Epistemic Internalism and Knowledge-Relevant Anti-Individualist Responsibility

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary epistemology, there are a number of particular internalism/externalism debates. My concern here is with the internalism/externalism controversy about some specific positive epistemic status required for knowledge which is normally understood in terms of epistemic responsibility. I argue that, given our pervasive epistemic interdependence, such particular debate needs to be reformulated in anti-individualistic terms if it is to be an interesting one.

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1. Internalism/Externalism Debates

There are a number of particular internalism/externalism debates. There are multiple controversies about diverse epistemic statuses and not just a single particular debate. This is what makes the general internalism/externalism debate difficult to characterize (e.g. Fumerton 1988). My concern here isn´t (directly) with knowledge, but with the internalism/externalism controversy about some specific positive epistemic status required for knowledge. And I argue that, given our pervasive epistemic interdependence, such particular

debate needs to be reformulated in anti-individualistic terms if it is to be an interesting one.[1]

It might seem obvious that knowledge is an externalist notion. Knowledge requires truth and requires the belief to be un-Gettiered. Given anti-scepticism and fallibilism, it should be possible for two subjects to be internally identical and differ in terms of what they know.[2] So maybe that's not what the debate related to knowledge is about, since that would not make it very interesting (given that the externalist would very clearly and easily be the winner of the debate) and so it would be difficult to make sense of the last 40 years of that debate.[3] It shouldn´t be that easy to rule out an interesting philosophical position. In fact, doing so seems uncharitable to the parties involved. So just as we don´t want to explain the debate in terms of internalists and externalists talking past each other due to being concerned about different epistemic statuses (cf. Alston 2005, BonJour 2003, 2010), we don´t want to render the distinction uninteresting because one of the views is clearly wrong.[4]

Given that, perhaps the debate that concerns us is really about whether there is some internal condition necessary for knowledge. If that's what the

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[1] Of course, there might be other epistemic statuses, which are essentially subjective, for which the suggested reformulation is not an option.

[2] In §§2-3, I introduce Generic Internalism and particular internalist positions with their corresponding understanding of "internal," but for now all I need to be granted is that the rules of engagement are such that if two internally identical subjects vary with respect to some epistemic status, then such status isn´t internal (in some sense to be specified).

[3] In *Belief, Truth and* Knowledge (1973, p.157), David Armstrong introduced the term "externalism" in relation to theories of knowledge. For Armstrong, in an externalist theory there is some kind "natural relation" between the belief that p and the world, when you know that p. But two articles form the early 80´s started the debate: BonJour (1980) and Goldman (1980). For more details on the history of the debate, see Kornblith (2001).

[4] At least, these should be the sort of strategies adopted only once other more charitable strategies to the parties involved have failed. One such strategy is offered here (namely, a reformulation of epistemic internalism in anti-individualist terms), given the anti-individualist turn that epistemology has been experiencing since the end of the 20th Century (more on this in §4).

debate is about, it seems pretty clear that knowledge is an internalist notion. You can't know what you don't believe and your beliefs are very likely to be internal in the relevant sense. But this would be another way of trivializing the debate (and hence rending it uninteresting). And if the debate is really an interesting one, this cannot be what epistemologists are arguing about. So maybe that is not what the debate is about either.

Perhaps the debate is really about whether there is some internal condition, distinct from the belief condition and other very likely internal conditions, such as a defeating condition (e.g. BonJour 2003, Grundman 2009, Greco 2010, Beddor 2015), that is necessary for knowledge. If that is what the debate is about, then it at least seems *prima facie* to be an interesting debate given that it's not obvious that there is some such epistemic standing required for knowledge that is internalist. Indeed, whether there is some such standing might seem to depend upon what we think about the cases of clairvoyants and other epistemically naïve subjects (e.g. BonJour 1980, Foley 1987, Lehrer 1990) as we´ll see.

Having said that, there clearly seem to be, as mentioned, external conditions, such as a truth condition and some Gettier-blocker. Moreover, whether it is achieved by the Gettier-blocker or not, some truth-conduciveness is required for knowledge (as any sensible internalist would allow; e.g. BonJour 1985, Zagzebski 1996). In fact, some reliability of the *local* or *global* form (or a combination of both) seems required for knowledge. [5] Here I take some reliability to be necessary for knowledge and for simplicity's sake I just speak in terms of global reliability when required. This condition on knowledge seems desirable anyway because views that don't take it into account seem to fail to be appropriately normative. If my belief is responsibly but unreliably formed, say due to exploiting some Tea-Leaf-Reading or Ball-Gazing practice to find out

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[5] *Local reliability* is here understood as the reliability of a procedure with respect to a particular belief, so the procedure is locally reliable in that instance if the belief in question is true throughout a range of possible worlds (as in the case of modal conditions such as sensitivity or safety; see e.g. Nozick 1981, Sosa 1999, Pritchard 2015a). *Global reliability* is the more general reliability or truth-conduciveness of a belief-forming procedure. In this case, a procedure is globally reliable, roughly, if it tends to produce true beliefs (for present purposes this characterization will do; see e.g. Goldman 1986, Kornblith 2002, Goldberg 2012). I employ the term 'procedure' so not to differentiate between innate processes and acquired methods.

the truth about some matter, those procedures, even if reasonably regarded to be reliable, don´t seem to provide the knowledge-relevant normative status (Goldman 1986, Greco 2010).

