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How To Account For Externalist and Internalist Intuitions

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Honors Research - Epistemology
Dr. Ann Baker, Advisor
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This paper is dedicated to my parents, Wally and Geri Yehnert, for all the love, confidence, and encouragement they've given me.

A special thanks to Dr. Ann Baker, for advising me on the paper. Her encouragement, enthusiasm and critical commentary created the perfect environment as I worked to first formulate my thoughts, and then worked to further refine them. By allowing me to work through my ideas at my own pace, I was able to utilize my mind to a degree to which I hadn't before utilized it - a truly satisfying experience. Her own work as a professor at Illinois Wesleyan University is an inspiration to me. I am proud to have had the chance to share this experience with her, and call her friend. A thank you also is extended to Dr. Larry Colter for his guidance and of course his proofreading.

In his book *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, Laurence Bonjour criticizes advocates of externalist versions of foundationalism. According to Bonjour, "externalism reflects an inadequate appreciation of the problem at which it is aimed."¹ With this in mind, Bonjour sets out to argue that externalism is not an acceptable theory for the foundationalist to appeal to in his attempt to solve the regress problem. In order to avoid a complete stalemate over doctrine, Bonjour's attempt to argue that externalism is unacceptable proceeds as an appeal to intuition. As such he allows that "although this intuition may not constitute a conclusive objection to the view, it is enough. . . to place the burden of proof squarely on the externalist."² Bonjour's criticism is aimed at the externalist conception of justification. I contend that Bonjour's demand of proof can be met by the externalist. Moreover, as I shall argue, the proper conception of justification involves the use of both internalist and externalist requirements. To establish my contention I shall draw the internalist/externalist distinction with regard to justification and examine the intuitive strengths of each. Having completed these tasks we shall find that a proper epistemology incorporates a level distinction between non-epistemological claims on the first level and epistemological claims on the second level. Justification on the first level, I shall argue, warrants externalist requirements, while justification on the second level warrants internalist requirements.

In the field of epistemology one can be said to possess knowledge only if certain requirements are met. Traditionally, these requirements have been the following,

S is said to know p iff,

- 1) p is the case
- 2) S believes that p
- 3) S's belief that p is adequately justified

It has been one of the main tasks of the epistemologist to elucidate the third requirement. Just what is meant by "adequate justification?" Is it a requirement of the believer, or of the belief? The externalist/internalist debate is centered around these very questions. For the externalist, S's being able to justify the belief that p is inessential to S's having knowledge. On the other hand, Bonjour, an internalist, insists that S be able to justify his/her belief in order to have knowledge.³ The follow-

¹Bonjour, Laurence, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 37.

²Bonjour, p. 37.

³Bonjour, p. 10.

ing example illustrates the distinction between the conceptualization of justification on the part of the externalist and on the part of the internalist.

Suppose that you and your friend are enrolled in a Survey of Asian Art class. Being the studious type you have paid attention in class, and kept up on assignments. Throughout the course you have diligently studied the material and have a firm grasp of it. Your friend, on the other hand, has been altogether too occupied with the good looks of a fellow classmate and hasn't heard a word of lecture. Furthermore your friend hasn't even bought the books for the class, let alone cracked one open. The night before the first exam, and having finished reviewing, you check up on your friend's study. You find that your friend is extremely confused about the time periods of two seemingly identical urns. You repeatedly tell your friend, to no avail, which urn is from which century, failing to explain how it is you can discern the one from the other. As if things couldn't get worse for the poor chum, on the way to class the next day your friend trips and lands on a, unbeknown to anyone, magical rock. The spill leaves your friend with a nasty bump on the head. Now suppose just minutes before the exam is to be administered you finish taking a last glance at your notes and your friend takes a look at the sheet with the two urns on it. You ask your friend which urn is from which century and lo and behold your friend is correct. After the exam you decide to see if your friend was a lucky guesser. You repeatedly question your friend and find that regardless of the order you present pictures of the urns your friend is consistently correct. What has happened, you see, is that the magical rock your friend landed on gave your friend a subconscious awareness of one minute distinguishing factor between the urns which now causes your friend to associate each urn with its correct century. When you both receive your graded exams, you find that both you and your friend received full credit on the urn question. Who has knowledge regarding this matter, you, your friend, both you and your friend, neither you nor your friend?

