

KNOWLEDGE AND REASON

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1. Internalist and externalist conceptions of knowledge and reason

As John Skorupski (2010) says, “Perhaps the most pervasive conviction within the Western epistemological tradition is that in order for a person's belief to constitute *knowledge* it is necessary (though not sufficient) that it be justified or warranted or rationally grounded, that the person have an adequate *reason* for accepting it.” Traditionally the question of the role of reason within our knowledge has been taken to be the question whether knowledge is based upon rational principles which are independent of experience and which are grounded in the faculty of Reason. Another traditional issue is whether rational belief can be independent of knowledge, understood as entailing certainty and truth. Contemporary philosophers have, however, tended to concentrate upon an apparently less ambitious question. They are concerned with the role of our concept of reason when we ask such questions as: what are our reasons for believing this or that? In what sense can there be good reasons to believe, and when does having a good reason for believing amount to knowledge? Does knowledge need rest on reasons at all? In this chapter I shall be myself concerned with this more limited question.

If one accepts the traditional definition of knowledge as justified true belief (JTB), there is an obvious link between having (propositional) knowledge and having reasons: one knows that P if and only if one has good, conclusive reasons, for believing truly that P. The concept of reason seems to be coextensive with the concept of justification. Isn't knowledge, as Sellars (1963) famously put it, in “the space of reasons”? There are, however, two opposite ways of understanding this requirement. On the one hand, reasons are such that the subject is able to have access to them, and to articulate them in order to justify his beliefs. Reasons in this sense are typically propositional contents which are available, at least potentially, to a subject. Indeed they seem to be *essentially* reflective and accessible to consciousness: how could one have a reason and be unable to figure out what it? Reasons account in this sense for the normative dimension which is often associated with the concept of knowledge: one is justified in one's if one has the beliefs which one ought to have or if one obeys the relevant epistemic norms. On this internalist reading of the notion of reason, a one has a justified belief only if one attempts to base it upon adequate reasons. This seems to be a requirement for being responsible for one's beliefs. On the other hand, the reasons and justifications of one's beliefs need not be accessible to the subject who has them. Perceptual beliefs, in particular, need not be based on propositional contents to which a subject has access. If for instance at a crossroad there is a large truck coming from your left, that is a reason for you to slow down, although you may have not seen it. In such cases, it is the *fact* that P which gives one a reason to believe that P. In this externalist sense of “reason” the facts relevant for the truth of the belief constitute the reason for it. But it is not a reason which the subject possesses or to which he has access. It is the reason that there is, and the subject need not be aware of it. The same sort of duality affects the notion of evidence. A belief is rational if it is based upon epistemic reasons (otherwise it is held for practical or prudential reasons, it is either irrational or merely practically rational). Epistemic reasons consist typically in the evidence that one

has for one's beliefs and a belief is correct if it is true and based upon appropriate evidence. But like the notion of reason, the notion of evidence can be construed in an internalist sense, as the evidence *that one has*, and in an externalist sense, as the evidence *that there is*, independently from one's awareness of it. The internalist/ externalist opposition about reason and evidence is analogous to the familiar opposition between the internalist and externalist justification, and one main strand in the contemporary epistemological debate consists in determining which concept of justification is the correct one. One of the main arguments in favour of internalism about justification is that it would not make sense to attribute knowledge if the knower could not possibly have access to his reasons and justification and to articulate them. The externalist, however, denies this, and argues that it makes perfect sense to ascribe knowledge to creatures which, like infants and animals, do not have access to their reasons, justifications, or evidence (Bonjour and Sosa 2003).

