

Announcements and Such

- One Song — *Peter Kruder*
 - “Domination” from *Peace Orchestra*
- **No lecture Thursday (APA meeting conflict)**
 - Back on schedule Tuesday — see revised syllabus
 - Also, recommended readings for next § added
- **No office hours for Branden Thursday either**
 - **But, Branden will hold O.H. Friday, 3–5pm**
- **Second Essay Topics due 4/10 (!) @ 4pm**
- **Today: *The Analysis of Knowledge IV* (final episode)**
 - Internalism vs Externalism & Theories of Truth
 - Postscript: Virtue Epistemology

The Analysis of Knowledge III Internalism vs Externalism I

- Something is *accessible* to *S* if it is *either* present in *S*'s consciousness, *or S* is able to bring it into their consciousness *via* reflection and/or introspection
- We will say that something is (in part) *internal to S* if it has elements that are *accessible to S*.
- Historically, *justification* is *internal* in this sense — it has *accessible* or “by your own lights” elements.
- Because knowledge implies truth, it is to be expected that knowledge has *some external* component(s) — which *may not be* accessible.
- Example: my only *accessible* evidence concerning Tom's reliability indicates Tom is reliable re *p*. So, I am *justified in* believing (internal) *p* on the basis of Tom's testimony. But, unless Tom *really is* reliable (external), I don't *know p* on this basis.

The Analysis of Knowledge III Internalism vs Externalism II

- The “naturalistic” (*e.g.*, truth-tracking/reliabilist) accounts of knowledge tend to be *externalist* (*i.e.*, they emphasize *external* requirements on K).
- But, the JXTB theories tend to be *internalist* (*i.e.*, they emphasize *internal* requirements on K).
- *Extreme* internalism about knowledge seems very implausible (given *realism about truth* – see below)
- *Extreme* externalism about knowledge has been more widely accepted in contemporary philosophy
- Sometimes extreme externalists talk about “justification”, but (for them), this is *external*
- I will focus mainly on internalism about *justification*, and externalism about *knowledge*.
- There are various varieties of internalism/externalism, differing along various dimensions.

The Analysis of Knowledge III Internalism vs Externalism III

- The internalist about justification holds only that the *grounds* for one's justified beliefs are internal.
- They do *not* require that *how* (or *how strongly*) those grounds justify beliefs based on them must also be internal (accessible to introspection)
- The “support” relation *needn't itself* be internal. I'll return to this, below, since it can seem odd.
- One important dimension along which alternative internalist theories of justification differ:
 - *How accessible* must the justifiers *j* of *p* be?
 - Typical examples: sensory states of the kind present in perception or beliefs, assenting thought of believed propositions.
- A useful way of thinking about internalism is in terms of *unjustified* beliefs being *blameworthy*.

The Analysis of Knowledge III Internalism vs Externalism IV

- The externalist about knowledge, similarly, holds only that *some* of *what* grounds knowledge (*e.g.*, *that* the constituent true belief was *reliably generated*) will not be accessible to introspection.
- This is consistent with *some* of the grounds of knowledge being *internal* (*e.g.*, sensory experience)
- If *what* grounds knowledge is not accessible, then it is to be expected that *how* it grounds isn't either.
- One important dimension along which alternative internalist theories of justification differ:
 - The *kind* of (non-introspective) evidence required to ascertain whether K-grounds are present
 - *E.g.*, is commonsense observation enough to ascertain how reliable perception is, or is more full-blooded *scientific evidence* required?

The Analysis of Knowledge III Internalism vs Externalism V

- **Internalism about justification:**
 - What one *justifiedly believes* is determined by mental states and processes to which one has internal (introspective/reflectional) access, *e.g.*:
 - One's visual experiences
 - One's memory impressions
 - One's reasoning processes
 - One's beliefs of supporting propositions *j*
 - Note that Audi does *not* include on this list:
 - One's belief *that j* supports *p*
 - What if someone reliable on such matters (falsely) tells me that *j* does *not* support *p*. Is *j* *still* a justifier of *p* for me? Audi says "Yes". Odd, no?

The Analysis of Knowledge III Internalism vs Externalism VI

- **Externalism about Knowledge:**
 - What one *knows* is known on the basis of one's meeting conditions that are not (at least not entirely) internally accessible, as states or processes in one's consciousness are.
 - Note: for the externalist about knowledge *even introspective* (self) *knowledge* is based partly on things that are *inaccessible* to consciousness.
 - As in all other cases, *the faculty of introspection must be reliable*, and *that* this is so is *not* (in general) *introspectively accessible to the agent*.
 - This implies that (KK) is *generally false*: $Kp \not\Rightarrow KKp$.
 - That is, on an externalist view of knowledge, one can know *p* without knowing (or even *being in a position to*) *that one knows p*. We'll return to (KK).