By the externalist's lights both you and your friend know the fact regarding the urn's origin. According to the internalist however, only you have that knowledge. The externalist contends that because both you and your friend formed a true belief in a reliable fashion, (you through study, your friend through a never failing subconscious mechanism) such that if the belief were not true neither one of you would hold it, both instances constitute knowledge. Unlike the externalist, the internalist looks to each of you for a *reason* justifying your holding your belief. Moreover, what the internalist is ultimately concerned with is an individual's cognitive access to why it is that holding a belief is justified. In other words, the inter-

nalist, beyond asking for your reasons for holding the belief that p, asks for reasons why these reasons are legitimate with regard to your right to think p is true. These reasons for your reasons are spoken of as metajustificiers, since they justify your justification for holding the belief that p. While you can account for your belief on the basis of your study and offer a reason for why studying is a legitimate reason for you to think your belief about the urns is true, your friend is at a complete loss to associate the magical with his/her correct answer and most certainly wouldn't be able to give a reason why the encounter with the magical rock ought to be considered a legitimate belief forming mechanism. As a result, the internalist holds that you have knowledge while your friend does not.

Having laid out the views of the externalist and internalist regarding epistemic justification, we shall now examine BonJour's contention that "externalism reflects an inadequate appreciation of the problem at which it is aimed."⁴ Perhaps BonJour is motivated to make such a claim because of the historical perspective with which he approaches the subject matter. BonJour traces the notion of epistemic justification to Descartes. Descartes, who adopted the approach of believing only that which could not possibly be doubted, according to BonJour, motivated the modern epistemological tradition which "identifies epistemic justification with having a reason, perhaps even a conclusive reason, for thinking that the belief is true."⁵ This being the case, BonJour contends that the externalist has made a break from the tradition, and "rather than offering a competing account of the same concept of epistemic justification. . .has simply changed the subject."⁶ Has the externalist "simply changed the subject?" Given that he is not concerned with S's ability to give reasons for her beliefs he most certainly has. The externalist does not consider the concept of justification as applying to S the believer, but rather to S's belief, a radical change from tradition to be sure. Yet in changing the subject, has the externalist likewise failed to give an adequate appreciation of his subject? The answer to this as we shall see is "not entirely." BonJour is simply mistaken in equating a change in approach with inadequacy of that approach. By labeling it "inadequate" because of its differences, BonJour would have us dismiss the theory altogether. This would be a very hasty decision, however, because, though not entirely correct, externalism is valuable to the field of epistemology. Indeed, it will be demonstrated that by changing the subject, the externalist is able to account for several of our intuitions regarding be-

⁴BonJour, p. 37.

⁵BonJour, forthcoming.

⁶BonJour, forthcoming.

lief. For this reason, we must consider what motivates the externalist to change the subject. Is he simply being ignorant or is there a motivation for his "madness?" When we consider a possible consequence of remaining within the tradition we find that the externalist has a legitimate motivation for making the type of move he does.

