents. Internalism places a heavy burden on the shoulders of a cognizer, but in the end, it means that there is some special value that we get from this 'epistemic work' that we have to do. This idea will be elaborated some more in the concluding part of the paper.

3. Externalism

We saw at the beginning that externalists believe that justifiers should make a belief objectively more probable. One way to do that is to go out of the cognizer's head and his mental states and to look for the justifiers in the world. Justification is not a function of a cognizer and his mental states (evidential states, duty or anything else that he can access to), but of factors which generate and sustain belief. Most often, the idea is that a belief will be justified if it originates in a reliable cognitive process or faculties. This view usually goes under the name of reliabilism, and its most prominent advocator is Alvin Goldman, who claims: "The justificational status of a belief is a function of the reliability of the process or processes that cause it, where (at a first approximation) reliability consists in the tendency of a process to

¹¹ Connee and Feldman 2001, 238.

produce beliefs that are true rather than false¹². Most often, an analogy is made with perception: perception is reliable in most cases, so all the beliefs S forms on the basis of it are justified.

Another element that Goldman stresses is the origin of belief. He claims that "... a belief is justified if and only if it is well formed, i.e. it has an ancestry or reliable and/or conditionally reliable cognitive operations."¹³ He calls his theory historical reliabilism, due to the fact that the origin of the belief (i.e. the process that brought it into existence) is the factor that determines whether a belief is justified or not.¹⁴

Now, what can we conclude once we have defined conceptions of internalist and externalist justification? The biggest difference is the following: internalists emphasize and insist upon the active role of the cognizer. This means that it is subject's obligation or duty to pay attention to what he believes and why he believes that. His role is active in the sense that he has to justify himself for having that belief, he needs to know that he knows and how he knows that. Externalist, on the other hand, do not attribute that kind of a role to the cognizer, he is rather passive in a sense that justification has nothing to do with him, it is entirely the matter of factors that he can have no influence upon, or (in most cases) knowledge of. What is important to notice is that within the externalist framework, a cognizer doesn't need to know that the

¹² Goldman, *What is justified belief?* For a detailed account of reliabilism (in all of its formulations) see Goldman, „*Reliabilism*“.

¹³ Goldman, *What is justified belief?*

¹⁴ This of course is not the only externalist position. Michael Bergmann for example claims that (among other things), justification has to do with the proper functioning of the cognitive faculties of the person in question, and in claiming that, he relies on Plantinga's account of warrant. However, Bergmann wants to avoid reliabilism, but in the end, I think he doesn't manage to do that. See Bergmann 2006.

process is reliable in order to gain justification. The reason for this is obvious: were he to question the reliability, he would have to ask for reasons that make him justified, and that would be too much internalistic to be acceptable within externalistic framework.

On the other side, insisting on external factors can give more objectivity and connectedness to the real world, and that is something that internalists lack. Therefore, they are well aware of the need to connect internally justified belief with the real world, and this is where the two part in their definition of knowledge. According to externalists, what turns true belief into knowledge is justification, and justification is entirely the matter of reliable process. Internalists however, accept that they lack this factor that objectifies the belief, and they claim that what turns true belief into knowledge is a process of epistemization, which consists in having internal justification and in what is called degettierization. Epistemization can well include some external factors, but the central element is internal justification¹⁵.

Having presented the main footholds of each position, we will now look at the two main advocators of each and try to evaluate their arguments.

4. Goldman vs. Steup

At this point, we will confront these two conceptions of justification in order to see where that will lead us. In my opinion, the most worrying objections to internalism come from Alvin Goldman¹⁶. His method is to accept all that internalists claim and to see where that will lead him. He claims that internalism places an unsatisfiable condition on the cognizer, a condition that I will

¹⁵ This comes from Steup (Steup 2001,).

