Internalism and the Nature of Justification

Jonathan Egeland Harouny

This thesis examines the nature of epistemic justification. Justification is one among several different epistemic properties by which we evaluate beliefs. Since we deeply care about having beliefs that are justified, it is important to establish how we come to have justification for our beliefs. In the epistemological literature, there are two overarching approaches to this task. On the one hand, internalism claims that justification in some special sense depends upon one’s internal mental states, whereas externalism, on the other hand, denies that this is the case. The thesis takes a closer look at the internalism-externalism distinction, and it defends and develops a particular brand of internalism, both in general and with respect to specific sources of justification—such as testimony and memory.
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Jonathan Egeland Harouny

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Abstract

There are many important dimensions of epistemic evaluation, one of which is justification. We don’t just evaluate beliefs for truth, reliability, accuracy, and knowledge, but also for justification. However, in the epistemological literature, there is much disagreement about the nature of justification and how it should be understood. One of the controversies that has separated the contemporary epistemological discourse into two opposing camps has to do with the internalism-externalism distinction. Whereas internalists defend certain core assumptions about justification from the pre-Gettier tradition, externalists generally think that the traditional conception is untenable and should be replaced.

In this compilation thesis, I argue for, defend, and develop a particular brand of internalism, both in general and with respect to specific sources of justification. In papers 1 and 2, I defend a couple of well-known arguments for mentalism and accessibilism. Moreover, I also point out how prominent versions of these theses are vulnerable to serious problems (e.g., about over-intellectualization and vicious regresses). Part of my goal in the first couple of papers is to figure out what commitments the internalist should take on in order to avoid the externalist’s objections, while at the same time receiving support from considerations that have motivated internalism in the past. In papers 3 and 4, I start from the assumption that mentalism is true and attempt to answer the following questions: 1) which non-factive mental states can play a justification-conferring role with respect to empirical belief? And 2) why does this set of states play the epistemic role it does? In response to question 1, I argue that all and only one’s beliefs and perceptual experiences have justificatory relevance. In response to question 2, I argue that one’s beliefs and perceptual experiences are one’s strongly representational states, and that strongly representational states necessarily provide support to certain empirical propositions. Having done so, I then defend mentalism about scientific evidence from a couple of prominent objections in the recent literature. Lastly, in papers 5 and 6, I argue for a particular brand of internalism about testimonial and memorial justification and show how that position has a dialectical advantage over its main competitors.

Keywords: Justification, Internalism, Evidence, Rationality, Testimony, Memory.

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Introduction

1. From Knowledge to Justification

What is knowledge?\(^1\) This age-old problem was for a long time thought to be solved. First, whenever you know that such-and-such is the case, then such-and-such must of course be the case. In other words, whatever is known must be true. Second, whenever you know that such-and-such is the case, you must believe that such-and-such is the case. In other words, you cannot know something without actually believing it. Third, whenever you know that such-and-such is the case, then you must also be justified in believing that such-and-such is the case; lucky guesses do not qualify as knowledge. So, in other words, whatever is known must also be justifiably believed.\(^2\) These three ingredients were for the longest time thought to give us the essence of knowledge: they are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for knowledge. Indeed, philosophers as diverse as Plato (Theaetetus, 201; Meno, 98), Alfred Ayer (1956, 34), and Roderick Chisholm (1957, 16) all agreed that the following analysis of knowledge was correct:

The JTB analysis: S knows that \(p\) if and only if (i) \(p\) is true; (ii) S believes that \(p\); and (iii) S is justified in believing that \(p\).

However, philosophical problems have a tendency to reappear or reassert themselves, and the problem of knowledge is no exception. In 1963 Edmund Gettier published a three page article (really, it was only two and a half pages) which exposed a fatal flaw in the JTB analysis: it is possible to have a justified true belief that fails to qualify as knowledge. For detailed discussions of pragmatic encroachment, see Fantl & McGrath (2002); Stanley (2005); and Schaffer (2006).

\(^1\) Here, I’m only concerned with propositional knowledge, not practical or objectual knowledge.

\(^2\) The kind of justification that is necessary for knowledge is, more specifically, epistemic justification; i.e., justification that somehow speaks in favor of the truth of the thing believed. Proponents of pragmatic encroachment will disagree with the claim that knowledge only requires justification of the epistemic kind insofar as they think that there are pragmatic conditions on knowledge, and that those conditions may have something to do with whether one has knowledge-level justification. This is, however, an issue that I will sidestep in the dissertation.
example, you may be justified in believing that \( p \), competently deduce \( q \) from \( p \), and, as a result, justifiably believe that \( q \) as a conclusion of the deduction (where \( p \) is false and \( q \) is true). Since you have a justified true belief that \( q \) is the case, that belief should qualify as knowledge according to the JTB analysis. However, since \( q \) was deduced from a false proposition, that may disqualify your belief in it from counting as knowledge. In order to make the counterexample more lucid, consider the following scenario:

Bob’s wife just got diagnosed with cancer. While driving her home from the doctor’s office, Bob forms the belief that one person in the car has cancer. However, as fate would have it, the diagnosis is wrong: Bob’s wife doesn’t have cancer. Moreover, unfortunately, and without knowing so himself, Bob actually has cancer. So there is after all one person in the car who does have cancer.

In the scenario, Bob has a justified true belief that one person in the car has cancer, but it fails to constitute knowledge.

After Gettier had provided counterexamples to the JTB analysis of knowledge, many epistemologists tried offering an amended analysis that would prove immune to counterexample. One prominent strategy was to figure out what the fourth “no-Gettier” condition that would turn justified true belief into knowledge was. Perhaps knowledge should be analyzed as JTB + something else. Another strategy was to somehow strengthen the justification condition so that the JTB analysis would give the right verdict about Gettier-cases. And a third strategy was to eliminate the justification condition altogether and, in certain cases, to replace it with something else, like reliable doxastic dispositions or proper causal etiology. However, the problem of knowledge has proved to be resilient. Indeed, now, more than fifty years after the publication of Gettier’s paper, there is still little agreement among epistemologists about what the proper analysis of knowledge looks like, or even whether knowledge can be analyzed into constituent parts.

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4 See, e.g., Lehrer & Paxson (1969); Nozick (1981); and Sosa (1999).
5 See, e.g., Chisholm (1989, ch. 6).
7 See, e.g., Dretske (1989).
8 See, e.g., Goldman (1967; 1976).
9 As a result of its resilience, a recent strategy has been to argue that knowledge cannot be analyzed into necessary and sufficient conditions, or at the very least to argue that JTB-inspired analyses invariably will fail. See, e.g., Zagzebski (1994); and Williamson (2000).
Following the publication of Gettier’s seminal article was not only a heightened focus on knowledge, but also on the three elements comprising the traditional JTB analysis. And, after a while, justification came to supersede knowledge as the main object of epistemological study, surrounded by its own puzzles and problems. However, the reason for this was only partly due to the impact of Gettier’s article. Another major contributing factor had to do with the resilience of skeptical problems and the apparent inability of our reflections on knowledge to provide satisfying solutions to (or dissolutions of) them. In a nutshell, the problem is that when we’re pressed by the skeptic to provide grounds for thinking that our everyday beliefs actually have a lot going for them, epistemically speaking, our knowledge attributions often, if not always, appear to be unjustified. After all, do we really know the things we usually take ourselves to know, or might we somehow simply be deceived into thinking that we do? There appears to be several ways in which we actually might be deceived at this very moment such that it undermines our knowledge. Does this mean that the skeptic has won and that our beliefs don’t have anything going for them? Not necessarily. Whereas our knowledge attributions may seem vulnerable to a host of skeptical problems, our justification attributions don’t. This is arguably the most important insight provided by René Descartes’ Evil Demon thought experiment.

