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Epistemic Internalism

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Abstract: The internalism/externalism debate is of interest in epistemology since it addresses one of the most fundamental questions in the discipline: what is the basic nature of knowledge and epistemic justification? It is generally held that if a positive epistemic status obtains, this is not a brute fact. Rather if a belief is, for example, justified, it is justified in virtue of some further condition(s) obtaining. What has been called epistemic internalism holds, as the label suggests, is that all the relevant factors that determine justification must be "internal" (in a sense that needs to be specified). Epistemic externalism is the denial of internalism. Epistemic internalism about justification is the subject of this article.

After introducing the central intuitive considerations that have tended to motivate internalism, this paper will explore different ways of construing the internalist position (or family of positions). In addition to classical formulations, more recent formulations will be discussed, concluding with a discussion of an emerging position known as "Epistemological Disjunctivism", which its advocates claim preserves the most important features of more traditional forms of internalism, while avoiding their difficulties. Epistemological Disjunctivism is particularly worthy of attention since if true, it promises to bridge internalist and externalist epistemologies, bringing a rapprochement to two sides of what may otherwise appear a deep and intractable debate about the fundamental nature of epistemology.

1) Introduction: What's All the Fuss About?

The internalism/externalism debate is of interest in epistemology since it addresses one of the most fundamental questions in the discipline: what is the basic nature of knowledge and epistemic justification? The question of what *kinds* of factors can be relevant to determining the positive epistemic status of belief seems to be about as central as a meta-epistemological question could be. We might think that it is only with a firm grasp of meta-epistemology that we can properly approach questions of *applied* epistemology, such as considering various skeptical paradoxes that challenge how different kinds of justification are possible. It is only once we know what we are seeking that we should start our search for it.

It is generally held that if a positive epistemic status obtains, this is not a brute fact. Rather if a belief is, for example, justified, it is justified in virtue of some further condition(s) obtaining.[1] What has been called epistemic internalism holds, as the label suggests, is that all the relevant factors that determine justification must be "internal" (in a sense that needs to be specified). Epistemic externalism is the denial of internalism. Epistemic internalism about justification is the subject of this article.[2][3]

After introducing the central intuitive considerations that have tended to motivate internalism, this paper will explore different ways of construing the internalist position (or family of positions). In addition to classical formulations, more recent formulations will be discussed, concluding with a discussion of an emerging position known as "Epistemological Disjunctivism", which its advocates claim preserves the most important features of more traditional forms of internalism, while avoiding their difficulties. Epistemological Disjunctivism is particularly worthy of attention since, if true, it promises to bridge internalist and externalist epistemologies, bringing a rapprochement to two sides of what may otherwise appear a deep and intractable debate about the fundamental nature of epistemology.

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[1] This 'in virtue of', or the determination relation that fixes an epistemic property, is usually taken to be supervenience. Epistemic supervenience can be expressed as follows: "Necessarily, whenever something has an epistemic property, E, it has a collection of non-epistemic properties, N, possession of which entails that it has E" (Turri forthcoming, 2). In a slogan, there can be no epistemic difference without a non-epistemic difference. See Turri (forthcoming) for more on epistemic supervenience; see Bennett and McLaughlin (2005) for more on supervenience in general.

[2] Thus, I shall not here explicitly discuss the contours of the debate as it pertains to knowledge, or the relation between knowledge and justification.

[3] While there are obviously epistemologies in the history of philosophy that can be classified as either 'internalist' or 'externalist' in nature, the labels themselves were not used until relatively recently. David Armstrong (1973) introduced what he called 'externalist' theories of non-inferential knowledge as those that hold that knowledge is a natural or law-like connection between a subject's true belief and the state of affairs that make it true. This is what has become known as his 'Thermometer Model of Knowledge'.

However, since it is not clear what role, if any, epistemic *justification* plays in Armstrong's epistemology, it is not clear to what extent his concept of the epistemically external meshes with the current debate between internalists and externalists who speak explicitly in terms of justification. Therefore it was perhaps not until the exchange between Laurence Bonjour (1980) and Alvin Goldman (1980) who offered 'internalist' and 'externalist' theories of epistemic justification that these labels were first used in their current sense.