¹⁶ See especially his articles *The Internalist Conception of Justification* and *Internalism Exposed* (in Kornblith 2001).

sum up in the phrase ‘S must know that he knows’¹⁷. On the other side, Matthias Steup is trying to defend internalism by eliminating these objections, introducing two levels of justification: first and second. Second order justification is a meta-justification, but we do not have to reach this level. To explain and defend first order justification, Steup accepts the main externalist’s idea, the claim that a cognizer doesn’t have to know that the process is justified. In the same way, Steup claims, there is no need to burden

¹⁷ Many epistemologists call this the KK phrase (one must know that one knows). The arguments that Bergmann launches against internalism are motivated by his claim that a cognizer can never really know that he knows. Bergmann however speaks in terms of awareness, rather than KK phrase. His rejection of internalism rests on what he calls a fatal dilemma for internalism: the main reason for embracing internalism, Bergmann claims, is the so-called „Subject perspective objection“, according to which „if the subject holding a belief isn't aware of what that belief has going for it, then she isn't aware of how its status is any different from a stray hunch or an arbitrary conviction. But, as Bergmann is eager to show, this imposes the so called awareness requirement, an essential feature of internalism which can be summarized as follows: in order for a cognizer to have justified belief, he needs to be aware of the justification – contributor (which can be some kind of evidence, truth indicator or satisfaction of some necessary condition), and if he lacks this awareness then he lacks justification. However, and this is what makes internalism untenable, awareness requirement poses a problem, since it either leads to asking for second order awareness (cognizer has to be aware that he is aware of the justifiers at the first order level), which is of course impossible since it leads, as Agrippa showed long time ago, to regress at infinitum (just like Steup’s second order justification, see below). The only way to solve it is to give up awareness at the first level, which means giving up the main idea of internalism. For a more detailed account, see Bergmann 2006. For an attempt to explain how this awareness might nevertheless be achieved, see BonJour (2003) and his notion of ‘constitutive awareness’ (ch. 4).

cognizers by imposing them the need to know that they know. Justification consists in having evidential states and if they are present, that is all there is. A cognizer doesn't have to know that they obtain.

Here is how discussion goes¹⁸.

Steup: Justification is a matter of fulfilling one's duty (deontological conception)

Goldman: How can S determine what his duty is and when it is fulfilled?

Steup: S doesn't need to know what his duty is in order to fulfill it.

Goldman then goes on to claim that internalism faces problem in its accessibility and mentalistic formulation.

Goldman: From accessibility and mentalistic formulation follows that only conscious mental states can be justifiers. But if justifiers are confined to conscious states, how can we justify things that we remember? (the problem of stored beliefs)

Steup: There is a kind of memorial seeming which counts as evidential state and can play justificatory role. Justifiers are conscious mental states and stored mental beliefs.

Goldman: For the most part of our beliefs, the evidence is forgotten at the time of appraisal, so we can no longer

¹⁸ This summarizes the main articles on the issue of justification, as quoted in footnote 14. However, similar arguments against internalism have been developed by Alston and Plantinga, and arguments for internalism by Feldmann and Conee. For a great summary of the debate see Feldman and Conee 2001.

say they are justified since there are no justifiers available, neither in memory nor in current mental states. (the problem of forgotten evidence)

Steup: There is a kind of memorial seeming, I can clearly and distinctly remember, and that provides me with justification. I know because I have a positive track record which justifies me when relying on things that I clearly remember.

Goldman: Internalists tend to appeal to logical and/or probabilistic connections that hold between beliefs. These connections however are not themselves mental states, either conscious or stored, so internalist cannot appeal to them in order to justify target beliefs that are supposedly entailed.

Steup: There is no need for the internalist to include logical and probabilistic connections to the list of justifiers. As for the first order justification, S's belief that p is enough to justify S's belief that q provided there is a suitable entailment relation that holds between p and q. S doesn't have to be aware of this relation.

Goldman: Internalism presupposes that there are some kind of computational operations or algorithms and procedures that enable cognize to ascertain whether a target proposition has appropriate logical and probabilistic relations to the contents of other belief states he is in. This implies that an agent has the necessary knowledge about what computational methods should be accepted. But surely that takes some time to process which poses a problem, and it is rather questionable whether agents are actually capable of recognizing these methods.

Steup: This doesn't threaten internalism, at least not internalist first order justification, since what counts is the possession of justifiers, not the actual recognition of their justificatory role.

- Goldman: Epistemic principles are among the factors that determine whether an agent is justified in believing a proposition. They are important because an agent must know what the relevant epistemic principles are, if she is to properly determine her epistemic duty and to know whether she has been epistemically responsible. But this poses a problem, since there is no generally defined and accepted set of principles, not even among the epistemologists. Ordinary people have no knowledge about the principles, which opens the door to global skepticism.
- Steup: Internalism imposes no such condition upon the cognizers, they are only needed for the second order justification. Besides, epistemic principles are not justifiers; they just specify conditions that are necessary and sufficient for justification. Apart from that, there is a great disagreement in ethics about the ethical principles, but no one claims that ordinary people do not know what their moral duties are. Finally, it is not right to claim that ordinary people have no knowledge about justification.