By remaining within the tradition, the internalist must contend with the skeptic's criticism that internalism, when taken to its logical conclusion, results in our inability to know anything. Skepticism about S's ability to possess knowledge results as the internalist gets caught in an infinite regress about the justification of the Bp. The skeptic's reasoning is as follows. In an effort to make S accountable for the beliefs he holds, internalism requires that S provide reasons to think S's belief that p is true. Additionally, in order to substantiate S's reasoning, the internalist requires S to provide metajustificatory reasons for thinking his reasons that the belief that p is true are themselves truth conducive. The skeptic argues that, to remain consistent, the internalist must further require S to have a justification for his metajustification and so on *ad infinitum*. In other words, S should be required to have reasons to think that the reasons which justify the reasons to think the belief that p is true, are justified. If the regress is not stopped, notes the skeptic, then S's is obviously never justified in holding the belief that p and therefore never has knowledge. The only way to stop the regress, continues the skeptic, would be to appeal to an unjustified justifier.⁷ However, the internalist cannot appeal to an unjustified justifier without appearing arbitrary, and thus it seems unlikely that S's belief that p can ever be justified. If this is the case, how then, questions the skeptic, can S ever have knowledge about the most empirical of matters, such as S's having a body? Because the externalist is committed to the idea that we do in fact have some knowledge, externalism does not require reasons, let alone metajustificatory reasons, for why S believes p to be true. The skeptical argument against internalism can be viewed as providing a strong motivation for externalism. However, to view externalism merely as a response to the skeptical problem would be to disregard, as we shall see, one of the strongest arguments in favor of externalism. Furthermore, even if the skeptic could be answered, internalism is still presented with the problem that anyone aside from epistemologists does not have knowledge. It is therefore one of the thrusts of this paper to view externalism not merely as a response to the skeptical problem that in-

⁷ Foundationalism does offer unjustified justifiers when appealing to basic beliefs. However, as Bonjour argues in chapter two of The Structure of Empirical Knowledge, (Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1985) there are several problems with an appeal to foundationalism.

ternalism faces, but rather as a theory with its own virtues. The following discussion will demonstrate the intuitive strengths of externalism.

One demonstration of externalism's ability to account for our intuitions where internalism does not, involves its ability to discriminate between instances of varying epistemic value. Consider the following example:

Arnie, Betty, Carla, Dean, Ernie, and Fay are walking around in Epistemic Gardens. When we come upon our flower lovers we find that all six hold the same belief concerning why it is the jaqueminot rose has no thorns, and it so happens that the belief is true. This, however, is where the similarities end. On the one hand, Arnie, Betty, and Carla's belief is formed by a reliable belief forming mechanism such that if the belief were not true, they would not hold it. Dean, Ernie, and Fay, on the other hand, just happen to hold the belief. In other words, their belief is "accidentally true." Listing the groups' epistemic possessions we have:

Arnie, Betty, Carla (Group A)

Dean,Ernie,Fay (Group B)

Truth Truth

Belief Belief

Reliable Belief Forming

No Reliable Belief

Mechanism

Forming Mechanism

According to an internalist stand, Group A and Group B have *equal* epistemic status. Yet, noting that the difference in the groups' epistemic possessions has to do with the reliability of the groups' beliefs, the externalist questions whether or not we would be selling Group A's belief short to equate their epistemic status with the epistemic status of Group B's belief. After some consideration, our answer should be yes, clearly, the epistemic status of Group A is higher than that of Group B. Think of it this way: knowing what you do about why they hold their belief, wouldn't you discount Fay's statement of her belief, yet have confidence in Betty's? The simple fact of the matter is that Fay has no good reason to believe p or not p, while Betty's belief has formed for what appears to be a good reason. Clearly we can conclude that there is a difference in epistemic status of the two groups for the nature of Group A's belief formation is substantial as compared to the nature of Group B's belief formation. By arguing that those in Group A have justified belief and hence, knowledge, the externalist can account for the difference in the groups epistemic status. The internalist cannot. In fact, the most the internalist can say about the difference in epistemic status of the two groups is that members of Group A, though not of a different epistemic status than those in Group B, make better "belief thermometers."

Another demonstration of externalism's ability to account for our intuitions where internalism does not follows from the idea that the reliable belief forming mechanism does create a difference in epistemic status. The externalist contends that our intuition that there is a difference in epistemic status between the beliefs held by Group A and B is unaffected by the fact that neither Betty nor Fay would be able to explain their beliefs. This too appears in line with our intuitions. After all, our measure of confidence has to do with the fact that Betty's belief was formed by a mechanism that we *trust*, not with her ability to enunciate that mechanism. It is natural that we have no confidence in Fay's belief because we realize that she could have just as easily formed the exact opposite belief. Betty, on the other hand, because of her reliable belief forming mechanism, could only hold the true belief. In sum then, our intuitions are leading us to the following notion: group A is of a higher epistemic status than group B, regardless of group A's ability to account for why this is so. Once more, the externalist account of knowledge is in line with our intuitions.