2) The Master Intuitions That Shape the Debate:

One way of appreciating what is at stake in the debate between epistemic internalists and externalists is to consider some judgements about central kinds of cases. Two kinds of cases will be introduced that have proved fundamental in shaping the debate: cases of unusual but reliable cognitive faculties, such as clairvoyance, and the so-called case of the New Evil Demon.[4][5]

1) Cases of Clairvoyance and Unusual but Reliable Cognitive Faculties: Is Reliability *Sufficient* for Justification?

In what has become a classic thought experiment motivating forms of epistemic internalism, Laurence Bonjour writes,

> Norman, under certain conditions that usually obtain, is a completely reliable clairvoyant with respect to certain kinds of subject matter. He possesses no evidence or reasons of any kind for or against the general possibility of such a cognitive power or for or against the thesis that he possesses it. One day Norman comes to believe that the President is in New York City, though he has no evidence either for or against this belief. In fact the belief is true and results from his clairvoyant power under circumstances in which it is completely reliable. (Bonjour 1985, 41)

From cases like this, Bonjour concludes, and internalists since have agreed, that despite Norman's reliability in this case, he is not justified in believing that the President is in New York.

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[4] In addition to the method of appealing to judgements about cases, a historically important approach taken by some authors has attempted to motivate and defend epistemic internalism on *deontological* grounds. Such authors understand epistemic justification in terms of fulfilling one's epistemic duties and obligations, and go on to claim that the fulfilling of these duties is an entirely 'internal' matter, where the internal is understood in terms of access or awareness. For advocates of such an approach, see Chisholm (1966) (1977) (1989), Steup (1999); for staunch criticism of such approaches, see chapter 1 in particular of Plantinga (1993a), as well as Alston 1989c. For general discussion of epistemic duties and obligations, see Feldman (2002), as well as the collection of papers in Steup (2001).

[5] Another way of arguing for epistemic internalism might be to appeal to axiological considerations. For example, Richard Feldman (2000) has argued for Evidentialism, which is an epistemically internalist theory, by appealing to what is of epistemic value. He argues that rational beliefs are what is of epistemic value, and one therefore maximizes epistemic value by adopting or maintaining rational attitudes, which in turn is achieved by believing only what is supported by ones evidence (where evidence is understood along internalist lines). See Feldman (2002) 682-686 in particular for his presentation of this argument. See Haddock, Millar and Pritchard (2009) for a recent collection of papers on epistemic value generally.

From this, a negative thesis can be drawn: the reliability of the process that gives rise to a given belief is insufficient for that belief's being justified. In addition, by reflecting on such cases, internalists have tended to draw a positive thesis about the nature of epistemic justification: some kind of *awareness* on the part of the subject is required if the beliefs in question are justified. Exactly what one must be aware *of* and what the nature of this awareness consists *in*, remains an issue of dispute among internalists (more on this below). But roughly, what epistemic internalists conclude on the basis of such cases is that justification minimally demands some kind of access *to* or awareness *of* one's grounds or reasons for thinking that one's belief is true. What is missing in Norman's case is the following: from *his* point of view, he has no reason, in some sense of reason, to think the President is in New York, nor is he aware of any possible way he could come to have a true belief on that topic, given everything of which he is aware. So a common way that the "internal" of epistemic internalism is understood is as follows: only factors that are or easily can be available to the agent's conscious awareness can contribute to, or detract from, a belief's justification. Traditionally, epistemic internalists have stressed the epistemological significance of consciousness.

For example, the awareness condition that is meant to characterize epistemic internalism has recently been put as follows:

> *The Awareness Requirement*: S is justified in believing that *p* only if
> i) there is something, X, that contributes to the justification of belief B; and
> ii) for all X that contributes, S is aware (or potentially aware) of X.
> (Bergmann 2006, 9)

However, one might argue that Bergmann's formulation is problematic as it stands. While the first conjunct adequately captures the idea that every justified belief must in fact have a justifier, an internalist might argue that the second conjunct fails to capture uniquely the kind of awareness internalism demands. One can be 'aware of' facts, properties and

objects, without being aware *that* they are thus and so, or that they stand in a justificatory relation to what is believed. An internalist might emphasize the way in which the subject is or can be aware of her grounds. For instance, Bergmann's second conjunct might be reformulated as follows:

ii) for all X that contributes, S is aware (or potentially aware) *that X contributes to the justification of belief B.*

This more demanding formulation will rule out considerations making a justificatory difference if the subject fails to *appreciate* their existence or relevance to what is believed. However, it should be noted that this condition on the face of it seems to require that the subject have the concept of justification, or of appropriateness, or of evidence, or of having a reason, etc. Accordingly, some might object that this kind of condition intellectualizes justification to the point of being unreasonably demanding.