Nevertheless, epistemically responsible belief seems required for knowledge and it is those cases of epistemically naïve subjects which seems to suggest so. So, given that here we are concerned with some epistemic normative status required for knowledge that doesn´t obviously belittle the internalism/externalism debate related to knowledge, such status is here understood in terms of *epistemic responsibility* (to be specified below). And in what follows we´ll see that the main (and perhaps only legitimate) rationale behind internalism exploits such notion (§3).[6]

However, given our clear epistemic interdependence, some sort of epistemic anti-individualism (viz. the thesis that some knowledge-relevant normative status at least partly depends on factors that lie outside the cognitive agency of the knower) seems right.[7] As social and feminist epistemologists have noticed for some time (e.g. Potter and Alcoff 1993, Schmitt 1994), traditional individualist positions about knowledge seem doomed. Now, anti-individualist positions about knowledge needn´t be *incompatible* with epistemic internalism about knowledge-relevant responsibility, but if our epistemic interdependence goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge (as it seems; §4), then this epistemic anti-individualism can render the individualistically-framed internalist position related to knowledge uninteresting (given that the debate would too

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[6] Anyhow, it might be useful to stress that the kind of epistemic responsibility here considered is *relevant to knowledge. Epistemic responsibility* is a technical notion and needn´t be understood in relation to knowledge, just like the notion of *epistemic justification* sometimes isn´t (e.g. Alston 1988a, Foley 2005). In fact, some authors who write about epistemically responsible belief explicitly don´t commit to its necessity for knowledge (e.g. Peels 2017). Moreover, other authors who might at first seem to be writing about epistemically responsible belief seem in fact to be considering slightly different phenomena (such as rational and blameworthy belief; see e.g. Conee and Feldman 2004 and Nottelmann 2007, respectively).

[7] Here I focus on *positive* epistemic interdependence. For the distinction between positive and negative epistemic interdependence (i.e. interdependence that enables or prevents some given epistemic standing), see e.g. Kallestrup and Pritchard 2013, Pritchard 2015b, Carter and Pritchard 2017.

easily solved in favour of the externalist). [8] Having said that, this anti-individualism, as we´ll see (§3), is *compatible* with the main rationale behind internalism, so it seems that we should reformulate the debate in anti-individualistic-friendly terms in order to keep it interesting, as opposed to easily rejecting internalism (§5).

So, in what follows, I introduce the kind of epistemic internalism that I´ll focus on (§2) and consider the main motivation behind that view and its compatibility with epistemic anti-individualism (§3). Then I introduce the general and genuine phenomenon of epistemic interdependence that goes beyond testimony and entails epistemic anti-individualism (§4). Finally, I argue that, given our thorough epistemic interdependence, we should reformulate the internalism/externalism debate that concerns us (§5).

2. Epistemic Internalism

To be an epistemic internalist about X is to endorse the following conditional:

Generic Internalism: If two subjects are internally alike (in a sense to be specified), they will be alike in terms of X (e.g. how rational they are in believing *p*, what reasons they have to believe *p*, what they are permitted to believe, etc.).

Epistemic externalism is simply understood as the denial of internalism. [9] So someone who denies internalism about X is an externalist about X.

Here I´ll present two main ways of filling in the details of Generic Internalism and do it in neutral terms with regard to the epistemic status (X above) that will concern us later on (i.e. epistemic responsibility). So I´ll speak of *epistemic status*. Now, *epistemic factors* [10] are the features that affect (positively or

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[8] As suggested above, one way to make the debate uninteresting is to focus on some epistemic status that is trivially internalist or externalist.

[9] Pritchard (2012) argues for a third alternative, namely: epistemic disjunctivism. Here, for the sake of space, I ignore this alternative and take the internalist/externalist distinction to be exhaustive. For some doubts regarding epistemic disjunctivism, see

[10] In the literature, epistemologists sometimes refer to them as "justifiers" (Alston 1986) or "J-factors" (Goldman 2009). This is because the epistemic status affected by

negatively) some epistemic status. The internalist/externalist qualification corresponds to the *nature* of such factors and Generic Internalism suggests that *all* such factors are internal.[11] This allows us to make some sense of the traditional idea that epistemic internalism is the view that some epistemic status is internal (Alston 1986, Bonjour 2010, Vahid 2011).

But what makes an epistemic factor *internal*? In the literature, there are two main alternatives: internal could mean either accessible or mental. The more traditional view is called *access internalism* (or *accessibilism*), and it stipulates that all factors that make up some epistemic status must be *accessible* (in some sense to be specified) to the subject (at a given time t). The notion of access can vary in

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such factors is epistemic justification. The generic ´epistemic factor´ is preferable given that the epistemic status in question could be other than justification. Moreover, ´epistemic justification´ is a technical term that is used in different ways. When used in relation to knowledge (cf. fn.6), it can have from broad uses (e.g. whatever is required for a true belief to be knowledge) to narrow ones (e.g. whatever is required to objectively promote the truth). So here I prefer to avoid "justification" talk altogether, unless I´m talking about some philosopher who is concerned with that notion.