5. Internalism vs. externalism

So, to sum up the two positions.

Goldman claims that internalism leads to skepticism, mostly because of the conditions that are placed upon the cognizer (summed up under the phrase S must know that he knows, or in Bergmann's terms, under the awareness requirement) which he cannot satisfy. That means that he is never justified and that he lacks knowledge altogether all the time. Steup's answer to this is that the demand is too strong; there is no need for the cognizers to know all that second-order stuff. At this point it seems that the

plausibility of Steup's answer rests on our willingness to accept his first and second order distinction, which I am not really inclined to do, mostly because of the regress problem. What seems to follow from Goldman's and Steup's arguments is a certain kind of switch in the underlying rationale they endorse. Goldman is an externalist, which means that for him, all that matters are external factors, mainly reliability of the process that causes and sustains the belief. He doesn't require cognizers to be able to account for this reliability or to question it or to know that it obtains; cognizers don't have to know that they are justified. In other words, there is no need to justify the reliability in order to accept the belief, cognizers can in a sense believe passively, without questioning themselves. However, when he criticizes internalism, he insists upon this justification and claims that cognizers can accept the belief only after they had established that it is justified. But if he claims that it is not important for the cognizers to know what gives justification, then he shouldn't claim that cognizers need to know that they know. If he rejects that in his own theory, he can't claim that alternative theory is wrong because it cannot fulfill condition which he had discarded as irrelevant in a first place.

On the other hand, Steup also embraces a very prominent element of externalist theory, namely the claim that cognizers do not have to know that justification takes place. If it takes place, then S is justified, but he doesn't need to know that it takes place. It seems to me that this is an unacceptable twist in internalist theory, since, on the one hand, it completely gives up the spirit of internalism and on the other hand, externalism itself is a rather problematic theory, which entails that embracing its element(s) can bring new difficulties to internalism, not solutions to the problems. I shall now briefly address some of the problems that are present in externalism in order to show that despite the plausibility of Goldman's objections, we are still better off within internalist framework.

6. Objections to externalism

What seems most troubling in externalism is that whatever causes and sustains the belief is entirely out of the (cognitive) reach of the cognizer, as well as the factors that supposedly make that belief justified. If all the relevant factors come from the outside, then a cognizer doesn't actively participate in acquiring knowledge, and that is a rather gloomy diagnose¹⁹. It is often objected that due to the inability of most cognizers to have the appropriate knowledge about epistemic principles and logical relations that hold among beliefs, only a very small percentage of people actually has knowledge. But according to externalism, there is a very small difference in knowledge acquisition between people and other creatures. This seems rather uneasy outcome, since it washes away the value of knowledge and the value we accredit ourselves with as rationale creatures capable of researching and founding the truth. With respect to this, internalism stands much better, since there is little (if any) place left for the agency on the externalistic account.

There are many difficulties with the notion of reliability itself. How exactly should we come from reliability to justification, or justified belief? Goldman admits that "our conception of justification is vague in this respect. It does seem clear however that perfect reliability isn't required. Belief forming processes that sometimes produce error still confer justification. It

¹⁹ In fact, L. BonJour claims that it is one of the most fundamental problems with externalism, since it gives up the traditional approach to knowledge and justification, the first person approach inspired by Descartes, and turns to the third person approach. For more details, see BonJour and Sosa 2003.

follows that there can be justified beliefs that are false.²⁰ It seems to me that is a one way ride to skepticism²¹.

The problem of generality is well known. Reliabilism only says that in order for a belief to be justified it has to be produced and sustained by a reliable process, but it doesn't say when the process is reliable. Basically, reliability is defined in terms of having a high truth ratio in general, but there is no warrant that in every specific situation the process is reliable and that resulting belief will be justified. Within internalistic framework, a cognizer has to reexamine the justifiers before he can assent to the belief, so he will at least in principle know when (and why) something has gone wrong with the belief-forming process and refrain from assenting to belief. Externalist cannot do that, since by definition he is not supposed to question his reasons, or the reliability of the process.