So far, epistemic internalism has been construed as holding that conscious awareness of one's justificatory grounds, and perhaps that awareness that those grounds contribute to the justification of one's belief (or the possibility of such awareness upon reflection), is a necessary condition of epistemic justification obtaining. In addition, in its traditional form, epistemic internalism holds that not only are factors external to consciousness (such as one's reliability in forming beliefs) *insufficient* for justification, but neither are they *necessary* for justification. Internalists have tended to motivate and defend this claim by appealing to what has become known as the New Evil Demon case.

2) The Case of the New Evil Demon: Is Reliability *Necessary* for Justification?

Are external factors, such as reliability, *necessary* for epistemic justification? The main argument in support of the conclusion that they are not necessary has become known as the New Evil Demon problem (Lehrer and Cohen 1983; Cohen 1984). One form of the

argument proceeds by comparing what constitutes justified belief for one who lives in the actual world with what constitutes justified belief for one's counterpart who lives in a demon world, like the one entertained in Descartes' First Meditation. The demon world is one which by hypothesis is from our own perspective just like the actual world. What we experience and believe in the demon world is as it is in the actual world except crucially that the demon ensures that all our beliefs are false.[6] Nevertheless, internalists point out the intuitive plausibility of holding that the counterparts are equally justified in believing as they do: their beliefs are justified to the very same *extent*, sharing sameness of justificatory status. If sound, the argument purports to show that external factors are not necessary for justification and so internalism about justification is true.

Stewart Cohen, who originally introduced the New Evil Demon problem, notes that if Reliabilism about justification is true, (i.e. a belief is justified iff it is the product of a reliable belief-forming process) (e.g. Goldman,1979; 1986), then in the case of the demon world, perceptual beliefs will never be justified since the demon sees to it that they are unreliably produced, i.e. that the process used in forming the beliefs yields a sufficient ratio of false over true beliefs (Cohen 1984, 281).[7]

Cohen argues as follows:

> Thus we can imagine two inhabitants of this [demon] world, A, who is a good reasoner, i.e., reasons in accordance with the canons of inductive inference, and B, who engages in confused reasoning, wishful thinking, reliance on emotional attachments, guesswork, etc. Since the beliefs of A and B are both produced by unreliable processes (the evil demon sees to this), a reliabilist theory of justification must render identical epistemic appraisals of both sets of beliefs. Plainly, this cannot be correct. A's beliefs are conditioned by the evidence whereas B's beliefs are not. A is a good reasoner whereas B is not. A's beliefs are reasonable whereas B's belief are not. There is a fundamental epistemic

[6] Externalists about mental content, however, tend to deny that such a case is possible. That is, they deny that there could be a world where a counterpart has all the same beliefs that we do, but that all of their beliefs are false. Since many people hold that some form of content externalism is obviously true, if it is incompatible with epistemic internalism, this would seriously threaten the position. For charges that content externalism and epistemic internalism are incompatible, see for example Pritchard and Kallestrup (2004); Williamson (2007). For replies that the two views *are* compatible, see for example Gerken (2008); Madison (2009).

[7] But even if such processes are not reliable in the actual world in which they are deployed, are they not reliable in *some* sense? Might they be *conditionally* reliable in the sense that they are reliable in some 'normal' world, and hence resulting beliefs are epistemically justified? See Goldman (1986) for an early attempt to flesh out this proposal. See Peacocke (2004) for a more recent version of a normal-worlds-reliabilism style account.

difference between the beliefs of A and the beliefs of B. But the Reliabilist does not have the theoretical means to display this difference. I would claim that the distinction between the beliefs of A and B is marked precisely by the concept of justified belief. (Cohen 1984, 283)

Cohen and many internalists since have held that intuitively the subject A in the demon world does have justified beliefs and we should hold on to this conclusion unless we have a good reason to give it up. What remains at issue is whether externalists of different stripes (e.g. about mental content, or justification) can give us such a reason.

A further moral is often drawn from cases like the above in defence of epistemic internalism. Just as subjects A and B are not equally justified, even though they are equally unreliable, it is often claimed that subject A, the good reasoner, is equally justified as his good-reasoner counterpart in the actual world. Intuitively, A and his counterpart are equally justified in believing as they do. If so, again actual reliability and other external factors are not necessary for justification since the two subjects are equally justified and the external factors are present in one case and not another.