In the First Meditation, Descartes noted that a malevolent demon could be deceiving us about the external world by somehow making our perceptual experiences systematically unreliable, and, moreover, that this kind of deception appears to undermine our knowledge of

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10 Although, as we will see, there is a recent trend among proponents of the so-called “knowledge-first” program to place knowledge at the heart of epistemological analysis and research. See, e.g., Williamson (2000). In my thesis, I will discuss and criticize certain core aspects of this species of externalism (see paper 4).
11 For a comprehensive study of the history and development of skepticism as a philosophy, see Popkin (2003).
12 Consider the following Brain in a Vat (BIV)-Based Skeptical Argument:

- 1. I don't know that I'm not a BIV.
- 2. If I know that I have two hands, then I know that I am not a BIV.
- 3. Therefore, I don't know that I have two hands.

The first premise is motivated by reflection on the BIV scenario, and the second premise is motivated by the plausible Closure Principle, according to which you know whatever you competently deduce from your knowledge. Moreover, the argument seems to undermine much of what we usually take ourselves to know since it doesn’t lose any of its strength if we replace the proposition that “I have two hands” from the second premise and the conclusion with any similar empirical proposition that we usually take ourselves to know.

13 Many strategies have of course been devised for responding to the skeptic. One of them, popularized by G. E. Moore (1939), is to argue that the first premise of the BIV-Based Skeptical Argument is false. The argument can be presented as a modus ponens as follows:

- 1. I know that I have two hands.
- 2. If I know that I have two hands, then I know that I am not a BIV.
- 3. Therefore, I know that I am not a BIV.

The second premise is motivated as before, by the Closure Principle above, whereas the first is motivated by the idea that one’s perceptual experience is able to justify beliefs with the same (or sufficiently similar) propositional content. For more on skeptical arguments and Moore-inspired responses, see Pryor (2000); and Pritchard (2012).
the world. After all, if my actual perceptual experiences are subjectively identical to those that I would have if I were deceived by such a demon, then it appears that I can’t know anything about how the world really is on the basis of them. However, even though Descartes’ demon may undermine my knowledge of the world, it doesn’t appear to undermine the justification I have for my beliefs about it. Indeed, this fundamental intuition is the basis of Keith Lehrer and Steward Cohen’s (1983) New Evil Demon Problem for reliabilism. According to reliabilism, a belief is justified (if and) only if it is the result of a reliable doxastic disposition. However, reliabilism seems to be false since a Cartesian demon could make our beliefs about the world unreliable without undermining their justificatory status. For the purposes of my dissertation, this is a very important argument which I will revisit later in the introduction and also in much greater detail in several of the papers to come.

So, because of the various problems facing our reflections on knowledge, justification has in many ways become a central notion of contemporary epistemology. And that, moreover, is not a cop out. Regardless of whether or not our beliefs qualify as knowledge, we care deeply about their rational standing; i.e., whether, and to what degree, they are justified.

In the next section, I will therefore take a closer look at two of the debates that are responsible for shaping the contemporary epistemological discourse on the nature of justification.

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14 This is how he presents the thought experiment: “I shall suppose, therefore, that there is, not a true God, who is the sovereign source of truth, but some evil demon, no less cunning and deceiving than powerful, who has used all his artifice to deceive me. I will suppose that the heavens, the air, the earth, colours, shapes, sounds and all external things that we see, are only illusions and deceptions which he uses to take me in. I will consider myself as having no hands, eyes, flesh, blood or senses, but as believing wrongly that I have all these things.” (Descartes, 1641/1968, 100.)

15 The demon scenario, which functions as a possible explanation for the perceptual evidence we have, threatens to undermine our knowledge of the world, according to Descartes, since knowledge requires immunity from doubt and the scenario has the function of making us doubt the things we usually take ourselves to know. Moreover, it also threatens our knowledge even if we don’t endorse a certainty or immunity from doubt condition on knowledge. Indeed, it does so by pointing out that our evidence is compatible with both the skeptical hypothesis and the “common sense” hypotheses that we usually take ourselves to know, and this might make us sufficiently doubtful of the veracity of the common sense hypotheses that we no longer can be said to know that they are true.

16 For a disagreeing perspective, see Unger (1975, ch. 5), who argues, in a manner that anticipates some of the central points made by Williamson (2000) over two decades later, that Descartes’ demon even undermines the justification we have for our beliefs about the world.

17 See especially papers 1 and 3.

18 Some philosophers, like Cohen (1984), think that a justified belief is the same thing as a rational belief, whereas others, like Lyons (2016), think that rationality and justification are different epistemic properties.

19 Some philosophers, like Sutton (2007, 7) and Williamson (forthcoming, 24), will disagree insofar as they defend the identification of justification with knowledge.
2. The Nature of Justification

In the previous section we saw how it was that justification came to the fore in the epistemological discourse. In this section, we will take a closer look at the internalism-externalism debate and the foundationalism-coherentism debate, both of which are responsible for drawing some of the most important battle lines in the literature on justification. Let’s begin with the internalism-externalism debate.

2.1 Internalism vs. Externalism

Philosophers often draw a distinction between two different kinds of justification. First, you can have justification to believe a certain proposition, regardless of whether or not you actually believe it. For example, after watching the weather forecast you can have justification to believe that it will rain tomorrow, but without having to form that belief. Second, you can also have justifiably held beliefs (or other doxastic attitudes). For example, if you believe the proposition above—that it will rain tomorrow—in a way that is properly based on that which gives you justification to believe it, then your belief is justifiably held. There are many ways in which this distinction has been characterized. Following Roderick Firth (1978), we can say that the first kind of justification is justification in the propositional sense, whereas the second kind of justification is justification in the doxastic sense. Thus, propositional justification is a property of propositions (for an epistemic agent), whereas doxastic justification is a property of doxastic attitudes (had by an epistemic agent).

Now, epistemic internalism should most plausibly be construed as a theory about propositional justification. It is a theory about the propositions one has justification to believe/withhold/disbelieve, or, in other words, about the doxastic attitudes one has justification to hold (regardless of whether or not one actually holds them). (Henceforth, I’ll therefore use “justification” as short for “propositional justification”.) More specifically, in order to be an internalist one has to endorse either of two theses. The first thesis goes by the name mentalism (or non-factive mentalism), and it claims that facts about justification supervene upon one’s non-factive mental states, where a mental state is non-factive just in
case it doesn’t necessarily have true propositional content.\textsuperscript{23, 24} Thus, according to mentalism, there can be no change in the facts about which doxastic attitudes one now has justification (to a certain degree) to hold without a change in one’s non-factive mental states.\textsuperscript{25}

The second thesis goes by the name \textit{accessibilism} or \textit{access internalism}, and it claims that there is an internalist accessibility condition on justification. More specifically, it says that facts about justification always are \textit{a priori} accessible, where \textit{a priori} is used in the traditional sense that a condition is \textit{a priori} just in case it doesn’t depend on any of the sense modalities.\textsuperscript{26, 27} Internalists are thus committed to accepting either mentalism or accessibilism (or both, of course).