[11] Cf. Goldman 2009. In an attempt to make the debate more interesting, Goldman relaxes the terms of engagement and only requires that *most* (as opposed to all) factors be internal. The reason Goldman feels compelled to this is that he thinks that it´s clear that externalism about the adequacy of the epistemic factors is correct (given a truth-conduciveness epistemic goal and being truth-conduciveness a paradigm example of an external factor). So, in order to give the internalist better chances to win the debate, Goldman adopts a "majoritarian configuration" of the terms of engagement between internalism and externalism. Now, it´s clear that some internalists, like Chisholm, thought that we had special internal access to overall justificatory status because we could know from the armchair what epistemic principles there are and whether their application conditions were satisfied (1977, p.77). So there certainly are some who are internalists about grounds *and* their adequacy (more on this below). But this strikes many as being too strong. And so there are some internalist-externalists who are internalists about grounds but externalists about their adequacy (e.g. Alston 1988b). Under the normal terms of engagement, they would count as externalists. However, a majority rule gives internalism the chance to be an interesting position. Having said that, given that I shall focus on a very specific epistemic status, as opposed to a more encompassing epistemic standing (such as warrant or justification broadly understood, as Chisholm did), and that internalists themselves claim that *all* factors relevant for the given epistemic status need to be internal, I´ll ignore Goldman´s suggestion.

strength and type (and so it does in the literature—although, for our purposes, we needn´t rehearse its various permutations). For example, leaving aside issues of infallibility, the access can be *weak*, in the sense that merely the epistemic grounds in virtue of which the belief is likely to be true need to be accessible. *Strong* access, on the other hand, requires accessibility of the grounds and their adequacy as grounds. Moreover, the access can also be *direct*, say through introspection, or *mediated*, say through reflection. But whether one opts for one or another form of access should be determined by the motivation of the view and so we shouldn´t rule out *ab initio* any alternatives. In the next section, I´ll consider the main motivation for accessibilism, but for now it´s worth mentioning that the accessibilist position is considered the orthodox view due to the positions developed by, say, Laurence BonJour (1980), Roderick Chisholm (1977) and Carl Ginet (1975), among others, and is arguably traced back to Descartes.[12]

The second internalist position, articulated more recently by Richard Feldman and Earl Conee (2001), is called *mentalist internalism* (or *mentalism*) and it stipulates that the epistemic factors that grant a positive epistemic status to beliefs (at time t) are *only* "things that are internal to the person´s mental life" (at time t) (2001, p.2). This position doesn´t exploit the notion of access in order to understand epistemic factors as internal, but instead interprets them as being occurent or dispositional (non-factive) mental states, events and conditions (2001, p.2). Feldman and Conee also provide a characterisation of mentalism as a supervenience thesis: the epistemic status of a person's doxastic attitudes strongly supervenes on the person's mental life (2001, p.2).[13] This

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[12] See e.g. Kornblith 2001; cf. Sosa 2009, 2015.

[13] It´s not clear that these formulations are equivalent, since specifying a supervenience base for epistemic factors is under-informative (Goldman 2009, p.335). After all, the supervenience thesis seems to suggest only that the epistemic factors cannot vary independently of one´s mental life. Of course, this will depend on how we understand supervenience, and in particular the strong supervenience exploited in their formulation. Normally, strong supervenience is understood in the sense that the modal comparison of individuals with respect to the subvenient properties is made *across* possible worlds. This differs from *weak* supervenience, in which the comparison is made between individuals that pertain to the *same* possible world. See Kim (1993), for more details. Although access internalism can be described in supervenience terms as well (see e.g. Pryor 2001, p.104), it´s not commonly done.

implies that no two individuals that are alike mentally (at time t) can differ with regard to the given epistemic status.

Here I´ll ignore mentalist internalism given that it´s not clear what the motivation for the view is. One suggestion is that viewing internalism as mentalism "renders readily intelligible the nominal connection of epistemic internalism to mind internalism" (2001, p.3). But this is clearly no strong motivation, as even Feldman and Conee recognize. And they add that a "much stronger consideration in favor of mentalism itself is that it turns out to be entirely defensible" (2001, p.3). Now, although they attempt to show this, it is, to say the least, very controversial to think that they have succeeded (e.g. Bergmann 2006, pp. 48-65, Goldman 2009). One final suggestion might be that "simplicity and clarity are best served by understanding internalism as mentalism" (2001, p.2). Although Feldman and Conee are thinking about the nominal connection between different forms of internalism (i.e. the first suggestion above), one could anyway think that the issue of clarity has to do with the lack of clarity that the notion of *access* introduces in the case of accessibilism (perhaps because of the many alternatives in principle available). But, leaving aside that such notion, as mentioned, depends ultimately on the motivation for the view, this wouldn´t be an independent motivation for mentalism. More importantly, it isn´t clear, given the very plausible view that not *all* mental states and events, such as unconscious ones, are epistemic factors, why some are. The mentalist needs to motivate this plausible discrimination, and one such way of doing it is by invoking the very notion of *access*. And if they were to do so, mentalism would simply be a disguised form of accessibilism. So since I´m at a loss with regard to any independent strong motivation for mentalism, I´ll ignore it and focus instead in the main motivation behind accessibilism.[14]

3 .Internalist Motivation

The most prominent rationale for internalism derives from a responsibility condition on knowledge (e.g. BonJour 1985; Fogelin 1994; Greco 1990;

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[14] From now onwards, when I speak of "internalism" or "internalist" I´m referring the accessibilist approach here focused on.