²⁰ Goldman, *What is justified belief?* Notice however that other externalistic notions, like proper functioning, do not stand much better. The idea is that a belief is to be justified if the cognitive faculties are functioning properly in the environment for which they were produced. But we have no way of knowing that; there're no tools available for us to check that they are functioning properly (and we can only postulate that we in fact are in the right environment, regardless of how difficult it is to explain what that is), except by finding evidence in favor of proper functioning, which is not a move that externalist can make.

²¹ Of course, internalists are not exempt from the treat of skepticism either, since, if one can never know that he knows (and Goldman presented a very strong case supporting that conclusion), we have to give up all the knowledge. However, I think that the treat of skepticism is generally too strong to be handled and that, given the strength of skeptical arguments as formulated not just by Sext Empirik but by contemporary skeptics like Berry Stroud or Peter Unger, there's hardly any knowledge we can save. So in my opinion there's no point in evaluating the two conceptions in terms of their success in handling the skepticism.

The crucial advantage of internalism is what BonJour calls the reduction of externalism to internalism²². It rests on the following idea. If we claim that some process is reliable, we have to ascertain that reliability somehow, or it will only be hypothetical stipulation, not good enough to provide justification. But the only way to do this is to look at the reasons we have for taking the process to be or not to be reliable. This is something that can be done only from the internal perspective. So basically, what we got in the end is the need to internalize the reliability of the belief forming and sustaining process. Externalists cannot do that since they have no tools available for questioning the reliability. Goldman himself claims that “There are many facts about a cognizer to which he lacks privilege access and I regard the justificational status of his beliefs as one of those things”²³. In opposition to this, internalists can, at least in principle, look at his evidence and claim that the justification rests on them.

However, from what Goldman says about the reliability, it seems that he doesn't think we need to have any kind of evidence for the reliability. He claims: “the reason we count beliefs as justified is that they are formed by what we believe to be reliable belief-forming process. Our beliefs about which belief-forming processes are reliable may be erroneous... What matters then is what we believe about wishful thinking, not what is true, in the long run, about wishful thinking²⁴.” So it would seem that Goldman gives up not just justification, but truth as well. There are two things we can conclude from this, and both show deep implausibility in Goldman's claim. First, it is reasonable to think that we believe wishful thinking is unreliable because we have some kind of evidence that it is unreliable, the evidence that consist in our memory: we remember that we failed in our actions

22 BonJour (2003).

23 Goldman, *What is justified belief?*

24 Goldman *What is justified belief?*

when we relied on wishful thinking. So believing the process to be reliable is a matter of internalism, and shouldn't be a part of externalist theory. The second thing is that, even if we allow our believing to entail reliability, it can hardly explain how that can lead us toward objectivity. Different people can believe different things, which would imply that belief can never be justified generally, only for that particular cognizer. A clairvoyant person would probably happily accept her method as reliable, while someone skeptical about it would not. I do not think externalist would be happy with this consequence.

What we have so far is the following. Externalist have it right when they claim that causal connection is important, external factors that cause and sustain belief are important and should be taken into account in the proper theory of justification, since belief cannot be justified if it is the product of malfunctioning process (that would open the door to the possibility of accidentally having true belief). However, if reliability or the facts that make a process reliable remain outside the cognitive sphere, then cognizers have no way of knowing that they have knowledge, which is a serious defect of the theory. In addition to this, it seems that if we accept externalistic account of reliability we have no way of solving the generality problem and that can lead to skepticism.

Internalists, on the other hand, place a lot of burden on the cognizer, since he has to find a way to justify his belief by gaining access to his evidential states. The problem however is to establish the validity of evidential states. There is always the possibility that cognizer got it all wrong, that he doesn't have all the relevant evidence, that there is some information that he lacks or that he is just deceiving himself. Internalism also faces a problem of skepticism since it is hard to see what connects real world and mental states. However, it seems that internalism has one very important advantage over externalism and I will now try to show that.