A central moral of the New Evil Demon case that has shaped internalist theories of justification can be summarized in the following principle: "[...] 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*" (Neta and Pritchard 2007, 381). This deeply rooted intuition about the New Evil Demon cases counts in favour of epistemic internalism.[8][9]

[8] For more on the New Evil Demon problem, see Littlejohn (2009).

[9] It is worth noting that some externalists grant the force of these two master intuitions, but nevertheless argue that they do not count against their view of epistemic justification. In effect, they argue we must distinguish what has been called *personal* from *doxastic* justification. They argue that while the *subjects* may be unjustified in clairvoyance cases, their *beliefs* are nevertheless justified. Similarly, while the *subjects* may be justified in the New Evil Demon case, their *beliefs* are not. Advocates of this approach include Bach (1985) and Engel (1992). The distinction itself between personal and doxastic justification can be traced back to at least Lowy (1978). Intuitive considerations aside, the plausibility of such a response will turn on the coherence of a subject being justified in believing that p while his belief that p is itself unjustified. According to Kvanvig and Menzel (1990), for example, a person's being justified in believing that p entails that his belief that p is justified – one cannot have the former without the latter.

3) Some Ways of Construing the Internalism/Externalism Distinction:

So far we have been considering two Master Intuitions to which epistemic internalists have traditionally appealed in motivating, articulating, and defending their view. The kinds of cases involved have led their advocates to construe the "internal" of epistemic internalism in terms of conscious awareness or access through introspection. After considering in more detail different views of what one must have access to, it is important to note that there is another, and arguably distinct way, that internalism has been understood. This alternative formulation, in its most prominent form, has been called "Mentalism".[10]

i) Awareness/Access: What must one have access *to*?

Even among those who stress the epistemic significance of conscious awareness, there are diverging answers as to what kinds of things are taken to be justificationally relevant by different theorists.[11] Here is a spectrum of views that have claimed to be epistemically internalist, views that vary in what they hold must be accessible to the subject:

a) Grounds: Whether one is justified in believing that *p* supervenes on facts which one is in a position to be consciously aware of. In order for a fact to contribute to justification, its presence must be accessible to the agent. This position has been

[10] In a series of recent papers (2006) (2007), Michael Huemer advances a view he calls Phenomenal Conservatism which holds that "If it seems to S that p, then, in the absence of defeaters, S thereby has at least some degree of justification for believing that p" (Huemer, 2006, 148). He considers this view to be epistemically internalist, understanding the internal in terms of 'appearances'; Huemer writes, "Internalism holds that all of the conditions that confer justification supervene on how things seem to the subject" (Ibid.). Huemer motivates this position both by considering a case of a clairvoyant brain (which is a combination of the two Master Inutition cases above), as well as by arguing that to deny Phenomenal Conservatism is self-defeating (see in particular Huemer (2007) for an extended defence of this latter claim). As Huemer argues that this is view is consistent with all plausible forms of access / awareness internalism, as well as Mentalism, his view is perhaps not thought of as a rival to the views discussed below, but rather as a way of attempting to capture what the fundamental disagreement is between internalists and externalists.

[11] For surveys of other ways these distinctions have been drawn, see Alston (1989b) and Pryor (2001).

called "Simple Internalism" (Pryor 2001) and "Internalist Externalism" (Alston 1989a).[12]

b) Adequacy of Grounds 1: *Access Internalism*, by contrast, maintains that one always has 'special access' to one's justificatory status. So unlike simple internalism which only requires access to the mere presence of one's grounds, access internalism makes the strong requirement that *all* of one's beliefs, basic and non-basic alike, are such that not only are one's grounds accessible, but also that the grounds are adequate.[13]

c) Adequacy of Grounds 2: *Inferential internalism* is a sub-species of Access Internalism in that it only requires access to reasons to think one's *non-basic* beliefs are well-supported.[14]

d) The Basing Relation: The epistemic-basing relation is the relation that holds between a reason or one's grounds, and one's belief when the belief is held *for* that reason. This contrasts with holding a belief and merely having a reason to believe it. Only in the former case is there a proper connection holding between a reason and a belief. Given this distinction, is the fact that a belief is evidentially related to a reason something that the subject must be *aware of* if one is to be based on the other? Or is it enough that the reason is merely causally related to the belief in an appropriate way if the latter is properly based on the former? How