Pritchard 2005), which is understood in terms of access to reasons. The main idea behind it is that, given that we want to hold beliefs that are true (or likely to be true), we must have some sense of the grounds that provide support for the belief in question, and a belief held without any sense of its grounds isn´t a responsible belief and so cannot be knowledge.

This is commonly illustrated by problem-cases, such as BonJour's Norman case (1980, 2003) and Keith Lehrer's Mr. Truetemp case (1990). What is common to these cases is that it features some unreflective epistemic agent, whose true beliefs don´t constitute knowledge because they were formed irresponsibly, despite being the outcome of reliable belief-forming procedures, their beliefs being un-Gettiered, and there being no undefeated defeaters.

This is BonJour's (1985, p.41) case:

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

The verdict that BonJour wants to draw, and many agree with, is that Norman doesn´t know. That is, the relevant belief doesn´t enjoy the positive epistemic status required for knowledge. It is, in an epistemic sense, defective. This and other cases like it are normally presented as counterexamples to pure reliabilist theories of knowledge because they suggest that an internal condition is required to obtain the necessary normative status for knowledge.15 This condition, as BonJour (1985) argues, is epistemic responsibility. And, in fact, a responsibilist condition is normally put forth.16

This condition aims to capture some perspectival epistemic dimension that is naturally thought to be missing in Norman-type cases. In particular, BonJour

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15 See e.g. Lehrer 1990, pp.163-4.

16 In fact, it may be said that "[t]raditionally, epistemology has been overwhelmingly responsibilist" (Williams 2008, p.2). See e.g. Code 1987, Fogelin 1994, Greco 2000, Steup 2001, Zagzebski 1996.

thinks that Norman-type cases show that, for a belief to be appropriately normative, the knower needs to at least reflect critically on the sources of her beliefs. As he says, "[p]art of one's epistemic duty is to reflect critically upon one's beliefs, and such critical reflection precludes believing things to which one has, to one's knowledge, no reliable means of epistemic access" (1985, p.42). In particular, the knower should at least reasonably judge the belief-forming procedures to be reliable from within her system of beliefs (1985, pp.50, 123).

What the internalist tries to advance here is the idea that epistemic responsibility cannot be achieved without access to the reasons that grounds the belief in question. And by means of this access, this responsibilist requirement for knowledge is meant to stop the belief being true by accident from the subject's perspective (BonJour 1985, p.43, 2003, p.27).17 In other words, this perspectival appropriateness stops it from being, in a sense, lucky (Pritchard 2005, pp.181ff.). And according to BonJour and many others this luck precludes knowledge. Norman, they would say, doesn't know because he doesn't pursue the truth responsibly: he believes "blindly."

If the above is correct, this responsibilist requirement suggests that a version of access internalism is true. The argument seems to be this: in order for the knower to avoid believing truly by (reflective) luck (and so not have knowledge, as in Norman´s case), she should reflect on the evidence that grounds her belief, and this implies that she must have some kind of access to that evidence. This is a version of access internalism, because such epistemic factors that explain the positive epistemic status of the belief in question should be accessible.

With this in mind, the positive epistemic status that offers the best chances of an interesting, non-trivial, internalism/externalism debate regarding the notion of knowledge is epistemic responsibility. Irresponsible true beliefs cannot be knowledge because their instantiation isn´t different from a lucky (reflective) success. This is the key motivation for internalism about knowledge. Internalists then argue that a necessary condition for the attainment of

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17 Duncan Pritchard (2005) distinguishes between two varieties of epistemic luck that are thought to be knowledge-threatening: *veritic epistemic luck* and *reflective epistemic luck*. The first is concerned with the epistemic luck that is at issue in Gettier-style counterexamples, and the second concerns "the manner in which, from the agent's reflective position, it is a matter of luck that her belief is true" (p.173). The second variety is of interest here.

knowledge is some kind of access to reasons or evidence that entails that the belief is responsible.

However, there is a difficulty facing this internalist motivation. As we saw in §2, the access required can be understood in different ways. Specifically, what degree of access is required in order to entertain a responsible belief? Presumably, a strong version of access, like full awareness of epistemic factors on the part of the epistemic agent, together with awareness of its adequacy as proper factors, would render the belief responsible, given the above. But then the responsibilist requirement seems certainly too demanding. BonJour´s position (viz. requiring the knower to have reflective access to her epistemic situation, which entails minimally that the knower should reasonably judge the belief-forming procedures to be reliable—1985, pp.42, 50, 123) is problematic precisely in this respect. Most ordinary subjects would seem to fail to fulfil this condition (even if allowed to satisfy it tacitly; 1985, p.50), so it seems to over-intellectualize knowledge (see e.g. Cohen 1984, Burge 2003). 18 This responsibilist condition to reflect critically on the sources of our belief that is exclusively framed at the individual level seems overly strong. It´s intuitively too demanding since imposing such requirement would seem to have extensive sceptical implications (and, one should add, the internalism/externalism debate isn´t a debate held among sceptics). The issue doesn't seem to be about the subject's belief being epistemically appropriate from her point of view. We cannot, as BonJour does, understand epistemic responsibility as demanding the knower herself to reasonably take the procedure exploited to be reliable.19

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18 Consider, for example, the ability we have to differentiate between male and female human faces. Most of us don't know how we do it, although an adult might have some sort of track record that would provide her with the required evidence—that is, the subject might have adequate evidence for its reliability. But this is more difficult to accept in the case of a child or some other cognitively unsophisticated being. Still we would attribute knowledge to the child when exploiting this ability. Another example would be proprioception: this is a reliable faculty that many know nothing about (not even about its existence), but we are nonetheless willing to attribute knowledge to those subjects when exploiting it.