7. Internalizing the external

We saw with BonJour that reliability can and should be internalized. The same idea is developed even further in Matthias Steup's conception of justification which he labels internalist reliabilism. Steup claims that having a belief that was caused by a reliable process is not enough; a cognizer should also have some kind of evidence for the reliability of the process, and this evidence consists of having a memory impression of a track record of both perceptual and memorial success. Steup concludes: "According to INREL, what justifies my belief is a complex body of evidence, involving evidence for the reliability of both my memory and sense experiences. INREL does not however require that I actually believe that my memory and sense experience are reliable. It merely requires that I have evidence in support of believing these propositions."²⁵

Another advantage of internalism thus understood is that it can solve the generality problem. We saw that according to the externalist reliabilism a cognizer has no way of knowing whether or not the process is reliable in some particular situation; within externalist position reliability is defined in terms of having a tendency to produce true beliefs, rather than in terms of actually being true *in any* particular situation. On the other hand, according to the internalist evidentialist reliabilism, a cognizer can accept reliability only if he has reasons to believe that in that particular case a process was reliable, and the reasons are derived from his evidential states; from the perceptual, memorial, introspective data that speak in favor of reliability . So the generality problem disappears, since no evidentialist position allows for the general postulation of something as justification conveying process; a cognizer is always under the obligation to

evaluate his evidence if he is to have a justified belief. Therefore the belief causing process is itself scrutinized before found justified, rather than merely accepted as justified. It seems to me this is a big advantage of internalism.

There is one more way to internalize the external. When Goldman talks about the function of reliability, he gives a list of processes that are usually found reliable (such as standard perceptual process, remembering, good reasoning and introspection) and opposes them to those that are thought of as unreliable (confused reasoning, wishful thinking, hasty generalization), and making a comparison between the two goes on to claim that “A belief that results from a hazy and indistinct memory impressions are counted as less justified than a belief that arises from a distinct memory impression...”. But this isn’t about the reliability of the process itself, this is about the evidence we have about the reliability of the process. Hazy and indistinct memory impressions are not good evidence, they do not constitute good reasons and no cognizer would be justified in accepting them as grounds for belief. So when Goldman talks about the reliability, his explanation is better off given in evidentialist terms. This then opens the door for internalist to ground his belief in the reliable process, which ensures connection to the real world but also enables him to prove the reliability.

8. Conclusion

Justification is indispensable element of the definition of knowledge. Even if we accept the most powerful skeptical arguments against the possibility of gaining knowledge or finding the truth, the domain of justification is something that, in my opinion, rests on the cognizers, not on the external factors. External factors are important, because they make the necessary connection with the external world. But justification has to do

with cognizers, not with the world and therefore, it should be accepted in its internalistic formulation.

Internalistic formulation is problematic. We can't ever know that we know or that we are justified; second order justification always remains out of our reach. But that is not the reason for accepting externalism, since externalism has even more problems. Within their theory, there is a strong pull to give up any kind of second order justification, and the consequence of their theory is that we cannot have even the first order justification. I have tried to show that taken externalistically, justification always remains out of our reach, even if in fact we are justified. But that isn't good enough; we have to know that we are justified. Other ways, we are left with 'justification without awareness', to use Bergmann's term, and I do not know what good would that do to us.

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Iris Vidmar

Obrana internalističke koncepcije opravdanja

Apstrakt

U ovom radu predstavljam osnovne ideje dviju koncepcija epistemičkog opravdanja koje su najčešće suprotstavljene u suvremenoj epistemologiji: internalizam i eksternalizam. Internalizam, koji definiraju i brane filozofi poput M. Steupa, R. Feldmana i E. Coneea temelji se na Platonovoj tezi da je uloga opravdanja vezati vjerovanje za vjerovatelja, odnosno pružiti vjerovatelju razloge za prihvaćanje vjerovanja. Ovo na spoznavatelja postavlja težak – a po svoj prilici i neispunjiv – zahtjev: spoznavatelj mora znati da ima opravdanje da bi imao znanje. Nasuprot tome, eksternalizam, čiji je najpoznatiji zastupnik A. Goldman, nastoji izbjeći ovaj zahtjev smještajući opravdanje u potpunosti van dosega spoznavatelja: u pouzdanost procesa koji je generirao vjerovanje. Iako obje koncepcije imaju svoje probleme, a zadovoljavajuća teorija opravdanja nam i dalje izmiče, u članku se tvrdi da internalizam bolje osvjetljava pojam opravdanja i ulogu koju mu pripisujemo.

Ključne riječi:

eksternalizam, internalizam, opravdanje, pouzdanost