A final intuition that arises out of the Epistemic Gardens case, which demonstrates externalism's ability to account for our intuitions where internalism does not, underlies our preceding intuitions. It is simply that the objective viewpoint has a function in the realm of epistemology. Both our intuitions that Group A is of higher epistemic status than Group B, and our intuition that the awareness of this status by Group A is irrelevant to that group possessing such a status rely upon our intuition that an objective viewpoint has relevance when speaking of others' epistemic status. Such an intuition, in line with externalist accounts of knowledge, is directly at odds with the internalist who denies the value of any viewpoint aside from S's when speaking of the justification of S's beliefs.

In all fairness to Bonjour we must reconsider his argument, for he contends that his view is in line with our intuitions. Bonjour's criticism of the externalist position is in line with our intuitions to a degree. Given instances in which individuals meet externalist conditions, Bonjour questions whether or not these individuals are being epistemically irresponsible to hold their beliefs.⁸ As readers we reflect and conclude that it certainly would be a form of irresponsibility to claim knowledge merely on the basis of reliable belief formation, if one could not account for this mechanism as a reason for why his belief should constitute knowledge. If our friend from the Survey of Asian Art class were to claim that he/she *knew* which urn is from which century, wouldn't you question your friend's logic? After all,

⁸BonJour, p. 42.

your friend can't tell you how he/she knows this. What are his/her reasons? "I just know I know," is all your friend can reply. The fact that you may or may not know about the association between his/her head injury and his/her belief is of no help either (and chances are you wouldn't). And, even if you did know about the association, that doesn't help your friend's ability to make a credible statement of knowledge. The notion of "blind faith" or "gut feeling" that your friend is relying on is worthless when what we're looking for is the "cold hard facts." In this regard, externalism seems to be too weak, for it allows knowledge to be claimed too easily, almost as if it weren't "earned." Bonjour relates these notions of one's "earning" the right to claim to know in terms of his notion of epistemic duty. Bonjour contends that just as we have a moral duty to try to do the right thing to the best of our own reckoning, so too we have an epistemic duty to think the right thing.⁹ Clearly, it seems that our friend is shirking some kind of duty when he/she starts making knowledge claims.

Reviewing our externalist intuitions, we found that when S's belief p is formed by a reliable belief forming mechanism, S's belief is of a higher epistemic status than when the belief that p is accidentally true. This status remains the same regardless of S's ability to account for the mechanism as the cause of the belief. Rather, we noted that the mere fact that the mechanism caused the belief that p was all that mattered. However, given our internalist intuitions we seem to feel that an individual is accountable for his or her ability to claim knowledge. The fact that S's belief was caused by a reliable belief forming mechanism was of no consequence to the internalist's determining whether or not S had knowledge, as S was neither aware of the mechanism nor of its reliability.

I propose that we consider the matter in terms of a levels distinction which incorporates the difference between *non-epistemological* claims and *epistemological* claims. Second level claims are epistemological while all others are first level non-epistemological claims. By recognizing this distinction, we can account for our seemingly contradictory intuitions in such a manner as to require that both externalist and internalist criteria be met. Ultimately, by making just this sort of move we will have a better understanding of the role of justification in epistemology. The difference between non-epistemological and epistemological claims is a distinction about the content of "p" regardless of whether we are speaking of *believing* p, or *justifiably believing* p or even *knowing* p. Non-epistemological claims have as their

⁹BonJour, pp. 44-45.

content representations of states of the world. However, they are not about S's mental states. Conversely, epistemological claims have as their content representations of S's mental states, more accurately S's knowledge states. For example, a non-epistemological claim would be "the sky is blue," while an epistemological claim would be "S knows that the sky is blue."