19 Of course there are other ways in which one might attempt to capture this *knowledge-relevant* responsibility. One is by requiring some kind and measure of *voluntary control*, as opposed to *reflective control* (as the present account does), over our beliefs (e.g. Feldman 2001, Ginet 1985). But this option doesn´t seem promising for well-known and genuine

Given the above, it seems that we can capture Norman-type cases only at the expense of scepticism. But this is wrong. Once we recognise that the responsibilist requirement is not necessarily linked with any individualistic commitment (which denies the dependence of the knowledge-relevant normative status on factors that lie outside the cognitive agency of the knower), it´s a live option to understand such positive epistemic status in less demanding anti-individualistic terms in order to accommodate it within a plausible account of knowledge.

Recall that the main motivation for internalism exploits the notion of responsible belief as a requirement for knowledge. And having responsible beliefs requires that the agent has reflective access to her epistemic situation. This puts the agent is in a position to exert some sort of (reflective) guidance regarding the formation of her beliefs and it seems fair to say that this idea of guidance is what supports the requirement of reflecting on one's sources of knowledge in order to avoid (reflective) luck. In fact, Goldman (1999), talking more generally about epistemic justification, identifies this idea of guidance with the main thrust for the internalist case.20 He argues that "a guidance-

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concerns (Alston 1988a; cf. Williams 1973). Yet another option is to suggest a *minimal* notion of responsibility that is the product of one's cognitive integration, which consists roughly on not having any undefeated defeaters and is suggested by Palermos (2014), following Greco (1999, 2010). Unfortunately, this notion seems too weak to satisfy the internalist here considered (see e.g. Fricker 1994, §7, Pritchard 2005, pp.188-190). Responsibility, as our internalist understands it, seems to require some *positive reflective control*, not merely the lack of negative reasons (after all, Norman satisfies, *ex hypothesis*, this minimal notion but lacks knowledge). Finally, one might try to capture this knowledge-relevant responsibility by requiring the subject to be motivated to form her beliefs in an *epistemically conscientious way* (e.g. Code 1987, Zagzebski 1996). For example, Kornblith (1983, p.84) states that "[a]n epistemically responsible agent desires to have true beliefs, and thus desires to have his beliefs produced by processes which lead to true beliefs; his actions are guided by these desires." But it seems clear that no such intellectually virtuous motive is needed to know, at least if we aren´t merely concerned with "reflective" or "high-grade" knowledge (see e.g. Baehr 2014a, 2014b). So the positive reflective control required by epistemic responsibility needn´t be accompanied by epistemic conscientiousness.

20 In fact, some philosophers, such as Kaplan (1991), think that an epistemology that doesn´t help to guide our intellectual enquiries is an "epistemology on holiday" (p.154).

deontological conception of justification" is the first step in the main rationale for internalism and that it enjoys widespread support (p.272). For Goldman, internalists commit to the fulfilment of the "epistemic duty to guide [the agent's] doxastic attitudes by his evidence" (p.273).21

But there is no reason to think that the relevant guidance can only be achieved at the personal level. We can also understand it as operating in cases of epistemic interdependence, where the epistemic standing of a belief depends on properties and actions other than the knower's. For example, it would be legitimate to consider the agent's belief as being socially guided if the belief was formed as a result of following established epistemic practices that are reflectively endorsed by the epistemic community (in the sense that some subject or, more likely, a group of subjects of the knower's epistemic community have undertaken, through time, the positive epistemic work to, a la BonJour, reasonably judge the community's established belief-forming procedures to be reliable; for more on this, see .22 And it would be wrong to

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21 Note that talk about "epistemic duty" here is superfluous; see Goldman 1999, pp.273-4. The deontological component of the guidance-deontological conception doesn´t play a key role in explaining the rationale behind internalism. See also Bergamann 2006.

22 After all, knowledge doesn´t seem to be a *reflective success of the knower*. Although responsiveness to the world is required for knowledge, responsiveness to reasons doesn´t seem to be, as many philosophers from different epistemological strands have noticed (e.g. Ayer 1972, Lewis 1996, Millar 2010—not even reasons concerning the procedures exploited). Much of our responsiveness to the world is achieved without responsiveness to reasons (see e.g. fn.18). Indeed, the fact that "knowledge attributions can be underwritten by a believer's *reliability*, even when the *believer* is not in a position to offer *reasons* for the belief" can be seen as "the Founding Insight of reliabilism" (Brandom 2000, p.99). This is an insight because, regardless of one's sympathies, no such reflective responsiveness seems required of *the knower herself*. Indeed, as Papineau (2000, p.184) says, "Not everybody whose belief-forming strategies are improved by human civilization need themselves have reflected on the advantages of these improvements. Once a certain technique [...] has been designed by innovative individuals in the interests of improved reliability-for-truth, then others can be *trained* in these techniques, without themselves necessarily appreciating their rationale." Below I suggest that it´s not merely possible but that it seems to be the case that the reflective endorsement of the belief-forming procedures is undertaken by some members of the epistemic community, and that it can also benefit others members of the community

consider a belief that is socially guided in this way as being accidental in the relevant sense. I´ll discuss this phenomenon in more detail below, but for now it´s important to stress that the idea of a belief being guided by the relevant evidence is preserved even in a non-individualist (i.e. social) setup. In other words, belief-guidance doesn´t entail individualism (to repeat, the thesis that a given knowledge-relevant normative status depends exclusively on factors that lie inside the cognitive agency of the knower).