Many arguments have been offered for internalism. One of the most prominent arguments for mentalism starts by describing a deception scenario in which a subject somehow is being deceived into having a large number of false perceptual beliefs. However, the internalist notes, despite having beliefs that are false and unreliably formed, they nevertheless appear to be just as justified as they would have been if the subject were in a corresponding good scenario (without any deception going on). And, the internalist argues, the best explanation for why that is so is that mentalism is true. After all, there must be something which the subjects in the good and bad scenarios have in common that explains

\begin{itemize}
\item Proponents of mentalism include Pollock & Cruz (1999); Conee & Feldman (2001); Wedgwood (2002); Smithies (2012a); and McCain (2016).
\item Some proponents of mentalism, like Pollock & Cruz (1999) and Conee & Feldman (2001), formulate it as the view that facts about justification supervene upon one’s mental states—not one’s non-factive mental states. This, however, opens up for the possibility that mentalism, thus construed, might be an externalist view, since one’s knowledge might be thought of as part of one’s mental states. That being said, Conee and Feldman (2008) clarify that they think the supervenience base of justification is exhausted by one’s non-factive mental states, or, more specifically, one’s experiences. Moreover, since one’s knowledge usually wasn’t thought of as part of one’s mental states until after the publication of Williamson’s (2000) \textit{Knowledge and Its Limits} (Cf. Williamson, 1995), Pollock & Cruz’s mentalism should most naturally be interpreted as an internalist position.
\item Supervenience is a reflexive, transitive and non-symmetric relation. The reason I formulate internalism (or mentalism, more specifically) in terms of supervenience, instead of focusing on relations like grounding or realization, which have become increasingly popular in contemporary metaphysics and philosophy of mind, is that it avoids many of the problems in the epistemological context which it incurs when it is used in metaphysics or philosophy of mind. For example, many philosophers think that the supervenience of the mental upon the physical is necessary but not sufficient for physicalism to be true. For more about relations of metaphysical dependence in the philosophy of mind, see Tiehen (forthcoming).
\item Proponents of accessibilism include BonJour (1985); Moser (1985); Chisholm (1989); Fumerton (1995); Audi (1998); Steup (1999); and Smithies (2012b).
\item Thus, according to my usage of the notion, the modes of \textit{a priori} accessibility include not only reflection and reasoning, but also introspection and other cognitive mechanisms with an experiential aspect. For more on the distinction between narrow and broad notions of the \textit{a priori}, see Casullo (2003, ch. 2).
\end{itemize}

Moreover, whereas the notion of \textit{a priori} accessibility or knowability is able to capture the access internalist position, it plausibly fails in the case of physicalism. The problem, however, is opposite to that of supervenience: the \textit{a priori} entailment of all truths from all actual physical truths appears to be sufficient but not necessary for physicalism to be true. Again, for more on this issue, see Tiehen (forthcoming).
why they appear to be equally justified in having the same beliefs—\(^{28}\) the most plausible candidate being their non-factive mental states. Indeed, mentalism implies that our intuitive judgments about the deception scenario—i.e., that the subject’s beliefs are just as justified as they would have been in the corresponding good scenario—are true.\(^{29}\)

In response, externalists have argued in either of two ways: (i) they have argued that we\(^{30}\) don’t have intuitions to the effect that the subject in the deception scenario has justification for his beliefs; (ii) they have argued that although we do have the intuitions which the internalist reports, mentalism doesn’t provide the best explanation for why that is so.\(^{31}\) In the first paper of my thesis I respond to both kinds of argument.\(^{32}\) Moreover, my strategy for doing so is outlined in the dissertation synopsis later in the introduction.

A somewhat similar internalist argument, but this time for accessibilism, starts by describing a scenario in which a subject forms a belief using an unfamiliar faculty—i.e., a faculty for belief production which a subject has, but without any awareness of the fact that he has it or of why beliefs produced by that faculty should be true. But, as the internalist notes, although the belief is true and reliably produced (as the scenario stipulates), it doesn’t appear to be justified. Moreover, the best explanation for why that is so seems to be that there is an accessibility condition on justification that the subject fails to satisfy: a subject can only have justification for a certain belief if it isn’t an accident from his first person perspective why that belief should be true. After all, without being in a position to tell what one’s beliefs rationally have going for them, they appear to be no more justified than hunches or guesses. Indeed,

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\(^{28}\) Although I occasionally write as if the topic of my discussions and arguments is what has been called personal justification (rather than propositional justification)—i.e., the justification someone has for believing/withholding/disbelieving certain propositions—this is simply for the sake of convenience since it isn’t always possible (at least not easily so) to differentiate the different types of justification in one’s writings. Moreover, although my discussions and arguments focus on propositional justification, I don’t commit myself to any particular position when it comes to the issue of how propositional justification relates to personal justification. For more detailed and disagreeing discussions about whether and how personal justification relates to propositional justification, see Kvanvig & Menzel (1990), Engel (1992), and Littlejohn (2009).

\(^{29}\) The kind of deception scenario under consideration was first described by Lehrer & Cohen (1983) as a counterexample to simple process reliabilism, whereas the internalist argument was (for the most part) developed Wedgwood (2002). For an overview and evaluation of many of the reliabilist responses that have been offered, see Littlejohn (2012, introduction).

\(^{30}\) Who the “we” in this claim are isn’t exactly clear. Turri (2015a; 2015b) has offered empirical evidence that most non-philosophers don’t have internalist intuitions in response to the scenario. However, it might still be the case that most philosophers do and that their intuitions should be given more weight. This issue will be further discussed in the dissertation’s first paper.

\(^{31}\) Littlejohn (2009) offers the first kind of response, whereas Williamson (2007; forthcoming) offers the second.

\(^{32}\) A similar response to the latter kind of argument is offered by Pryor (2001) and discussed in greater detail by Greco (forthcoming).
accessibilism implies that our intuitive judgments about the scenario under consideration are true. \(^{33}\)

In response, externalists have once again argued in either of two ways: (i) they have argued that we don’t have intuitions to the effect that the subject in the unfamiliar faculty scenario doesn’t have justification for his belief; (ii) they have argued that although we do have the intuitions which the internalist reports, accessibilism doesn’t provide the best explanation for why that is so. \(^{34}\) In the second paper of my thesis I respond to both kinds of argument. Moreover, my strategy for doing so is outlined in the dissertation synopsis later in the introduction.

Although these are the two most prominent internalist arguments, many others have been offered. Conee and Feldman (2004) argue from intuitions elicited by other, more mundane scenarios; Ginet (1975), Feldman (1988), Steup (1988; 1999), and Pollock and Cruz (1999) all argue from (what Goldman (1999) calls) a “guidance-deontological” conception of justification; and Smithies (2012b) argues from the paradoxicality of Moorean conjunctions, from scenarios involving subjects with blindsight (2014), and from the nature of higher-order reflection (2015).

An important source of motivation for internalism is so-called “internalist intuitions” about various scenarios. Indeed, internalists often argue for their positions by inferring plausible explanations from the intuitions elicited by different scenarios or thought experiments. Moreover, in my dissertation, I will often follow suit by making use of this common internalist strategy. However, some philosophers may find this an objectionable strategy insofar as they think that our intuitions aren’t really reliable with respect to the subject matter at hand, or that it only leads to intuition mongering between proponents of different positions. In response to these worries, I briefly want to mention three reasons why I don’t think that they undermine my argumentative strategy. First, as I argue in section 4 of the second paper, the claim that internalist intuitions aren’t reliable is often unmotivated, and in the absence of any such motivation, they do provide us with good (albeit defeasible) reason to believe that their contents are true. \(^{35}\) Second, although many of the arguments I make do rely

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\(^{33}\) This kind of argument was first presented by BonJour (1980; 1985) and later taken up by Lehrer (1990).