Synthesizing externalist and internalist requirements is something new in epistemology, to say the least. One approach currently being developed involves what should properly be labeled the "bifurcation of knowledge."¹⁰ According to this theory, an individual S has knowledge in one of two ways. Both require that p be true and that S hold the belief p. A final requirement is met when either S has adequate justification for her belief, where justification is understood to mean "reasons" to believe the belief is likely to be true, or S's belief has been formed by a reliable belief forming mechanism. Such a mechanism can be understood as a type of Humean "hard wiring"—an answer to why it is the way we think the way we do. These types of beliefs are foundational beliefs. They exist only as a small number of basic empirical beliefs. The theory which is internalist about justification, considers this second manner of obtaining knowledge as knowledge possessed without and not requiring justification. It is introduced to account for the belief that there are causes for the formation of beliefs which are not reasons but nevertheless do result in knowledge.

Another approach involves a levels distinction that incorporates the use of internalist and externalist constraints. It is offered by William Alston in his work "Level Confusions in Epistemology."¹¹ What Alston proposes involves a distinction between the first level justification of the belief p which he claims to be internalist, and a second level metajustification of the belief that the belief p is justified which he claims to be externalist. What Alston is claiming is that S is justified in her belief that p if S can provide reasons for thinking that p is true. However, unlike the pure internalist who requires a metajustification from S in terms of reasons for thinking his reasons are justified, Alston allows metajustification to be external to S. The distinction in Alston's theory is at the metajustificatory level—where the internalist requires S to have a cognitive grasp of why her reasons are justified, Alston does not. He is thus externalist in this regard.

¹⁰L. W. Colter, in conversation.

¹¹

What I propose is that the correct distinction to be made between internalism and externalism is unlike both of the above examples. It differs¹² from the first view because that view allows for reliable belief forming mechanisms to account for only a severely limited number of cases in which one can be said to possess knowledge, and it is overall internalist; it differs from Alston's view in that the distinction between levels is made on a different basis than Alston's, i.e., the levels distinguished are different, and the justification on the levels is reversed, i.e. first level justification is externalist while second level justification is internalist.

As mentioned earlier, central to my proposed levels distinction is the distinction between non-epistemological claims and epistemological claims. The distinction is noteworthy because of its great consequence to the discussion of justification in epistemology. In order to begin a discussion of justification that recognizes this distinction it is necessary to further elucidate the difference between what is meant by "non-epistemological" and what is meant by "epistemological". The following example illustrates the difference:

Suppose that Norman, a clairvoyant, comes to believe as a result of his clairvoyance that the President is in New York¹³ (clairvoyance for purposes of this paper will constitute a reliable belief forming mechanism). Suppose, additionally, that Norman is unaware of his clairvoyance and in fact has no good reason, in his own estimation, to believe that the President is in New York. Still, he holds this belief just as firmly as you hold the belief that you are currently reading. What we shall discern from this example is the difference between two possible situations that might arise from Norman's predicament (one of which, we shall later see, is justified by the state of affairs that currently obtains, the other of which is not.) The following is true of both situations: it is true that the President is in New York, Norman holds the belief that the President is in New York, and Norman's belief is formed via a reliable belief forming mechanism. In the first situation Norman asserts "that the President is in New York" while in the second situation Norman asserts "that I know that the President is in New York." Norman's first assertion, "That the President is in New York," is a claim about the belief regarding the President's whereabouts and nothing more. It is therefore merely a non-epistemological claim. By contrast, Norman's second assertion, "I know the President is in

¹² It is not within the purpose of this essay to analyze other approaches to synthesizing externalist and internalist requirements. Colter's and Alston's views are mentioned for the sole purpose of distinguishing my theory from others. They serve only an explicative function.

¹³BonJour, p. 41.

ing non-epistemological claims has shown us that meeting the externalist requirements of a reliable belief forming mechanism is sufficient to justify those claims.