[12] In "An Internalist Externalism" Alston defends the view that in order to be justified, there must be a kind of cognitive access to the ground of the belief (Alston 1989a, 237-239). On the other hand, he argues that the adequacy of the ground, i.e. its truth-conduciveness, is an external fact that the subject need not be able to access (Ibid., 239-244). As Alston summarizes in the conclusion of that paper, "I have given reasons for placing a (rather weak) AI [access internalist] constraint on something's being a ground that could justify a belief, but I have resisted attempts to put any internalist constraint on what constitutes the adequacy of the ground" (Ibid., 244). Hence an internalist externalism.

[13] For classic expressions of access internalism, see Bonjour (1985); Chisholm (1989).

[14] For a defense of inferential internalism, see Fumerton (1995), ch. 3.

one answers these questions can produce a theory that is 'internalist' in another distinct sense.[15]

In principle, a theory of justification could blend internalism/externalism in regard to any of the three elements of grounds, adequacy of the grounds, and the basing relation.

Mentalism:

Richard Feldman and Earl Conee, the chief advocates of Mentalism, define Mentalism as the thesis that "a person's beliefs are justified only by things that are internal to the person's mental life" (Feldman and Conee 2001, 233). So the "internal" of internalism here means internal to the mind.[16] Specifically, their official formulation of Mentalism is as follows:

S: The justificatory status of a person's doxastic attitudes strongly supervenes on the person's occurrent and dispositional mental states, events, and conditions. (Ibid., 234)

From this formulation, they express the main implication of S thus:

M: If any two possible individuals are exactly alike mentally, then they are alike justificationally, e.g., the same beliefs are justified for them to the same extent. (Ibid.)

They take it that this latter claim simply spells out a consequence of their supervenience thesis S.

Rather than appealing to the clairvoyance and New Evil Demon cases introduced above, Feldman and Conee offer their view as the best explanation of intuitive judgements about cases they provide. In defending Mentalism, pairs of cases are introduced where Feldman

[15] For an example of a causal account of the basing relation, see Moser (1989). Due to two types of putative counterexamples, namely the problem of deviant causal chains (e.g. Plantinga (1993a)) and so-called 'Gypsy-Lawyer' counterexamples, doxastic theories were developed as a rival account of the basing relation. Doxastic theories require that the agent holds a meta-belief with the content such that the support relation is a good one that holds between a reason and belief. For examples of doxastic accounts, see Audi (1993a); Leite (2008). Keith Lehrer first proposed the Gypsy-Lawyer counterexample in Lehrer (1971). This counterexample continues to run throughout his work, however. See for example Lehrer (1974); (1990); (2000). For a hybrid Causal-Doxastic account of the basing relation, see Korcz (2000). For more on the basing-relation and a survey of these issues, see Korcz (1997); (2010).

[16] Wedgwood (2002) also offers a version of Mentalism; he argues that justification supervenes on one's *non-factive* mental states.

and Conee invite the intuition that in the first instance the subject has a justified belief and in the second case the belief is intuitively not justified, or else one belief is more justified than the other. They contend that the best explanation of these apparent epistemic differences is that there are "internal" differences in their preferred sense of internal to the subject's states of mind. Feldman and Conee's first two cases and comments on them are representative of all the cases they provide and their assessment of them. They introduce them as follows:

Example 1 Bob and Ray are sitting in an air-conditioned hotel lobby reading yesterday's newspaper. Each has read that it will be very warm today and, on that basis, each believes that it is very warm today. Then Bob goes outside and feels the heat. They continue to believe that it is very warm today. But at this point Bob's belief is better justified.

Comment: Bob's justification for the belief was enhanced by his experience of feeling the heat, and thus undergoing a mental change which so to speak "internalized" the actual temperature. Ray had just the forecast to rely on.

Example 2 After going out and feeling very warm, Bob goes back in and tells Ray of the feeling. Here are two versions of the relevant details:

2a) Bob is in fact a pillar of integrity, but Ray has no reason to think so. As far as Ray can tell, it is just as likely that Bob is trying to deceive him as that Bob is telling the truth.

2b) Bob is a pillar of integrity, and Ray has observed and recalls many examples of Bob's honesty and none of dishonesty.