This debate over internalist and externalist justification is, however, predicated on the basis of the traditional JTB definition of knowledge. But this definition has been seriously challenged since Gettier-type counterexamples (1963) have shown that it is possible to have justified true beliefs which do not amount to knowledge. The common feature of Gettier-type counterexamples are that there can be, by way of epistemic luck, a complete lack of coordination between the truth of a belief and the reasons that justify a subject in holding it (Pritchard 2005). The failure of the JTB analysis of knowledge constitutes a strong argument in favour of the view that knowledge cannot be defined as true belief plus some justification property. On this view it is a primitive, unanalysable mental state, which is not necessarily attached to what Sellars called "the game of asking and giving of reasons". Indeed it seems odd to ask: "What are your reasons for knowing that P?", although it makes sense to ask: "On what grounds can you claim to know that P?" in which case the implicit question is "What are your reasons for believing that P?" When one believes that P, one can have more or less reasons, but when one knows, asking for reasons seems irrelevant. Why is the concept of belief reason-sensitive whereas the concept of knowledge is not? The answer seems simple: "know" is factive (if one knows that P it is the case that P) whereas "believe" is not. When one knows that P, there is no need to evaluate further reasons for believing that P. On the view that knowledge is the most general factive mental state among the class of factive states such as seeing, remembering, noticing or hearing, knowledge has nothing to do with internal reasons. Knowledge is not based on reasons, but it is the other way round: one has reason or a justification to believe that P only if one *knows* that P. The same holds for evidence: one has evidence that P only if one *knows* that P (Williamson 2000, Sutton 2007).

Internalists about knowledge and justification will disagree. For them renouncing altogether the very concept of reason and of justification deprives epistemology from the possibility of accounting for our most entrenched intuitions about knowledge and rationality: how can our beliefs be rational and how can we be held to be responsible for them if we do not make any room for such concepts? Can, for instance, one know that the President is in Washington on the basis of one's clairvoyant powers without having the slightest idea about why one holds such a belief, and can one know something on the basis of a reliable external process while having conscious beliefs which undermine one's present beliefs (Bonjour 1980)? If someone were implanted in his brain, unbeknownst to him, a device to appreciate accurately the room's temperature would he thereby know the temperature (Lehrer 1990)? How can one assess the conflict of intuition between the two views? Many philosophers have felt here that an intermediate position has more chances to be correct. Some epistemologists have held a dual view of knowledge and justification, combining an externalist conception of the one with an internalist conception of the other: knowledge answers externalist requirements which are independent from a subject's introspective access, while justification answers internalist requirements (Alston 1988, Audi 2001). Others have held that externalist

requirements bear on specific kinds of knowledge, such as perceptual knowledge, whereas internalist requirements bear on other kinds of knowledge such as inferential knowledge or knowledge of one's own mental states. Yet others have attempted a "marriage of externalism and internalism" (Goldman 1991) by arguing that one must distinguish two concepts of justification: a belief is "strongly" (externally) justified if and only if it is produced by a reliable process and the belief is not undermined by the agent's current cognitive state, and belief is "weakly" (internally) justified if and only if it is produced by an unreliable process which the agent does not believe to be unreliable. Yet again one can accept a contextualist conception of knowledge ascriptions (DeRose 2009) and argue that although knowledge itself obeys externalist criteria which are not variable, ascriptions of knowledge obey internalist requirements and vary from context to context. Finally, one can attempt to combine internalism and externalism by distinguishing two levels of knowledge: first-order or "animal" knowledge obtained on the basis of reliable beliefs and apt disposition on the one hand, and "reflective" second order knowledge obtained, in a reliable way, on the basis of one's first-order knowledge and including a "perspective" on it (Sosa 2007). But all these compatibilist views, are *prima facie* unconvincing. For what internalists and externalists views alike are supposed to give us, are unified accounts of knowledge and justification: claiming that they diverge or that the meaning of these terms is ambiguous does not help. Similarly if one accepts the idea that there is perceptual knowledge as well as inferential knowledge, one would like to understand in what sense these count both as *knowledge*, hence obey the same criteria. The distinctions between weak and strong justification will not solve the dispute either, since internalists will deny that their criteria of justification are weak whereas the externalist ones are strong. The contextualist move will not help either, for the issue which divides externalists and internalists bears on the nature of knowledge, and not the way it is linguistically ascribed. The animal/ reflective knowledge distinction will not be satisfactory for either party, unless the relations between the two kinds of knowledge are not made more precise.