In addition to offering an intuitive account of externalist justification as sufficient for non-epistemological claims, an examination of the inapplicability of "epistemological duty" to non-epistemological claims will show that an individual S need not be aware nor be in a position to become aware of the reasons that holding the non-epistemological belief p brings her closer to the truth, and yet still she can be said to possess knowledge of p. This is so because "epistemological duty" cannot be assigned to the realm of non-epistemological belief. If we examine an analogy between moral philosophy and epistemology we find that the notion of "duty" has no place when talking of an individuals believing p. Consider the following:

Ethics		
Epistemology		
doing the right thing	is analogous to	having true beliefs
doing what is by one's own lights is the right thing	is analogous to	subjective justification
blindly but habitually and discriminately doing the right thing	is analogous to	blindly but habitually and discriminately believing the true thing

What concerns us about the above analogy¹⁵ is the final comparison between ethics and epistemology. In ethics, while one who blindly but habitually and discriminately does the right thing would be described as amoral, her actions would be described as *moral*. Indeed the status of her actions as moral actions remains the same even if she could not become aware of the moral value of her actions. The actions have a moral character independent of the actor. Furthermore, it would seem ridiculous to hold that she ought not perform these moral actions unless she becomes aware of their moral value. However, it is important to realize that unless the performance of her actions becomes or could become a conscious endeavor, she could not claim herself to be a moral actor. By the same token, a person who blindly but habitually believes the true thing ought to be recognized as knowing p, yet be unable to claim herself to be a knower.

¹⁵K. Possin, class lecture.

Let us now examine justification on the second level. Having examined Norman's first situation we found that he does in fact have knowledge of the president's whereabouts. However, in the second situation we find that while he likewise has knowledge of the president's whereabouts; he does not have knowledge that he has such knowledge. His belief that he knows the president is in New York is only accidentally true. In order for Norman to be justified in making his second claim, both of the beliefs identified must meet the requirements of knowledge mentioned earlier. However, because we are now dealing with epistemological claims, the notion of non-accidentally true beliefs requires more than that the belief be formed in a reliable manner. If we recall our discussion of Bonjour's notion of epistemic duty, we found that such a notion did appeal to our intuitions in a limited sense. Although, as I have argued, one cannot be said to have an epistemic duty regarding non-epistemological claims, it does seem that the notion of duty is applicable to epistemological claims. An individual is not prohibited, by some duty, from continuing to believe nor from stating his non-epistemological beliefs; yet he cannot extend this privilege to an epistemological belief regarding his non-epistemological belief. Furthermore, if we recall our analogy to ethics, we can dig deeper into why it is that internalist conditions need be met at the second level. While we concluded that it would be ridiculous that our knower S not perform moral actions unless she becomes aware of their moral value, we also noted that unless the performance of her actions becomes or could become a conscious endeavor, she could not claim herself a moral actor. Likewise, while we concluded that a person who blindly but habitually believes the true thing ought to be recognized as possessing knowledge, that same person ought not be able to claim herself a knower.

Thus far, I have sought to motivate our internalist and externalist intuitions and through an analogy to ethics I have associated internalist intuitions with epistemological claims and externalist intuitions with non-epistemological claims. Additionally, I have proposed that these intuitions ought to be understood as indicative of a levels distinction in epistemology unlike any previously proposed. At this point, my account of justification in epistemology is incomplete as I have yet to answer why it is that one ought to associate externalist requirements with the first level and internalist requirements with the second level.

Examining the second level first, we find that externalism is simply an improper theory to be applied to epistemological claims. The reliable belief forming mechanism which constitutes justification for the externalist does not function when it comes to our knowledge states. Consider what it is to have a belief formed in a reli-

able fashion. Your belief that there are characters on the page before you, for instance, involves a causal relation between the empirical world and your thought processes. It is the absence of this causal relation in the formation of epistemological claims that prevents reliabilism from being an applicable justifier. Furthermore, knowledge claims are the sorts of things we, as cognitive beings, must handle responsibly. Making a knowledge claim without having reasons to think you can is irresponsible. In claiming to know something one asserts a position in relation to the empirical world that is privileged. We ought not claim that privilege without reasons. In sum, at the second level externalism is not a recourse, and internalism is warranted. This being the case we can conclude that we ought to make internalist requirements at the second level of epistemological claims.