\(^{35}\) Not only do one's intuitions provide evidence for certain propositions, but other people's intuitions can also provide the basis for testimonial evidence for certain propositions. If, for example, you're told by someone
on internalist intuitions about various cases, not all of them do. Moreover, just because many of the core arguments rely on such intuitions, it doesn’t follow that they are unsound. After all, there is a growing literature supporting the idea that intuitions are evidentially significant, and I will be working under the assumption that that idea is true. Third, as philosophers making arguments, I take it that we are bound to rely on intuition—for better or worse. Indeed, I doubt that there exists a single argument (philosophical or other) that doesn’t rely on intuition either when it comes to the justification of its premises or the justification of its background assumptions. So given that we are bound to rely on intuition, and also that intuitions are evidentially significant, it seems that intuitions are more likely to help progress the internalism-externalism debate, rather than deter it.

However, although I take intuitions to be evidentially significant, they only provide defeasible justification that can be overridden by other theoretical considerations. Indeed, following John Rawls’ (1971) method of reflective equilibrium, I believe, on the one hand, that philosophical theory building should be guided by intuition, and, on the other, that intuitions should be evaluated with respect to other theoretical considerations about the properties with which the intuitions are concerned. For internalism to be a plausible theory of justification, the intuitions on which it relies should harmonize with other theoretical properties that we generally believe justification to have. That being said, externalists can always try to defeat the evidential force of internalist intuitions. However, in order to do so, they have to provide reasons for doubting the reliability of said intuitions—simply pointing to the intuitive nature of the internalist position isn’t enough.

Internalism is the traditional view, more or less assumed and unargued for up to the middle of the twentieth century, whereas externalism is the new kid on the block, trying to

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36 See, e.g., Chudnoff (2013); Bengson (2015); Koksvik (2017); and Ramsey (2019).
37 More detailed reflections along these lines are offered in sections 6 and 7 of paper 4.
38 Peter Pagin, Staffan Carlshamre, and Duncan Pritchard have raised the following concern about internalist intuitions: how do we know that the intuitions which internalists base their position on are about justification in particular, rather than some other epistemic property? In response, I would like to point out that there are two reasons why I think that internalist intuitions actually are about justification. First, based on my own introspection, I clearly do have (or at least seem to have) intuitions about justification when I reflect on various scenarios, such as the New Evil Demon scenario. Second, given that the relevant discussions in the literature have developed as if most other philosophers also have intuitions about justification—after all, people regularly say of the individuals who inhabit various hypothetical scenarios that they seem to (not) have justification for their beliefs—I think it is safe to assume (barring defeaters) that philosophers generally do have intuitions about justification.
upset the established order.\textsuperscript{39} Having considered the case for internalism, it is time to take a closer look at the opposing position. Epistemic externalism is simply defined as the denial of both the mentalist and the accessibilist thesis above. Whereas the internalist thinks that facts about justification in some special sense are internal (either because they are \textit{a priori} accessible or because they have their basis in one’s non-factive mental states), the externalist denies that this is the case. That being said, externalism comes in different varieties. For present purposes, externalist views can be separated into two more or less distinct groups.\textsuperscript{40}

First, there are those who make specific claims either about what one’s justifying evidence or reasons for belief are, or about the nature of the relation of justificatory/evidential support. For example, proponents of the popular knowledge-first program claim that your evidence or reasons for belief simply are the propositions you know.\textsuperscript{41} This idea is captured by Timothy Williamson’s famous $E = K$ thesis, which says:

$$E = K: \text{“knowledge, and only knowledge, constitutes evidence”} \ (\text{Williamson, 2000, 185}).$$

And also by what we may call the $R = K$ thesis:

$$R = K: \text{“}p\text{ is available to you as a reason if and only if you know } p.\text{”} \ (\text{Williamson, 2007, 120.})$$

Another externalist view is that of William Alston (1989), who claims that there must be a reliable connection between one’s justifying evidence or reasons and the doxastic attitudes they support. Moreover, he maintains that the reliability which pertains to the relation of evidential support should be understood in terms of objective probability or chance. However, it should be noted that even though Alston argues that the relation of evidential support should be understood in terms of probabilification (in the objective sense),

\textsuperscript{39} And, it should be added, externalism has been very successful in doing so. In a survey by Bourget & Chalmers (2014) asking philosophers about their views on 30 central philosophical issues, 42.7% responded that they accept or lean toward externalism, whereas 26.4% responded that they accept lean toward internalism. Moreover, 30.8% answered “other,” which probably has a lot to do with disagreements or lack of clarity about how the distinction should be drawn.

\textsuperscript{40} However, they will not necessarily be exhaustive insofar as there may be externalist views that don’t neatly fit into either group. Nevertheless, they do capture the most prominent externalist positions in the literature.

\textsuperscript{41} Proponents of the knowledge first program are among those who advocate for what has been called a “factive turn” in epistemology. Those who work under that banner usually claim that evidence is factive either in the sense that it is truth-entailing or in the sense that it includes (or consists of) facts about the external world. Mitova (2018, 1), for example, summarizes the position by saying that “when you believe something for a \textit{good reason}, your belief is in a position to enjoy all the cardinal epistemic blessings: it can be rational, justified, warranted, responsible, constitute knowledge, you name it.”

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he also thinks that there is an accessibility condition on one’s reasons/evidence. As he sees it, a belief B is (doxastically)\(^\text{42}\) justified just in case it is based on an \emph{adequate ground}, where the ground is \emph{a priori} accessible,\(^\text{43}\) and the fact that it is adequate means that it reliably indicates that B is true. Thus, since he thinks that there is an accessibility condition on one’s reasons/evidence, but no such condition on the relation of evidential support, he calls his position \emph{internalist externalism}.\(^\text{44}\) However, since Alston is committed to denying both mentalism and accessibilism, insofar as the adequacy or reliability of one’s grounds isn’t \emph{a priori} accessible and facts about justification fail to supervene upon one’s non-factive mental states, his position should be considered externalist.\(^\text{45}\)

Second, there are externalists who make specific claims about the processes that lead to justified belief. For example, Alvin Goldman (1979) claims that a belief B is justified just in case the subject has a reliable belief-forming process for forming B available; i.e., a process for belief-production which produces a sufficiently high proportion of true beliefs in scenarios similar to the actual one.\(^\text{46}\) Although Goldman’s externalism resembles that of Alston insofar they both think that reliability in some sense is a necessary condition for justification, their positions differ to the extent that the kind of reliability which Goldman focuses on attaches to the support relations that hold between evidence/reasons and the doxastic attitudes they justify.

Another externalist view is proper functionalism, which claims that having cognitive faculties for belief production that function properly is a necessary condition for justification.

\(^{42}\) Although some of the externalist positions I consider are formulated with respect to doxastic justification, they should still be considered externalist positions with respect to propositional justification. The reason is simply that the externalist conditions they focus on attach to propositional justification, and not whether one’s beliefs satisfy the basing requirement (which internalists usually agree is a causal or counterfactual, and hence external matter).