In example (2b) Ray's belief that it is very warm becomes more strongly justified after he hears from Bob. In example (2a) hearing from Bob does not affect the strength of Ray's justification for his belief.

Comment: Bob's honesty, something out of Ray's ken in (2a), has become "internalized" by Ray in (2b). Bob's integrity made no justificatory difference to Ray's belief until it was suitably brought into Ray's mind. (Feldman and Conee 2001, 236)

Reflecting on these cases and those like them, Feldman and Conee argue that the epistemic internalism, understood as Mentalism, is true: justification supervenes on the mental; there can be no justificatory difference without a mental difference.

Granting that Mentalists obviously do not think that just *any* mental difference yields a justificatory difference, what kind of mental differences are relevant to epistemic justification? Are Mentalism and awareness/access forms of epistemic internalism materially equivalent?

4) What is the relationship between Mentalism and Awareness?

It is important to note that Mentalism as Feldman and Conee construe it has no access or awareness requirement of any kind. Recall that the supervenience base they are interested in is the subject's "occurrent and dispositional mental states, events, and conditions". For a mental state to be occurrent, it is presumably enough for the subject to be in it, which need not entail that she is aware that she is in it or that she is relevantly aware of anything at all.[17]

However, there may be *some* connection between Mentalism and access. If one endorses an access requirement, depending on what it is that one holds must be accessible, then a kind of internalism that is characterized by an awareness requirement may entail Mentalism. For example, if justification depends on certain properties of mental states, such as their phenomenal properties, and these are accessible to the subject, then awareness forms of internalism will entail Mentalism. But of course they need not, since one might hold that the things one must be aware of are not themselves mental.[18] For example, on direct realist accounts of perception, in the veridical case subjects are aware of things in the world – the objects of perception are not mental.

Similarly, Mentalism does not entail forms of access internalism since Mentalism only requires that the factors that determine justification are internal to the mind, not that the subject can *tell* that they are internal, or even detect their presence, wherever they happen to be located.[19] Whether the "mental states, events and conditions" lie below the surface of

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[17] Interestingly, in defending his version of Mentalism, Wedgwood *contrasts* his view of Mentalism, which has no awareness requirement, with what he calls the "standard version of internalism", which he understands in terms of access. See section 2 of Wedgwood (2002) for arguments against, and ultimately a rejection of, such views.

[18] This is not Feldman and Conee's view though; they explicitly reject this possibility in Conee and Feldman (2008) p 99.

[19] On the face of it, Mentalism has very little in common with epistemic internalism traditionally construed; in fact, by not requiring an awareness condition, some have thought of Mentalism as an *externalist* epistemology. For a defence of the claim that Mentalism is tantamount to epistemic externalism, see Bergmann (2006), chapter 3.

consciousness and are thus undetectable is justificationally irrelevant for the Mentalist, given the formulation of the view, something the access theorist flatly denies.

Complicating the relationship between awareness and Mentalist forms of internalism is an emerging position known as Epistemological Disjunctivism, since on that account access is required, and only mental states can make a justificatory difference, but the mental states in question are widely individuated. That is to say, that the contents of an agent's mental states fail to supervene upon his intrinsic properties, but rather are essentially dependent on his physical environment (including his social environment).[20] This has the consequence that these mental states cannot be shared by counterparts who occupy radically different environments. As we will see, Epistemological Disjunctivism attempts to do justice to the intuition arising from cases involving clairvoyance and other unusual but reliable belief-forming methods, although it must reject the claim that counterparts in the New Evil Demon case share sameness of justification.

5) New Developments and Blurring Old Distinctions: Epistemological Disjunctivism

Classical forms of epistemic internalism hold that factors external to consciousness are neither necessary nor sufficient for justification. Clairvoyance-type cases count in favour of awareness, and the New Evil Demon cases seem to support both awareness and Mentalism, since plausibly what could possibly be in common between a subject and their recently envatted counterpart would be mental.

[20] For classic papers on Content Externalism, see Putnam (1973); Burge (1979). For recent collections on internalism and externalism in both epistemology and the philosophy of mind and language, and on the interconnections between them, see Schantz (2004); Goldberg (2007).