If guidance is the main thrust of internalism, as seen above, and if this guidance doesn´t entail individualism, as just seen, then individualism needn´t constraint internalism.23 So an individualist constraint should be argued for: that is, it doesn´t come for free with the internalist motivation. And in the absence of such an argument, we can consider this guidance as not requiring individualism and in turn conceive the attainment of responsible belief in a non-individualist manner. To illustrate this, consider the following case, modified from BonJour's original clairvoyant case:

> Norm, under certain conditions which unusually obtain, is a completely reliable clairvoyant. Moreover, she grew up in a community that relies on clairvoyance. Some members of the community have evidence for the existence and reliability of this power in this community and so for endorsing the community's practice. However, she hasn't given these matters any thought and possesses no evidence for or against the reliability of such a power. One day, Norm comes to believe that the President is in NYC, though she has no evidence for or against this belief. In fact, the belief is true and results from her clairvoyant power under circumstances in which it is completely reliable.

In this case, it seems that Norm does, in fact, know that the President is in NYC. This case then suggests that the knowledge-relevant normative status

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(given the procedures are *established* ones within the community: roughly, procedures which are taught, trained or simply encouraged—in the case of innate ones that are regarded as reliable; see fn.5—to be exploited by the community and which are being monitored in terms of their reliability, just as the members of the community are tacitly monitored for the correct exploitation of them).

23 Another way to disassociate epistemic internalism and individualism is offered by Carter and Palermos (2015), by exploiting an extended mind thesis. This is a controversial thesis which plays no role in the suggestion being made here.

missing in the Norman case isn´t missing in this case and the only difference between Norman and Norm is the existence of an established practice endorsed by the community. So we can understand these social-epistemic features of the Norm case to satisfy the responsibility condition not satisfied in the Norman case.

In this sense, Norm's belief-formation is being socially guided and so Norm's success isn´t accidental in the relevant sense, as it is in Norman´s case.24 In fact, some members of Norm's community have reflectively assessed the procedure and they have contributed with their reflective endorsement to the establishment of the procedure as a common practice in Norm´s community (see fn.22). Given this, it´s reasonable to consider Norm´s epistemic success as the product of social guidance. Accordingly, we can still consider her belief as being epistemically responsible, given the favourable socio-epistemic environment in which she is embedded. So when the reasons are accessible in this way, or as we could say, are socially accessible (that is, a kind of access mediated by the epistemic community in the way suggested above), the requirement of epistemic responsibility can be satisfied, as Norm´s case illustrates.

As seen, it is the individualist constraint that makes the attainment of responsible beliefs too difficult and demanding. Once we abandon such a commitment, responsible beliefs become attainable and the scepticism that threatened us dissolves. Given this, we could reasonably wonder why this individualist constraint is commonly assumed (and in §4 I provide an explanation of it). But the point remains, it would be a mistake to simply assume it. A mistake that should be prevented by carefully distinguishing between what legitimately motivates the internalist position from unnecessary individualistic commitments that normally but contingently accompany that motivation.

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24 If one were anyway to believe that Norm's success is *in some sense* lucky, at least it should be conceded that this is a case of *benign* epistemic luck, in the sense that this is not a case in which the ascription of a positive epistemic status to beliefs should be denied (for more on different forms of benign luck, see e.g. Pritchard 2005). This is because the agent is embedded in a favourable social-epistemic environment (which is also what might give the impression of luck), in which there are social-epistemic mechanisms and policies directed toward the instantiation of true beliefs.

Given the above, it is possible then that epistemically responsible belief can be achieved not only by individual means but also by social ones and such responsible belief still satisfy the motivation for internalism. In the next section, we´ll see that it´s also plausible that many beliefs are responsible in such anti-individualist way. Given that, I argue in §5 that we should prefer a formulation of epistemic internalism about knowledge-relevant responsibility compatible with epistemic anti-individualism, and so preventing the position from being uninteresting.

4. Epistemic Interdependence and Anti-Individualism

Far from being a rare and incidental phenomenon, our epistemic interdependence is a generalized and socially structured phenomenon. But in epistemic communities, members not only share information. Our epistemic reliance on others isn´t limited to our testimonial practice.25 Our epistemic interdependence can be, and is, much more pervasive: people not only act as informants, they also act as exemplars, trainers, and teachers. Some are exemplars for me as a knower, others enable me to fine-tune and improve my epistemic standards and practices. We depend on others in order to calibrate one's own standards and to maintain appropriate standards (see fn.22). This genuine and pervasive phenomenon of epistemic interdependence has been widely recognized in recent times, in particular by social and feminist epistemologists (e.g. Hardwig 1985, Kitcher 1994, Longino 2002, Nelson 1993, Townley 2011, Webb 1993).