\(^{43}\) “Justification is a \emph{directly cognitively accessible} item that will contribute to making true belief into knowledge. . . I will, obviously, not accommodate those theorists who deny that a justifier must be internal in this way.” (Alston, 1989, 5-6.) Cf. Alston (1989, 239): “[T]he fate of prima facie justification is determined by what is in the subject’s perspective on the world, rather than by the way the world is.”

\(^{44}\) A similar view is endorsed by Glüer & Wikforss (2018); although they do not claim that the ground must be \emph{a priori} accessible, only that it must be a mental state.

\(^{45}\) A somewhat related position is epistemological disjunctivism, which claims (at least in paradigmatic cases of perceptual knowledge) that one’s reasons for belief are both \emph{a priori} accessible and factive (or truth-entailing). For example, Duncan Pritchard (2012, 13) argues that we often have justifying reasons for belief which are reflectively accessible in the sense that “the subject can come to know through reflection alone that she is in possession of this rational support”, and that the reasons support doxastic attitudes with the same (or relevantly similar) propositional content by entailing that they are true.

\(^{46}\) It is hard to overstate the impact which Goldman’s reliabilism has had on contemporary epistemology; some have even said that it has undergone a “reliabilist revolution” (Williams, 2016, 3). For similar reliabilist positions, see, e.g., Greco (1999); Comesaña (2002); and Lyons (2013).
For example, Michael Bergmann (2006) argues that if a certain belief is (doxastically) justified, then it must have been produced by a properly functioning cognitive faculty. If, however, the faculty in question isn’t functioning in according with its “design plan”, then the beliefs it produces will somehow be defect and cannot be justified.47, 48

Many arguments have been offered for externalism in general, or one of the specific varieties just mentioned in particular. Arguably, one of the biggest motivations for externalism is that it is able to accommodate the compelling idea that justification is truth-conducive.49 An argument from the truth-conduciveness of justification for externalism has recently been formulated by Clayton Littlejohn as follows:

1. The conditions that justify belief have to be sufficiently indicative of the truth or make it sufficiently likely that the belief is true.
2. Internal conditions alone cannot make it sufficiently likely that your belief is true or provide adequate indication that your belief is true.
3. (Therefore) Justification is an externalist notion. (Littlejohn, 2012, 26.)

In response, internalists will be quick to point out that even though we all would like justification to be truth-conducive, reflection on certain deception scenarios seems to suggest otherwise.50 Indeed, later on I will stress the point, which I believe some internalists have shied away from focusing on, that accepting internalist intuitions about Cartesian deception scenarios, which say that the deceived subject’s beliefs are just as justified as they would have been if they were true, commits the internalist to the view that evidential or justificatory support is a necessary, rather than contingent, relation. However, making such a commitment will, at least according to some externalists, be problematic for a couple of reasons: first, some externalists are likely to find this response problematic insofar as they think that denying the truth-conduciveness of justification also strips it of any epistemic value;51, 52

47 Following Plantinga (1993, 22-24), Bergmann (2006) conceptualizes design plans as sets of circumstance–response pairs. For an alternative understanding of proper function, according to which the proper functioning of a cognitive faculty has to do with how it performed when it produced the beneficial effects that caused its continuing existence, see Graham (2014a).
48 All of the externalist positions just mentioned will be discussed and criticized later; Williamson’s in papers 1 and 4, Alston’s in paper 3, Goldman’s in papers 1, 2, 3 and 6, and Bergmann’s in paper 2.
49 Recently, Silins (forthcoming) has argued that the internalism-externalism distinction itself should be defined in terms of truth-conduciveness.
51 Interestingly enough, one of the clearest expressions of this worry is given by the internalist BonJour, who remarks: “If epistemic justification were not conducive to truth in this way, if finding epistemically justified belief did not substantially increase the likelihood of finding true ones, then epistemic justification would be irrelevant to our main cognitive goal and of dubious worth. It is only if we have some reason for thinking that
second, by denying the truth-conduciveness of justification in favor of the view that justification is a necessary relation between one’s evidence and the beliefs it supports, internalists owe us an account of how the relation should be understood. By pointing to certain problems which threaten the existing accounts in the literature, externalists can make the claim that the prospects for any such account will be dim, and hence that the response to Littlejohn’s argument that we’re currently considering appears to be in trouble. I discuss this issue in more detail in the last section of paper 3.

Another argument for externalism turns on the issue of how to best explain what distinguishes justified beliefs from unjustified ones. Alvin Goldman (1979), for example, argues that reliabilism provides a plausible and unifying explanation of the issue, and, moreover, that internalism cannot, or at the very least has not provided any similarly plausible explanation. As he sees it, reliability is the distinguishing mark of justification—not propositions or facts that are indubitable or self-evident, as internalists sometimes suggest.53

In response, internalists have made a couple of points. First, reliabilism appears to be inadequate and therefore cannot provide a plausible explanation of what distinguishes justified beliefs from unjustified ones. For example, there appears to be counterexamples to both the necessity claim and the sufficiency claim which Goldman’s (1979) reliabilism is committed to.54 Second, internalists can attempt (indeed, they have attempted) to show that they do have the resources to offer a plausible and unifying explanation of the issue.55 For example, they can argue that you have (prima facie) justification for believing that p if it

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52 In order to alleviate the internalist’s worries, Madison (2017) has argued that justification does have (intrinsic) epistemic value even if it isn’t truth-conducive.
53 “Consider some faulty process of belief-formation, i.e., processes whose belief-outputs would be classed as unjustified. Here are some examples: confused reasoning, wishful thinking, reliance on emotional attachment, mere hunch or guesswork, and hasty generalizations. What do these faulty processes have in common? They share the feature of unreliability. They tend to produce error a large proportion of the time. By contrast, which species of belief-forming (or belief-sustaining) processes are intuitively justification-conferring? They include standard perceptual processes, remembering, good reasoning, and introspection. What these processes seem to have in common is reliability: the beliefs they produce are generally reliable.” (Goldman, 1979, 10.)
55 In paper 3, I offer such an explanation when it comes to empirical justification in particular.
seems to you that \( p \), along the lines of Michael Huemer’s (2007) Phenomenal Conservatism.\(^{56}\)\(^{57}\)

Moreover, in addition to the arguments just mentioned, externalists have offered many besides. Goldman (1986), Alston (1989), and Feldman (2005) argue from over-intellectualization; Alston (1989) argues from epistemic poverty; Senor (1993), Goldman (1999), Greco (2005), and Williamson (2007) argue from stored beliefs; Williamson (2000) and Kelly (2008) argue from the nature of scientific evidence; and Williamson (2007) argues from intuitions supporting externalism in the philosophy of mind.\(^8\)

### 2.2 Foundationalism vs. Coherentism

Next, let’s look at the other defining debate: the foundationalism-coherentism debate. This debate is about how our beliefs get justified in the first place. We all agree that we have a great many justified beliefs. How are they justified? Plausibly by other justified beliefs. If the reason you believe that you’re healthy is that you also believe that your trustworthy doctor told you so, but your doctor has communicated to you that he bases all his diagnoses on what his terra cards tell him, then you shouldn’t believe that you’re healthy. And for the very same reason, in order for any belief \( B_1 \) to be justified by another belief \( B_2 \), \( B_2 \) must itself be

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\(^{56}\) Huemer doesn’t just intend his principle of phenomenal conservatism to be a principle of foundational or non-inferential justification, he intends it to be the principle of such justification (2001, 99-100f.). This means that seemings are both necessary and sufficient for foundational justification on his view.

\(^{57}\) Cf. Wedgwood (2002).