The Analysis of Knowledge III Internalism vs Externalism VII

- The internalist "blameworthiness" or "by your own lights" account of justification has its problems.
- If justification is going to be a component of *knowledge*, one would think that it should be *truth-conducive*. But, where could *that* come from?
- What does being "permissible" or "not blameworthy" have to do with being *true*?
- Reliabilists have their own conception of "justified belief", which is *reliably generated* belief (and, it's easy to see how *reliability* is connected to *truth*).
- The answer to this question *cannot merely* involve the fact that *j* must (*in fact*) support *p* in order to be a justifier of *p*. After all, *j* may be *false*!
- It seems that the concept of justification must have built-into it *presuppositions about reliability*.

The Analysis of Knowledge III Internalism vs Externalism VIII

- The key here is that as we cease to *take* a ground of belief as indicating truth, we tend to cease to *take* beliefs thus grounded to be *justified*.
- So, while it may be an internal matter *whether* a belief is justified, *the standards we use for determining whether* justification obtains are sensitive to our judgments about reliability.
- The Key Presupposition is this: Normally, the internal states and processes that justify our beliefs also connect our beliefs with the external facts in virtue of which those beliefs are true.
- This is how truth-conduciveness gets “snuck in through the backdoor” of internalist accounts.
- We’ve been talking a lot about truth so far, without really talking about what truth *is*. Next, we’ll briefly sketch a few popular accounts of *truth*.

The Analysis of Knowledge III The Correspondence Theory of Truth

- The reason externalism about *knowledge* seems so plausible (*given* our assumption that $K \Rightarrow T$) is that we’re *also* assuming that *truth* is *external*.
- Whether (*p*) there is a green field before me does *not* depend on what I (or anyone else) *think about p* — *there’s an objective fact of the matter about p*.
- Indeed, we’ve been assuming that this is true for *all p* — *even p’s that are about my own mind*.
- Whether (*p*) I believe that *q* does not depend on what I think *about p* (although it does, of course, depend on what I think *about q*!).
- This idea that propositions (or beliefs) are true just in case they *correspond to objective facts of the matter* is called *the correspondence theory of truth*.
- This is the naive, realist theory we’re assuming.

The Analysis of Knowledge III The Minimalist/Redundancy Theory of Truth

- The correspondence theory needn’t posit “facts” that are things which exist independently of propositions, and are the “truthmakers” thereof.
- Instead, it could just say that *p* is true just in case the world really is the way *p* says it is.
- There is an even more deflationary account of truth, which takes it to be constituted by the so-called T-schema — all biconditionals of the form:
 - (T) ‘*p*’ is true iff *p*.
 - Example: ‘Snow is white’ is true iff snow is white.
- Indeed, we could have gotten away with assuming this less naive, more deflationary account.
- This account is still non-trivial, since it will imply that the truth predicate has a certain *logic*. Even (T) faces foundational problems (*e.g.*, liar paradox).

The Analysis of Knowledge III The Coherence Theory of Truth

- A non-realist alternative is *the coherence theory of truth*, according to which a proposition is true iff it is fully justified by virtue of coherence with every other relevant justified proposition, where a justified proposition is, minimally, one that at least someone is (or might be) justified in believing.
- For example, if no beliefs you could ever form could fail to cohere with your belief that *p*, then your belief that *p* would come out true on a coherence theory.
- On this view, for instance, if you are a brain in a vat with a permanently coherent belief that there is an external world, then that belief of yours is true.
- This account violates (T). In the brain in a vat case, the assumption is that *there is no external world*.
- This account sure does explain how coherence might be “truth-conducive”! But, it seems to conflate J & T.

The Analysis of Knowledge III The Pragmatic Theory of Truth

- The pragmatic theory of truth says true propositions are simply those that “work,” in the sense that they are *successful in practice* — *pragmatically*.
- What this comes to is chiefly that believing them, acting on them, and otherwise confirming them, leads (at least in the long run) to positive results.
- This account raises an obvious *Euthyphro* question:
 - Are propositions true because they’re successful or are they successful because they’re true?
- Also, does this imply that *the proposition that true propositions are successful* is (itself) *true*?
- If so, does this mean that the proposition that true propositions are successful is (itself) *successful*?
- What if I care about *correspondence* truth? Does that mean the pragmatic theory is *false* “for me”?

The Analysis of Knowledge III Postscript: Virtue Epistemology

- There is a variety of epistemic theory that doesn’t get much discussion in Audi: *Virtue Epistemology*.
- According to virtue epistemology, some agents are *epistemically virtuous*, and they get to have knowledge (and/or justified beliefs).
- There are internalist and externalist virtue-epistemologists. These camps disagree about whether epistemic virtue is something *internal*.
- An obvious question about virtue epistemology is whether it is possible to say what the “epistemically virtuous agent” is like, without already having an *independent grasp of justification and knowledge*.
- The idea is to explicate the concept of an *epistemic virtue* in terms of justification and/or knowledge (*not vice versa*). Roughly, an epistemic virtue is a trait apt for producing knowledge or justified belief.