In fact, a more fine-grained picture about epistemic agency should plausibly comprise the normative environment in which epistemic standards are endorsed, learned and maintained communally. To exemplify this epistemic interdependence, consider again the case of Norm. What is relevant in the attainment of the positive epistemic status of her belief doesn´t concern any particular information that she received but, as we could say, the social

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25 Testimony has rightly received copious attention recently—e.g. Lackey and Sosa 2006—but, I suggest, it´s not the most epistemically interesting social phenomenon; see immediately below.

endorsement of the established procedure that she is employing. 26 In particular, although the knower needn't possess the positive grounds for the endorsement of the procedures that she and other members of the community rely on, someone does. And the clearest example of subjects who appreciate the rationale behind our belief-forming procedures and who would also promote their revision through time if regarded necessary, is that of regulative epistemologists, whose job is to actively engage in the project to remedy the deficiencies of our epistemic practices (to increase their reliability). 27 In particular, the social endorsement suggested is sometimes the product of an epistemic policing that prompts the correction or perfection of inadequate procedures (e.g. Bruner 2013, Goldman 2011). And this kind of epistemic interdependence is crucial, as seen in §3, if we want to account for the positive epistemic status concerning epistemic responsibility in a plausible way. So we can and need to understand the attainment of responsible belief in terms of our division of epistemic labour.

But there are, of course, different sorts and models of divisions of epistemic labour offered in the literature (e.g. Kitcher 1993, Goldberg 2011, Muldoon

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26 A procedure is socially endorsed when some subject or group of subjects of the knower's epistemic community have undertaken (through time) the positive epistemic work for the endorsement of the community's procedures (i.e. for reasonably judging them to be reliable); see §3.

27 The regulative epistemic project, as Stich says, "tries to say which ways of going about the quest for knowledge [...] are the good ones" (1990, p.1). That is, when engaged in this project, we try to determine legitimate ways of obtaining knowledge. And many historical figures, such as Francis Bacon (e.g. *Novum Organum*), Rene Descartes (e.g. *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*) and John Locke (e.g. *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*), among others, have pursued this project. Moreover, he also correctly says that "those who work in this branch of epistemology are motivated, at least in part, by very practical concerns" (1990, p.2). This is clearly exemplified in the case of the aforementioned philosophers, who, responding to the intellectual crisis of their time, propose reforms to people's epistemic conduct by providing knowledge-yielding procedures. So there is clearly a practical orientation within the regulative project. Indeed, as Robert Roberts and Jay Woods say: "Regulative epistemology is a response to perceived deficiencies in people's epistemic conduct, and thus is strongly practical and social [...]. This kind of epistemology aims to change the (social) world" (2007, p.21).

2013). Here it´s important to distinguish between those cases, firstly, in which one depends epistemically on another subject or a group of subjects (that extends through time within the community) and, secondly, in which one is or is not aware of such dependence. Of course, the most familiar sort of division of epistemic labour, the testimonial case, normally involves dependence on a subject and awareness of it. But, concerning the above social endorsement for responsibility, there is no need for a single subject to do all the epistemic work to reflectively endorse any one procedure and for the knower to be aware that she is relying on someone (see fn.22). In fact, in many cases, it´s very likely that a number of members of the epistemic community collaborate through time in this endeavour28 and the subject isn't aware that she is relying on them. And as seen in §3, it´s not required that epistemic responsibility should be understood as requiring potential nor actual access to reasons by the knower herself to validate the procedures exploited.

This sort of epistemic interdependence entails epistemic anti-individualism, which, in its general form, is the claim that the (positive) epistemic standing of a belief, or some such mental state, depends epistemically on properties and actions other than the knower's (cf. Carter and Palermos 2015, Pritchard 2015b). But, of course, some might not find it plausible to think of this knowledge-relevant responsibility as a requirement that can be satisfied at the social level. This however just seems to be a remnant of the strongly individualist orientation of mainstream (analytical) epistemology (Kitcher 1994, Pritchard 2015b), which has considered the individual subject as the only relevant agent in the attainment of epistemic statuses and which the Cartesian ideal of epistemic autonomy (metaphorically put, that the epistemic agent ought to stand on her own epistemic feet) seems to have helped establish. According to this picture, knowledge, for example, is taken to be an essentially private and personal achievement and so its responsibilist condition needs to be compatible with this. But, since relying on others, as seen, seems to be cognitively fundamental for beings like us (see also Burge 1993, Code 1987), any investigation into human knowledge should be at odds with this Cartesian ideal and its accompanying individualist framework. As Jonathan Kvanvig says, "we

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28 First, it´s likely that, in some cases, no one human could probably do all the work that must be done to fulfil the endorsement (consider the development of scientific or historiagraphic procedures). Second, it´s very likely that no one human actually performs all the cognitive tasks even if they could.

should never begin to think that the deepest epistemological questions concern the isolated intellect" (1992, p.177). 29 A solipsistic human knower is implausible in light of our nature and what we take ourselves to know. In other words, the idea of an isolated, self-sufficient knower is incongruous with the epistemic interdependence of human lives (in all sorts of knowledge-seeking endeavours, not merely complex ones).