\(^{58}\) Whether or not externalism in the philosophy of mind supports externalism in epistemology by (i) entailing epistemic externalism and (ii) receiving intuitive support from reflection on various scenarios is a contested issue. To evaluate this kind of argument, it is important to note that externalism in the philosophy of mind can mean either content externalism, which says that some mental states have contents that are individuated in virtue of relations to the external environment, or vehicle externalism, which says that some mental states (as vehicles of content) are individuated in virtue of relations to the external environment. In the literature, three arguments have been offered for the view that content externalism entails epistemic externalism: BonJour’s (1992) Accessibility Argument, Boghossian’s (1989) Self-Knowledge Argument, and Chase’s (2001) Process Argument. However, all of the arguments rely on contentious premises and therefore remain unconvincing. When it comes to the view that vehicle externalism entails epistemic externalism, fewer arguments have been offered in the literature. However, a couple of recent arguments by Carter et al. (2014) and Smithies (2018) plausibly suggest that accessibilism, together with certain plausible background assumptions, is incompatible with vehicle externalism. A reasonable, albeit somewhat tentative conclusion to draw from these discussions is that although epistemic internalists will have a hard time squaring their position with vehicle externalism, they should be able to endorse externalism about content without inconsistency—at the very least, doing so seems to be “a live option”, as Carter et al. (2014) put it in their review of the current literature about these issues.

That being said, it would be somewhat odd to characterize a mentalist who thinks that non-factive mental states with externally individuated content can play a role in conferring justification upon one’s doxastic attitudes as an internalist, since this in effect would mean that the supervenience base of justification in some sense includes things that are external to the subject’s mind.
justified. So far, so good. But what about B2; what is it that justifies that belief? Well, plausibly another justified belief B3. This leads to the following principle:

1. A belief can only be justified by another justified belief.

The principle seems plausible enough, but it quickly leads to trouble. The trouble, more specifically, is that if B1 is justified, then there must be another justified belief B2 supporting it, and if B2 is justified, then there must be another justified belief B3 supporting it, and if B3 is justified, then there must be another justified belief B4 supporting it, and so on ad infinitum. However, since it is highly doubtful that we have such an infinite stock of beliefs, accepting the principle forces us to conclude that we don’t have any justified beliefs: skepticism ensues. This is known as the epistemic regress problem, and the foundationalism-coherentism debate is about how it should be solved.

Two unpopular and, as most epistemologists see it, implausible responses to the problem are (1) to accept skepticism about justification, and (2) to endorse infinitism. According to skepticism about justification, the fact that the principle mentioned above might lead to skepticism is actually something positive since skepticism is true: we don’t have any justified beliefs. The problem with skepticism about justification, however, is that it is extremely implausible. We certainly seem to have justified beliefs, and denying that this is so is so implausible that it might actually be impossible to rationally and consistently believe it. For if one really were to believe that no beliefs are justified, then that belief (in skepticism about justification) must itself either be justified or not. If it isn’t justified, then one doesn’t have sufficient reason for holding it. But if it is justified, then skepticism about justification must be wrong; there is after all at least one justified belief—namely, one’s belief in justification-skepticism.

According to infinitism, the principle above is unproblematic because justificatory chains can have infinite length. Thus, the infinitist thinks that we do have many justified beliefs, that the principle above correctly explains why that is the case, and that our justified beliefs are supported by infinite chains of other justified beliefs (B2, B3, B4, etc.). However, the problem with infinitism is that it appears to lead to skepticism, as we saw above. The

59 Note that the kind of skepticism that follows is much stronger than the kind of skepticism discussed in the previous section, since it is about justification rather than knowledge.

60 This and similar kinds of regress problem are sometimes traced back to Aristotle (Posterior Analytics, 72b 6-15), Agrippa, and Sextus Empiricus (Outlines of Pyrrhonism, 1.164-177). Although some of the aforementioned authors sometimes raised the problem as an argument for skepticism, nowadays it is mostly being raised in discussions about the structure of justification.
reason: we don’t have an infinite stock of justified beliefs. We are limited creatures with a finite number of neurons, with limited computational and memorial capacities, and who live a finite amount of time.\(^{61}\)

Another (but this time popular) response to the problem is (3) foundationalism.\(^{62}\) Foundationalism comes in different varieties, but the core idea is that the principle above, which says that a belief can only be justified by another justified belief, is wrong. More specifically, it is wrong because the regress eventually comes to an end with what is called basic beliefs—i.e., beliefs that are justified by something other than beliefs, the most popular candidate being experience. Thus, according to the foundationalist, the justification we have for our beliefs can ultimately be traced back to basic beliefs which are justified by experience.\(^{63}\) This gives us an elegant pyramidal picture of the structure of justification where, at the bottom, you have basic beliefs that are justified by experience, and to which all your other beliefs (floating above) in some sense owe their justification. However, there are some problems with foundationalism; one of which is that it appears to condone some sort of bootstrapping argumentation, according to which experience can justify belief in its own reliability or accuracy.\(^{64}\) Another problem is what is known as the Sellarsian dilemma, according to which experience either has (assertive) representational content or not. If it does, then experience cannot by itself generate justification. But if it doesn’t, then experience cannot play a justifying role at all.\(^{65}\)

The last response, which also has been very popular (especially in the twentieth century), is (4) coherentism.\(^{66}\) According to coherentism, the principle that a belief can only be justified by another belief is true, but the chain of justification eventually circles back on itself so that the regress need not be infinite or terminate in a basic belief. This means that

\(^{61}\) Although see Klein (1999) who argues, by drawing a distinction between occurrent and dispositional belief, that we do have an infinite stock of (justified) dispositional beliefs. For example, someone who has taken an introductory course in logic plausibly does believe (in a dispositional sense) with justification that \(p \rightarrow p \lor q\), that \(p \rightarrow p \lor r\), that \(p \rightarrow p \lor s\), and so on.

\(^{62}\) Proponents of foundationalism include Russell (1910-1911): Lewis (1929); Moser (1989); Fumerton (1995); Fales (1996); Pryor (2000); Huemer (2001); BonJour (2003); and Smithies (2014a).

\(^{63}\) According to this version of foundationalism, experience thus functions as a source of what we might call ultimate evidence, in the sense that experience (or perhaps perceptual experience more specifically) justifies basic beliefs but without standing in need of justification itself. In paper 3 I will revisit the notion of ultimate evidence which I there discuss in relation to Conee and Feldman’s (2008) view of justification and its source. However, in that paper I rely on an interpretation of Conee and Feldman's position according to which they use the notion of ultimate evidence in the same way that epistemologists usually use the notion of (regular) evidence.

\(^{64}\) For more on bootstrapping, see van Cleve (1979); Alston (1986); and Vogel (2000).

\(^{65}\) See Sellars (1956). See also Bonjour (1985, ch. 4), who provides a good reconstruction of Sellars’ somewhat intricate argument.

\(^{66}\) Proponents of coherentism include Neurath (1983[1932]); Blanshard (1939); Quine & Ullian (1970); Harman (1973; 1986); Sellars (1973); Lehrer (1990); and BonJour (1985).
whereas B1 is justified by B2, B2 by B3, and B3 by . . . Bn, Bn can then circle back around and be justified by B1. The structure of justification thus has the shape of a circle in which beliefs are justified solely by the fact that they cohere with one another. However, coherentism, just like the other responses to the regress problem, also has problems of its own. One of the objections to coherentism is the alternative systems problem, which says that there can be sets of belief that cohere, but which clearly are absurd. Such sets of belief don’t seem to be justified, but, according to coherentism, they are. Another objection to coherentism is the input problem; i.e., the problem that experience does appear to be sufficient in order to have justification for certain beliefs, contrary to how coherentism would have it: if you have a visual experience of a car driving past you, then (absent any defeaters) you have justification to believe that a car is driving past you.