I shall nevertheless propose a kind of compatibilist answer here, but one which is dominantly externalist.

2. *Knowledge without reasons*

Some reasons for beliefs are merely *prima facie* or *pro tanto*, while others are meant to be conclusive or all things considered (there are indeed interesting parallels here with reasons for action). Reasons for belief, even when they are taken to be conclusive, are never considered to be infallible. In this respect the contemporary conception of knowledge is fallibilist and differs strongly from the traditional one, which was meant to imply the infallibility of knowledge. Thus the Stoics took knowledge to bear infallible marks of truth which could be fully discriminated by a secure criterion. Descartes' clear and distinct ideas were supposed to be marks of infallible knowledge leading to *vera scientia*. Infallibilist conceptions of knowledge do not need reasons and justifications in the *pro tanto* sense. They need reasons which are absolutely grounded. On this foundationalist view, Gettier examples cannot arise, for the justified true beliefs cannot be inferred from false beliefs (in the spirit of Clark's (1963) early "no false lemmas" proposal).

Classical foundationalism does not use the notion of reason or of justification in the contemporary sense. It is basically a modal conception of knowledge, which defines it as the impossibility of error or as the state of someone who *could not have been wrong* (Sosa 2002, Dutant 2010). Something of this modal condition remains present, albeit in an externalist setting, in Nozick's (1981) counterfactual definition of knowledge, according to which one knows that P if and only if

- (i) If P were true, one would believe that P (receptivity)
- (ii) If P were not true one would not believe that P (sensitivity)

There is no trace of the notion of reason or of justification in this purely modal definition. The only requirement is that the subject's belief "tracks" the truth, independently of the perspective or internal point of view that he might have on his beliefs. But Nozick's conditions are notoriously insufficient. In the first place, they do not validate the very intuitive principle of epistemic closure (if one knows that P, and knows that P entails Q, then one knows that Q). In the second place sensitivity faces clear counterexamples such as the following. A grandmother believes that her grandson is well because she sees him and finds him well, but if the grandson had been ill, her family would have convinced her that he is not, to save her the anxiety. Her belief is insensitive: if the son had not been well, she would have still believed that he is, even though she can see that he is so. This seems to show that knowledge cannot be mere tracking of the truth of a belief: it has to be relativised to a way of knowing, to a *method*, or to a *basis* for one's belief. But this threatens to reintroduce the notion of a perspective, or of a point of view from which the belief is apprehended by an agent knows, which would constitute his *reason* for the belief.

Let us call "radical" an account of knowledge which would try to dispense with any independent account of justification and of reasons. Nozick's tracking account (i)-(ii), Goldman's (1967) or Armstrong's (1973) purely causal and reliabilist accounts of knowing, Williamson (2000) and Sutton (2006) "knowledge first" views are radical in this sense. Sosa's (2007) account of knowledge in terms of a weaker condition that receptivity and sensitivity, namely safety from error, is radical in so far as his basic definition is concerned. Sosa defines *safety* as the main condition on knowledge:

- (iii) if one believed P, P would be true

but a more common formulation is that a belief P is safe if the subject S could not easily have been wrong in similar cases (Williamson 2000: 124). Alternatively one can put as a necessary condition for knowledge the absence of luck or of "Gettierised" belief (Pritchard 2005). The notions of safety and of easiness of error, however, are vague, and subject to counterexamples. For instance if a benevolent demon manages to make true everything that you believe, in close counterfactual situations, you would still believe P, although you would hardly count as knowing it. So safety can hardly serve as a necessary and sufficient condition for a non circular definition knowledge. At most it can only be a necessary requirement of a non reductive account of knowledge, which means that it is not independent of our prior understanding of the notion of knowledge (Williamson 2000:100). This why most safety analyses use further notions to characterise knowledge, such as those of reliability, of intellectual virtue, of success from ability, or of perspective (Sosa 2007, Greco 2010)

It turns out, then, that even a radical account of knowledge cannot dispense with notions which, like those of reliability or virtue, which are meant to explain on what knowledge is *based*, on what sources it depends, and what way or method is used to acquire it. Not only beliefs must be safe, or reliable, or immune to error, to be knowledge, but they must be based on the "right" kind of basis, in order to count as knowledge.

