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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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:
  - Truetsimp
  - 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.

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Food for Thought

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

  OR