A lot of digital ink has been used on the internalism-externalism debate and the foundationalism-coherentism debate. Whereas internalism and foundationalism can be said to be the traditional views insofar as the majority of epistemologists before the twentieth century (including Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant) accepted them, the opposing views have gained a lot of traction lately—especially externalism. This dissertation is mainly an attempt to defend the tradition. My own view is that facts about justification are internal in the ways specified by both mentalism and accessibilism. Moreover, I think that the justification we have in some sense has its ultimate foundation in basic beliefs which are justified, but not by other beliefs. Whereas many foundationalists focus on how perceptual experience justifies such basic beliefs without itself having to be justified, I am inclined to include among the sources of such foundational justification things like intuition, so-called memory seemings, and facts about logic and mathematics. However, although I do endorse foundationalism, my focus in the dissertation will be on internalism and externalism. More specifically, I will argue for, defend, and develop a particular brand of internalism, both in general and with respect specific sources of justification, like testimony and memory.

Moreover, it should be noted that there is an important and ongoing debate about what exactly it is that is doing the justifying, or, in other words, what one’s justifiers are. There are three positions in the literature that stand out as plausible answers: first, it might be that it is the propositional content of (some of) one’s mental states that is doing the justifying (Fantl & McGrath, 2009); second, it might be that it is the mental states themselves that are the

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67 Coherence is usually taken to involve logical consistency, explanatory relations, and inductive/probabilistic relations.
justifiers (Cone & Feldman, 2008; Gibbons, 2014; McCain, 2014, 2016; Mitova, 2015); and third, it might be that it is facts or true propositions about (some of) one’s mental states that are responsible for the justification we have (Smithies, forthcoming). In the dissertation, I will remain neutral when it comes to this debate. So even though my wording in the dissertation sometimes might seem to indicate support for some of the aforementioned positions, my papers should be considered non-committal with respect to this issue.

3. Dissertation Synopsis

The dissertation argues for mentalism and accessibilism, both of the internalist theses. Mentalism and accessibilism receive strong support from our intuitive judgments about various scenarios; indeed, so much so that they provide the best explanations for our intuitions. Reflection on various scenarios thus provides grounds for a couple of abductive arguments with the conclusion that the internalist theses are true.

However, this kind of argument, which already is familiar from the literature, has come under heavy fire by proponents of externalism. The externalist objections usually either target the internalist intuitions, the abductive inferences that the arguments employ, or the internal coherence of mentalism or accessibilism. I will defend the arguments using a two-pronged strategy: first, I will argue from the assumption that the relevant scenarios do elicit internalist intuitions among many, if not most, professional philosophers when they are described with sufficient detail, that we haven’t been provided with sufficient reason to think that our intuitions about those particular scenarios somehow are biased or skewed; second, I will argue that the internalist theses do provide the best explanations for why our intuitions are true since (i) they receive the most support from the evidence which our intuitions provide, (ii) *reductios* and other problems internal to mentalism or accessibilism can be avoided.

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68 While many internalists endorse both mentalism and accessibilism, some only endorse one of the theses while rejecting the other. However, by endorsing either mentalism or accessibilism, while rejecting the other thesis, one becomes vulnerable to certain explanatory problems. For example, the mentalist who rejects accessibilism has to explain what it is that makes one's non-factive mental states so special that they provide the supervenience base of justification. That one always has *a priori* access to those states seems to be a good explanation, but it is of course unavailable to the mentalist who rejects accessibilism. On the other hand, the accessibilist who rejects mentalism has to provide an explanation of what the determinants of justification are, such that they always are *a priori* accessible. That the determinants of justification are one's non-factive mental states seems to be a good explanation, but it is unavailable to the accessibilist who rejects mentalism.

69 I should say that I neither operate with a particular conception of how abductive reasoning functions, nor do I purport to make any progress when it comes to providing such a conception. Abductive arguments appear to be holistic by nature—and somewhat mysterious at that. Nevertheless, most philosophers agree that they can be used in order to generate both justification and knowledge. For more on abductive reasoning, see Douven (2017).
shown to disappear upon closer analysis, and (iii) alternative, externalist explanations face problems that the internalist views avoid. The upshot is that internalism remains motivated and as plausible as ever.

The tradition will be defended, but not without incurring any criticism of its own. Although I argue that the internalist theses are correct, some of the most prominent versions of them have to be abandoned. This is especially the case when it comes to accessibilism. I will argue that some of the most prominent versions of accessibilism in the literature are vulnerable to serious problems (about, e.g., vicious regresses and over-intellectualization). Fortunately, however, there are other, more recent versions of accessibilism that avoid the problems and are plausible in their own right. Part of my task is to figure out what commitments the internalist should make in order to avoid the externalist’s objections, while at the same time receiving support from considerations that have motivated internalism in the past.

Mentalism informs us about the supervenience base of justification, but it doesn’t tell us which non-factive mental states are justification-conferring. When it comes to empirical belief (i.e., belief in empirical propositions), I suggest that all and only one’s beliefs and perceptual experiences can confer justification. The suggestion is then defended, on the one hand, against expansive views which claim that other non-factive mental states also can confer justification, and, on the other hand, against contractive views which claim that not all beliefs and perceptual experiences can confer justification.

Lastly, I argue for internalism about some specific sources of justification, like testimony and memory. A substantial part of the recent literature on the internalism-externalism debate has focused on the different sources of justification. Here, several novel and interesting challenges have been posed to the internalist. In the dissertation I take on some of the challenges and defend internalism about testimonial and memorial justification. Doing so, I aim to offer a comprehensive and plausible internalist view about the nature of justification, both in general and with respect to specific sources of justification.

Moreover, I should note that when I make abductive arguments for internalism, I rely on an implicit assumption to the effect that our intuitions about simple epistemological issues—such as whether or not individuals in hypothetical scenarios have justification for their beliefs—generally track the truth. The explanandum will be the content of our internalist intuitions, and the explanans will be (or contain) some internalist thesis.
4. Paper Summaries

The dissertation is a compilation thesis, meaning that it is a collection of individual research papers that all relate to a single topic—in my case, the internalism-externalism debate. Some of the papers have already been accepted for publication. Below you will find summaries of the papers, including information about where they have been accepted for publication.

**Paper I: The Demon That Makes Us Go Mental: Mentalism Defended**

Paper 1 is about mentalism. More specifically, it argues, using Lehrer and Cohen’s (1983) *New Evil Demon Problem*, that facts about justification supervene upon one’s non-factive mental states. That kind of argument, however, is often criticized by externalists. The paper takes a closer look at three prominent objections—a pair of which is offered by Littlejohn (2009) and one by Williamson (2007)—and argues that none of them is successful. Its conclusion is that mentalism remains motivated, and that recent attempts by externalists to undermine the argument from the New Evil Demon scenario fail.