Taking epistemic interdependence seriously it's not, as seen, just a matter of expanding our testimonial dependence, it also means recognising the more complex practices of interdependence found in our division of epistemic labour that are not reducible to transmitting knowledge. It is a mistake to take information sharing or transmission as exhausting the forms of epistemic interdependence to which our beliefs are subjected (see e.g. Goldberg 2011, Kallestrup and Pritchard 2013, Pritchard 2015b, Carter and Pritchard 2017). And importantly for our purposes, neglecting the complexity of our epistemic interactions distorts the internalism/externalism debate.

Of course, anti-individualist positions needn´t be incompatible with epistemic internalism (see e.g. Pritchard 2015b). But if our epistemic dependence is not merely limited to the transmission of knowledge (as seen above) and applies also with regard to those epistemic standings (such as epistemic responsibility) where the internalism/externalism debate is at home (as suggested above), epistemic individualism is false. So if we accept and individualist constraint on epistemic internalism, we end up with a position trivially false and so belittling the significance of this debate.

I doubt that the above will convince everyone that there exists the relevant epistemic interdependence for some knowledge-relevant anti-individualist responsibility (and in particular, I doubt that the above verdict about the Norm case will be universally shared—no intuition seems to be so shared, anyway). But here it wasn´t my aim to argue that some such epistemic interdependence with regard to this knowledge-relevant responsibility is actually in place. All I

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29 It's highly desirable not to do so, since "one is reminded here of the attempt to do ethics by beginning with 'desert island' cases; even if such cases are possible, it is absurd to think that we can come to be enlightened about the nature of the moral life we share by focusing on such cases. Just so in the epistemological case: divorcing epistemological concern from the realities of social interaction generates an epistemology built on answers to questions as relevant to the life of the mind as 'desert island' cases alone in ethics" (1992, p.178). See also Sosa 1991, p.190, Welbourne 1986, p.83.

wanted to show here is that it´s plausible that there is some such epistemic interdependence, given that our epistemic interdependence certainly seems to go far beyond testimony, and so that we ought to take it seriously. Indeed, as seen above, this sort of epistemic interdependence seems to be a genuine pervasive phenomenon that many epistemologists are starting to appreciate.30

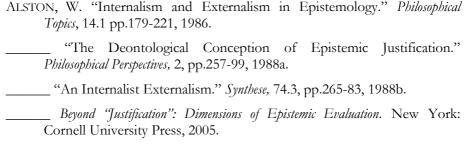## 5. The Internalism/Externalism Debate about Knowledge-Relevant Responsibility

Given all of the above, a liberalization of epistemic internalism about knowledge-relevant responsibility seems called for. More specifically, we should liberalize this internalism by expanding the class of epistemic factors to incorporate those accessible to others: as we said before, those socially accessible. It shouldn´t be confined to factors only accessible to the knower. We have seen no reason to suppose that this confinement is mandatory given that the main motivation for internalism needn´t rely on individualistic commitments (§3). In other words, the access requirement in this accessibilism can be accommodated either at the personal or social level.

Given that no considerations push internalism towards individualism and that the main motivation for internalism can be accommodated in an anti-individualist manner, there is no barrier to stop the liberalization of internalism to be compatible with epistemic anti-individualism. This would be a welcome move given that the Cartesian ideal of epistemic autonomy and its accompanying individualism are both rightly questioned nowadays, given our thorough epistemic interdependence that goes beyond testimony (§4). So if this internalism/externalism debate is to remain interesting, it must evolve accordingly. In other words, if we are to keep this debate interesting (that is, if it isn´t going to be easily resolved one way or the other), we should reformulate internalism in anti-individualistic-friendly terms.

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30 Just as it happens in the moral domain, where philosophers differentiate between personal, shared and collective moral responsibility (see e.g. Smiley 2017), we should also distinguish between different sorts of epistemic responsibility. In fact, some have already started doing it; see e.g. Medina´s (2013) work on shared epistemic responsibility. But what I have offered here is some sort of anti-individualist epistemic responsibility, which further expands our understanding of epistemic responsibility.

Recently, Laurence BonJour, who is, as seen, a pivotal figure in the internalism–externalism debate, wrote about it that "it is far from clear that any real progress has been made towards a resolution. [… Both] the definition of the main positions and the ultimate significance of the dispute seem now, if anything, less clear than they previously appeared to be" (2010, p.33). I agree with BonJour that it´s not clear that real progress on the debate has been achieved. And I put it down to the individualistic approach to which mainstream (analytical) epistemology is subjected. But, as seen, it is nowadays clear that there exists an epistemic interdependence that speaks against such an approach. And in fact we can talk of an anti-individualistic turn in epistemology, which is clearly appreciated in the new and exciting social and feminist epistemologies that have been developed since the end of the 20th century. The internalism/externalism debate still needs to catch-up to this development in order to find again a home in the epistemological landscape. Without it, the debate is rendered uninteresting and remarks such as BonJour´s seem warranted. I suggest then that epistemic internalism about knowledge-relevant responsibility needs refinement in its formulation and not rejection. The case for the rejection of such an internalism remains to be made in a debate that we can still think of as interesting, given that it requires us to further investigate the plausible but not established idea of capturing epistemic responsibility in anti-individualist terms.

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