Before moving on to the first level of justification, consider the following case which will help illustrate the logic behind drawing the levels distinction in the manner I am arguing. You recently had the good fortune of being invited to your dear friend's home to share in her family's Christmas dinner. You accept the invitation and arrive at your friend's home early morning December 25. When you enter her house you immediately smell a variety of mouth-watering odors. Taking a deep breath, you exclaim to your friend that you can't wait to have a taste of that delicious plum pudding her family is preparing. At this point we must ask ourselves "How is it that you formed this belief given that your friend hasn't mentioned a word of what the meal shall consist?" In answer, we explain your belief that the meal will include plum pudding on the basis of your smelling what you perceive to be plum pudding. We do not explain your statement on the basis of your going through the following sort of cognitive process, upon smelling the belief you a) noted your olfactory senses were stimulated, b) you smelt the odor, c) you considered whether or not smelling was a good indicator of the truth of odors, d) on the basis of a - c, formed the belief that you smelt plum pudding and based your statement on that belief. The only time these thought processes would occur would be if you claimed to know that plum pudding was being prepared. This thought process then becomes what is referenced when you are asked for reasons why it is you think you know p. In drawing the levels distinction in the manner I have argued for, we can account for our basing beliefs on perception, and yet hold individuals accountable for asserting that that they know their perceptions are true.

Shifting our attention to the first level of external justification we observe that the requirements of externalism are less stringent than those of internalism. Non-epistemological beliefs are of a lower order than epistemological beliefs in that they

do not require the same degree of responsibility from S as epistemological beliefs do. S need only hold the belief that p with a degree of conviction (resulting from the fact that the belief was reliably formed) to be in a position to make non-epistemological claims. S ought not be held accountable for her non-epistemological beliefs and in fact, we do not hold S accountable. Consider again, the mechanism for how it is we come to have non-epistemological beliefs. When we perceive empirical objects we form beliefs about them, not as a result of some cognitive process involving our reasons for thinking what we perceive is actual; rather, a causal relation exists between ourselves and the world which results in our forming the belief that p. Our sense perception transduces data and beliefs are formed. The notion of accountability for non-epistemological beliefs is a contrived requirement of internalism which is simply inappropriate. When we require more of S in forming his non-epistemological beliefs, as the internalist does, other than that they be formed reliably, then S just by satisfying externalist requirements does not have knowledge about the empirical world. Were we to insist on internalist requirements for justification only epistemologists acquainted with internalist theory would have knowledge, as only they would be in a position to offer metajustificatory reasons for their belief that p, ordinary individuals would not. Surely, having knowledge is not the privilege of these students of epistemology alone.

In sum, externalist justification is warranted on the first level of empirical claims due to the very nature of how it is we form such claims. To apply internalist requirements at this level, would force us to the absurd conclusion that we do not have knowledge of the empirical world.

Before concluding, it deserves mentioning that the levels distinction as I have drawn it is subject to the same skeptical objection on the second level regarding S's ability to know that S knows, that the internalist is subject to regarding S's ability to know that p. What, then, is the virtue of a levels distinction which requires that externalist requirements be met for the justification of non-epistemological claims and internalist requirements be met for the justification of epistemological claims? The virtue of this distinction lie in the fact that ordinary individuals can be said to possess knowledge. This conclusion is to be favored over the internalist theory which concludes that ordinary individuals do not have knowledge, and over the skeptical conclusion that no individuals have knowledge. Furthermore, to argue that S has knowledge, though S may be unwarranted in claiming S has knowledge, is not "cold comfort." It matters, for instance that Norman knows that the President is in New York even if he can't claim he knows. How is this so? Norman's non-epistemologi-

cal claim, in light of my levels distinction, is justified, whereas by the internalist's lights it is not. Similarly, your claim that there is a piece of paper before you (based on your perception), in light of my levels distinction, is justified, whereas by the internal lights it is not. In finding your's and Norman's non-epistemological claims unjustified, the internalist puts them on a par with the non-epistemological claim that there are twenty purple dancing elephants in front of you. Certainly, there is a difference between your empirical claim that there is a piece of paper in front of you and the empirical claim that there are twenty purple dancing elephants in front of you. The virtue of my theory is that the difference between the two non-epistemological claims mentioned above has been explained.