It is not enough that there are reasons, evidence or justifications for a belief; there must be an appropriate relation holding between the belief and the reasons for which it is held by the believer, the *basing* relation (Korscz 1997, Alston 2005). That a certain proposition P, logically entails another, Q, is an objective fact and it is a reason for inferring Q from P. But unless someone actually believes that this logical relation holds, and does not base his belief

that Q upon this reason, he cannot be said to be justified in believing that Q. If for instance he believes that P, but believes that Q on the basis of a guess or if his belief that Q results from a stroke, he cannot be said to base his belief that Q upon his belief that P. Or, in a similar terminology, the subject in this case has *propositional* justification for Q, but he does not have *doxastic* justification. The basing, or well-groundedness, relation requires that one has both a propositional justification and a doxastic justification. Thus understood, the basing relation seems to be an internalist requirement: it holds between a belief and the reasons upon which the subjects bases it, and it seems to presuppose that the subject has access to his reasons for believing P on the basis of Q. Could he take these as reasons unless he would be able to regard them as *his* reasons? But the basing requirement can also be read in an externalist sense. A causal theory of justification requires that a belief be caused by the *appropriate* cognitive processes. If the belief is not the product of the right causal chain, it is not properly based (this is the epistemological analogue of the problem of “deviant causal chains” in the philosophy of action). Or, if one operates with the externalist notion of safety, for a given belief, if a belief is obtained on the basis of various dispositions or aptitudes, these must be of the right kind or such that they are able to base the belief in question.

The need for a basing relation holding between beliefs and the reasons upon which they are based shows that a radical theory of knowledge, which would altogether dispense itself with the notion of reason, is doomed to fail. A less radical, and more plausible version of “knowledge first” epistemology, should hold that although we cannot have an understanding of the notions of reason, of justification and of evidence independently from the notion of knowledge, the latter notion is itself hard to understand independently of the former (Williamson 2009:306). The very fact that a number of externalist theories of knowledge (e.g. Plantinga 1993) have been formulated in terms of the notion of *warrant*, rather than in terms of the notion of justification, shows that a notion sufficiently close to the latter is still needed, even when its internalist clothing is removed.

2. *Internal reasons*

It is not the place to settle the dispute between internalism and externalism about epistemic reasons and justification. I shall only grant that the internalist requirements on reasons are well motivated, and that an externalist theory of knowledge has to take them into account anyway. The main motivation for the internalist requirements comes from the fact that the basing relation is naturally construed as a requirement upon the availability of a reason to the person who holds the belief: in order for one to have a reason or a justification in virtue of believing P *on the basis of* a reason R, one must believe that R supports P—because otherwise, one wouldn’t count as basing one’s belief that P upon R. This requirement suggests that, in order to be justified in believing that P, one must infer one’s justification for P from one’s reason R, and have justified believe that R supports P, is often called *inferential internalism* (Leite 2008). Internalism is also motivated by an asymmetry between epistemic and practical reasons. Our practical reasons do not in general depend upon what we know about a situation. For instance that the glass in front of you contains petrol is a reason for you not to drink it, although you may well ignore that fact. In contrast, epistemic reasons are not independent of the knowledge that you may have of them. The facts that can give me a reason to believe that a certain fact obtains must be restricted in some way. For otherwise the only reason that one would have to believe that P could be only the fact that P. This may hold for some beliefs – in particular egocentric beliefs such as “I think”, which is made true by the very fact that I think it and have a reason to think that it is true – but it cannot be the case for most other beliefs, in particular empirical ones. In other words, to use the language of

evidence instead of the language of reasons, there must be a difference between the evidence that one has for believing P and P itself, so that one is evidence *for* the other.