As one might expect, epistemic internalism faces many potential difficulties.[21] For example, given that it seems that what makes epistemic justification genuinely *epistemic*, rather than say pragmatic, aesthetic or moral is a connection to the truth, one major issue internalists confront is accounting for the truth-connection. That is, what is the connection between a belief's being justified, and its being true? If one embraces the New Evil Demon case, it turns out the truth-connection is more tenuous than one might have initially hoped for since all of one's justified beliefs could turn out to be false, and hence justification need not be truth-conducive. An internalist needs to explain what the truth-connection is, and also why should we *care* about having justified beliefs if doing so is consistent with their (all) being false.

This is where Epistemological Disjunctivism is proposed as having an advantage over traditional forms of internalism. The view aims to preserve reflective access and allow only mental states to serve as justifiers, while at the same time maintaining a substantial truth-connection. In short, this position, inspired by the work of John McDowell (McDowell 1998a, 1998b, 1998c), aims to combine the best of both worlds.[22] Duncan Pritchard writes,

> There is an excellent rationale for taking the trouble to explore a position that McDowell himself offers so little argumentative support for. This is that if the McDowellian proposal could be made palatable then it would constitute the *holy grail* of epistemology, in that it is offering a *bona fide* internalist conception of knowledge which is able to nonetheless allow that the rational support that one's belief enjoys can be genuinely truth-connected and thus skeptic-proof. (original emphasis) (Pritchard 2008a, 6-7)

Thus the McDowellian position can be seen as an attempt to combine awareness/access requirements with Mentalism. Such a position also proposes a novel anti-skeptical strategy unavailable to classical forms of internalism and traditional forms of internalism: it aims to

[21] For a recent book length attack on internalism, see Bergmann (2006). See Rogers and Matheson (2009) for a reply to Bergmann's central challenge. For a book length defence of internalism, see McGrew and McGrew (2007). Goldman (2001) also launches a number of well-known and serious challenges for internalism. Feldman and Conee (2001) address each of Goldman's criticisms in turn.

[22] Good textual evidence is available to support the conclusion that McDowell thinks of reasons as mental states, as well as that he stresses the epistemic importance of reflection and the first person perspective, thus aligning himself with awareness / access theorists. For exegesis and analysis of these passages see Neta and Pritchard (2007).

maintain epistemic reasonableness and the first-person perspective that the internalists emphasize, while keeping the truth-indicative grounds the externalist favours.[23]

Focussing on the case of perceptual belief, Epistemological Disjunctivism's central thesis is that two subjectively indistinguishable perceptual experiences can differ in what they put a subject in a position justifiably to believe.[24] In the experience where there is a fact being 'made manifest' to one, to take a phrase of McDowell's, the subject is in a position to justifiably believe that *p*, whereas in the situation where the fact is not made manifest, the subject is merely in a position to be justified in believing that it merely *seems* to him that *p*. So according to the epistemological disjunctivist, one's reason to believe that a desk is in front of one, for example, is one's *seeing that* there is a desk in front of one, which is a mental state of the subject. 'Seeing that' is factive, which is to say, entails that the content of what is seen is true. This is a different state of mind than a mere seeming, which is possible not only in a veridical case of perception, but also in illusory and hallucinatory cases.

The unique McDowellian thesis is the conjunction of two claims, which we can follow Neta and Pritchard by understanding as follows:

Reflective Accessibility of Reasons (RAR): One is in a position to know, by using one's reflective capacities, what one's reasons are for believing that *p*.

Factivity of Reason (FAR): There are factive empirical reasons for beliefs about the external world (Neta and Pritchard 2007, 388-389).

The conjunction of these two theses gives us:

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[23] For internalist responses to the sceptical paradox, see Vogel 2008; see Bergmann (2008) for a survey of externalist responses to scepticism. For a survey of the issues involved in epistemologically disjunctive responses to scepticism, see Millar (2009).

[24] As Paul Snowdon (2005) points out, McDowell's version of disjunctivism is cast purely epistemologically, that is, the view is about the difference between two experiences cast in terms of what one is in a position to know or justifiably believe. This is different from the kind of disjunctivism that he and others defend in the philosophy of perception that holds that i) the case of veridical perception is a fundamentally different kind of state than a hallucinatory state and ii) that it does not follow from the fact that two experiences are indistinguishable that they are of the same kind. According to McDowell's disjunctivism the dispute is epistemological, whereas the one Snowdon represents is metaphysical. For more on the distinction between epistemological and metaphysical varieties of disjunctivism, see Haddock and Macpherson (2008b); Byrne and Logue (2008); Pritchard (2008b). For recent collections on disjunctivism, see Haddock and Macpherson (2008a); Byrne and Logue (2009) contains many of the classic papers on disjunctivism in the philosophy of perception.

