

Internalism vs. Externalism

Internalism vs. Externalism

- Various debates go by this name.
 - Semantic (internalism vs. externalism)
 - Moral Motivation (internalism vs. externalism)
- Our focus is on Epistemological Internalism vs. Externalism
 - with respect to knowledge
 - with respect to justification – main focus

Internalism

- ‘Access Internalism’: Whatever justifies our beliefs must *in principle* be cognitively accessible, i.e. it cannot be hidden.
- Cognitive access via introspection, direct reflection, awareness.
- Internalist Principle: If S is justified in believing p, then S knows or is aware that (s)he is justified.
- Intuition: Justification is a matter of asking oneself what reasons there are for holding a given belief and answering by reflection.
- Most Coherentists and Foundationalists are Internalists.
- Prominent Internalists: Descartes, Chisholm and Bonjour.

Internalism: Examples

- Cogito

The meditator is justified in believing ‘I exist’ and this justification is cognitively accessible, namely via the reflection that *they think* and that *their thought implies their existence*.

- Lecture room in Bristol

I am justified in believing ‘I am in a lecture room in Bristol’ and this justification is cognitively accessible, namely via the reflection that *I have good evidence in the form of perceptions*.

Internalism: Problems

- Our powers of rational reflection are limited.
- Kornblith: Not only are we not always aware of the reasons for our judgements but we sometimes present the wrong reasons.
 - Nisbett and Wilson position effect
 - Tversky and Kahneman's anchoring effect
 - Visual vs. Kinaesthetic information about orientation
- Pre-reflective children and animals seem to have justification or at least knowledge.

Externalism

- Defined in opposition to Internalism: Whatever justifies our beliefs *need not* be cognitively accessible to introspection.
- Externalist Principle: Denies Internalist principle.
- Appeal: (1) lifts pressure off powers of rational reflection and (2) focuses on the truth-conductivity of justification.
- Reliabilism is a form of externalism because the reliability of a process need not depend on cognitive accessibility.
- Causal Theories are typically externalist because the causal link need not depend on cognitive accessibility.
- Prominent Advocates: Nozick, Goldman, and Kornblith.

Externalism: Examples

- Notice: Pre-reflective children and animals can have knowledge according to this account.
- Chicken-sexer
The chicken-sexer is 'justified' because (s)he bases his/her belief on a reliable process (despite not being introspectible).
- Truetemp
Truetemp is 'justified' because (s)he bases his/her belief on a reliable process (despite not being introspectible).

Externalism: Problems

- Inherits problems from reliabilism:
 - Truetemp
 - Chicken-sexer
 - Reliable clairvoyance
 - The Generality Problem
- Reply: Deny the relevant ‘intuitions’.
- But: The Generality Problem remains.

Internalism vs. Externalism about Knowledge

- Internalism

KK-principle: If S knows that p, then S knows that (s)he knows that p.

- Externalism

Denies *KK-principle*: It is not the case that if S knows that p, then S knows that (s)he knows that p.

Food for Thought

- Philosophers have come up with mixed strategies.
Try to think of some...

Reading

- H. Kornblith (1989) ‘Introspection and Misdirection’, Australasian Journal of Philosophy, vol. 67: 410-422.
- OR
- H. Kornblith (2002) *Knowledge and its Place in Nature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, ch. 4.
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