This paper has been accepted for publication in *Philosophical Studies*. See Egeland, J. (2019). The Demon That Makes Us Go Mental: Mentalism Defended. *Philosophical Studies*, 176(12) 1-18. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-018-1167-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-018-1167-7)

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**Paper II: The Problem with Trusting Unfamiliar Faculties: Accessibilism Defended**

Paper 2 is about accessibilism. More specifically, it argues, using BonJour (1980; 1985) and Lehrer’s (1990) clairvoyance and Truetemp scenarios, that there is an accessibility condition on justification. That kind of argument, however, is often criticized by externalists. The paper takes a closer look at three prominent objections—one by Bernecker (2008), one by Ghijsen (2016), and one by Bergmann (2006; 2013)—and argues that none of them are successful. Moreover, it also explores what commitments the accessibilist should make, arguing (i) that many internalists have defended implausible versions of the view, and (ii) that the objections levelled against it only undermine those implausible versions of it. Its conclusion is that accessibilism remains motivated, and that recent attempts by externalists to undermine the argument from the aforementioned scenarios fail.
Paper III: Epistemic Internalism and the Basis of Justification

Paper 3 is about the basis of justification. Starting from the assumption that mentalism is true, it aims to answer two questions: 1) which non-factive mental states can play a justification-conferring role with respect to empirical belief? And 2) why does this set of states play the epistemic role it does? In response to question 1, it argues that all and only one’s beliefs and perceptual experiences have justificatory relevance. In response to question 2, it argues that one’s beliefs and perceptual experiences are one’s strongly representational states, and that strongly representational states necessarily provide support to certain empirical propositions. Lastly, the paper grapples with the issue of how strongly representational states confer justification upon certain propositions, something which largely has been overlooked (especially by internalists) in the Internalism-externalism debate.

A version of the paper (or, more specifically, section 3.1 of the paper) has been accepted for publication in *Episteme*. See Egeland, J. (forthcoming). Imagination Cannot Justify Empirical Belief. *Episteme*, 1-7. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2019.22](https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2019.22)

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Paper IV: Scientific Evidence and the Internalism-Externalism Distinction

Paper 4 is about scientific evidence. It explores a couple of arguments to the effect that considerations of scientific evidence eliminate internalism as a viable theory about the nature of justification. The first argument is offered by Williamson (2000), and it claims that the E = K thesis (in contrast to internalism) provides the best explanation for the fact that scientists appear to argue from premises about true propositions (or facts) that are common knowledge among the members of the scientific community. In response, the paper shows that the E = K thesis isn’t supported by the way in which we talk about scientific evidence, and that it is unable to account for facts about what has been regarded as scientific evidence and as justified scientific belief in the history of science. The second argument is offered by Kelly (2008; 2016), and it claims that only externalism is suited to account for the public character of scientific evidence. In response, the paper argues that there are internalist views that can account for the publicity of scientific evidence, and that those views indeed do better in that
regard than the (externalist) view proposed by Kelly. The paper concludes that considerations of scientific evidence don’t eliminate internalism as a viable theory about the nature of justification, contrary to what many epistemologists and philosophers of science assume.

**Paper V: Epistemic Internalism and Testimonial Justification**

Paper 5 is about testimonial justification. More specifically, it argues that testimonial justification should be understood along internalist lines. It then explores three objections offered by Wright (2016a; 2016b) and defends the argument against them. Moreover, it also argues that the version of externalism endorsed by Wright either collapses into internalism or a more robust kind of externalism that he opposes. The paper’s conclusion is that externalist conditions do make an epistemic difference when it comes to our testimonial beliefs, but that they cannot make any difference with respect to their justificatory status—i.e., they are justificationally irrelevant.

This paper has been accepted for publication in *Episteme*. See Egeland, J. (forthcoming). *Epistemic Internalism and Testimonial Justification. Episteme, 1*-17. doi: https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2018.48

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**Paper VI: Against Overconfidence: Arguing for the Accessibility of Memorial Justification**

Paper 6 is about memorial justification. It argues, using a two-pronged strategy, that access internalism should replace preservationism as the standard view about memorial justification. First, it argues that the considerations which motivate preservationism also support access internalism. Second, it argues that preservationism faces a couple of problems which access internalism avoids. The first problem is that there is a certain scenario involving a subject who exhibits a special sort of overconfidence with respect to the memory beliefs he has and which, on the one hand, functions as a counterexample to preservationism, and, on the other hand, provides intuitive support for access internalism. The second problem is that preservationism, in light of recent research in cognitive psychology, is vulnerable to skepticism about memorial justification, whereas access internalism remains unthreatened. The paper concludes
that access internalism provides the best theoretical framework for understanding the nature and structure of memorial justification.

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5. Comments and Corrections

Given that some of the papers have been accepted for publication, and that Stockholm University requires that parts of a dissertation that have been accepted for publication must be presented the exact way in which they appeared when they were accepted, this has prevented me from making further changes to those papers. In order to clarify certain issues, or rectify certain mistakes, I therefore provide some comments to that effect below.

1. Paper 6 discusses Goldman's Fake Barns scenario, but without mentioning that he credits it to Carl Ginet.

2. In the second sentence of paper 6, I use the notion of *a priori* in what I call a "narrow" sense, insofar as I take a condition to be *a priori* just in case it doesn't depend on any of the sense modalities. However, that involves a mischaracterization, as I actually use the notion in what more aptly should be called a "wide" sense.

3. The argument that is presented and defended in paper 6 is offered in support for a version of accessibilism. However, the argument should more plausibly be seen as supporting mentalism about testimonial justification. When I talk about "internal reasons" in that paper, it should therefore be interpreted as the reasons one has that supervene upon one's non-factive mental states, rather than the reasons one has that are *a priori* accessible.
6. References


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Swedish Summary

Vi månar om att ha övertygelser som är berättigade. Ta som exempel följande vanligt förekommande uppfattningar:

1. Vatten utgörs av H2O-molekyler.
2. Albert Einstein hade mustasch.
3. Det libertarianska partiets kandidat kommer inte att vinna nästa presidentval i USA.


Avhandlingen försvarar och utvecklar en särskild form av internalism både generellt och med avseende på specifika källor till berättigande såsom vittnesmål och minne. Jag menar att frågor om berättigandets natur bör hanteras utifrån ett internalistiskt perspektiv, och jag försöker ta några steg i denna riktning. Avhandlingen är en s.k. sammanläggningsavhandling.
vilket innebär att den består i en samling artiklar som kretsar kring ett enda ämne – vilket i mitt fall är debatten mellan internalism och externalism.

Följande är en lämplig ingång till diskussionen: Anta att du, utan att känna till detta, är ett offer för en illvillig cartesiansk demon som bedrar dig angående den externa världens beskaffenhet. Även om dina övertygelser om världen är falska så stöds de av erfarenheter som från din subjektiva utgångspunkt är oskiljaktiga från de erfarenheter du skulle ha haft om världen var sådan du tror att den är. Fråga nu dig själv: är dina övertygelser om världen under dessa omständigheter berättigade trots att de är falska?


tillstånd ger berättigande åt vissa påståenden, vilket är en fråga som debatten mellan internalister och externalister i stort sett har förbisett.


av överdriven tilltro till sina minnen. Detta scenario innebär ett motexempel mot preservationism men ger samtidigt intuitivt stöd för accessibilism. Det andra problemet består i att preservationism i ljuset av senare tiders kognitionsforskning inbjuder till skepticism angående berättigande via minnet, medan accessibilismen förblir ohotad. Artikeln landar i slutsatsen att accessibilismen tillhandahåller det bästa teoretiska ramverket för att förstå naturen och strukturen hos minnesbaserat berättigande.