(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 sometime are) factive empirical reasons. (Ibid., 389)

The claim is that one can have empirical beliefs justified by factive empirical reasons, where one is nevertheless able to access one's reasons. Crucial here is that since the factive empirical reasons are taken to consist in certain widely individuated mental states, the McDowellian position combines access/awareness with mentalism, although not the kind of Mentalism advocated by Feldman and Conee, since McDowell would reject the New Evil Demon master intuition. This is because the factive mental states enjoyed by the subject in the normal world cannot be shared with their counterpart in the demon world since they are being deceived. Interesting here is a return to the issue of relationship between Mentalism and awareness/access forms of epistemic internalism.

Whether or not this new McDowellian view is tenable depends not only on the coherence of each of RAR and FAR individually, but also on the coherence of their conjunction. Is it really possible to be in a position to know what one's reasons are if they are factive? Does this not require knowing *that* they are factive, and is this something that is knowable upon reflection?

For example, if one sees that *p*, one can 'access one's reasons' in the weak sense of knowing that one is having a perceptual experience with a certain phenomenal character, but one cannot tell by introspection alone whether one is truly seeing that *p*, or merely *seeming* to see that *p* (i.e. seeing a situation in which *p*). That is, what content a state has is not something that can be read off how things appear to the subject. For example, seeing that the cup is chipped and *seeming* to see that the cup is chipped are different states with different truth-conditions, and yet they appear identically to the subject who experiences them.

If, according to the epistemological disjunctivist, one's reason to believe that *p* is the factive state of one's seeing that *p* (and not the non-factive but subjectively indistinguishable

state of one seeming to see that *p*), then 'knowing what one's reasons are' seems to require being able to discriminate one's factive perceptual state from one's qualitatively identical non-factive state. But this is impossible, one might suppose, since there is nothing subjectively to distinguish between them. In short, is it really the case that a subject can know through his reflective capacities alone what his reasons are for a belief if those reasons are factive?[25]

Notice that the non-factive conception of reasons that classical internalist accounts of epistemic justification presuppose does not face these difficulties, since in effect they endorse RAR but not FAR. In paradigm cases of justified belief, the subject is in a position to know, by using her reflective capacities, what her reasons are for believing as she does.[26]

6) Conclusions:

We have briefly surveyed traditional ways of understanding epistemic internalism, both in forms that demand conscious awareness on the part of the subject if their beliefs are to be justified, as well as accounts that assert that justification supervenes on the mental. While certain versions of these views may entail each other, in their most basic forms the views are not extensionally equivalent. We also considered some Master Intuitions and key cases that internalists have appealed to in motivating and defending their views. We then went on to briefly explore the possibility of a new kind of theory of epistemic justification that sought to preserve the insights of both internalist and externalist epistemologies. Epistemological Disjunctivism, as it is known, holds that we can have internally accessible reasons that are nevertheless factive in nature.

[25] Nicholas Silins (2005) has also questioned this claim. He argues among other things that if it were true, then a subject could gain armchair knowledge of the external world (Silins argument is an evidential analogue of arguments that aim to undermine the conjunction of the theses of content externalism and privileged access on the grounds that it would allow subjects to have a priori knowledge of their external environment). See in particular his discussion of 'Access Arguments' at pp. 379-384 in Silins (2005).

[26] For a book-length development and defence of Epistemological Disjunctivism, see Pritchard (forthcoming a).

Whether Epistemological Disjunctivism can ultimately prove to be a viable form of epistemic internalism remains to be seen as the details of the view are fleshed out. Otherwise, it will remain that classical forms of internalism are best motivated by doing better justice to the Master Intuitions. In that case, its proponents will have to continue to motivate, articulate and defend the view against not only rival internalist accounts, but against epistemic *externalists* whose disagreement is not one of mere detail, but goes right to the heart of the epistemological enterprise.[27,28]

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[27] For further general reading on the internalism / externalism debate, see Kornblith (2001); Pappas (2005); Poston (2008). In addition to the sources cited and further reading listed below, an up-to-date bibliography on the epistemic internalism / externalism distinction is maintained on PhilPapers at http://philpapers.org/browse/epistemic-internalism-and-externalism

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