If we accept this very general internalist requirement, what form should take internalist accounts of reason? One can conceive various levels from the weakest to the strongest. At the very least it seems that they must include an awareness of our reasons and an access to them. The access can be only potential, and it need not be conscious. We can require in this sense a mere sensitivity to reasons (in the sense in which Scanlon 1998 talks of “judgment sensitive attitudes”). At a second level, we may require that the reasons be actually accessed, through reflective second-order beliefs. Still, some internalists about reasons think that mere accessibility, actual or potential is not enough. They require not only that the agent has reasons and has access to them, but also that he can be capable of treating them *as* reasons, by being able to argue in favour of them, to deliberate about them, and to defend them against opposing view. As Leite (2008) puts “in order for one to be proceeding acceptably in basing one’s belief upon... reasons, one must believe that those reasons are good, and this latter belief must be responsibly held”. It is only if agents can consider themselves as being active in finding, defending and responding to reasons can they be held responsible for them as persons. This responsibilist conception of reasons is often formulated in individualist terms, but others, such as Brandom (2000) formulate them in explicitly social terms, holding that the “game of asking and giving reasons” is essentially a matter of “keeping score” of normative reasons involved in social practices. These views, however, which put a strong normative weight on the notions of reason and justification, do not imply that this normative weight carries epistemic obligations or duties which an agent would have to obey categorically in order to be justified. The “deontological conception of justification” (Alston 1988) takes this further step and consists in accepting the idea that there are categorical and prescriptive epistemic duties, such as the duty to base one’s belief on evidence. But the traditional doctrine of evidentialism, which is often presented as entailing the existence of such duties and of our being compelled to obey them, need not be formulated in such strong terms (Conee and Feldman 2005).

Whether one adopts a weaker or a stronger conception of internalist reasons, the main objection to this family of conceptions is that they all presuppose inferential internalism, and that this view gives rise to a regress, familiar from the traditional Agrippian trilemma, which one can formulate thus:

Suppose that premise P is justified for subject S, that P entails Q, and that S infers Q from P. Shall we say that Q is not justified for S unless he is also justified in believing that P does entail Q? But if so, shall we not also have to add the requirement that S be justified in believing that if P is true and P entails Q, Q is true, too? A regress impends, and to avoid it we must say that in some cases the mere *existence* of an appropriate relation between premise and conclusion, whether the subject has a justified belief about it or not, enables justification to be transmitted from one to the other (Van Cleve, 1984: 560)

There are various versions of this objection, which is of course reminiscent of Carroll’s (1895) paradox of Achilles and the Tortoise. The objection is that one does not have a justification for believing Q if one has a justified belief P which supports Q; one must also have a justified belief that P supports Q. If this were correct, for every justified belief Q that one has on the basis of P, one would have to have an additional belief that Q is justified on the basis of P (see also Boghossian 2008). But why, if one has a reason (is justified) to believe Q on the basis of P, and recognise that P supports Q, should one have this belief Q on the basis of one’s belief that P *and* of one’s belief that P supports Q? The Carroll regress is engendered because the Tortoise writes down the rule of inference of *modus ponens* as a

propositional premise in the inference leading to the conclusion. But as soon as one realises that the internal reason need not be a further proposition from which one infers the justified belief, the regress is stopped. (Leite 2008)

The regress objection rests upon a wrong construal of the relation between one's beliefs being justified and the reasons which justify it: to have a reason to believe P on the basis of Q, one needs not have an access, even potential, to the conjunctive proposition expressing this reason *P and P supports Q*. It is enough that one infers, justifiably, Q from P. But from where does the justification come if it does not come from one's awareness that P supports Q? Some justifications are immediate, and not lead to the characteristic regress (Pryor 2005).

5. Entitlement and epistemic norms

When one infers a conclusion from a set of premises in a simple inference, or when one perceives an ordinary visual scene, one's justification for the proposition inferred or for the perceptual belief does not rest upon any independent reason to which one has to attend. It is direct and immediate, although it can be defeated, if, for instance, one realises that the lighting conditions are not optimal. In the logical case, our inferring the conclusion is not simply "blind" (Wright 2003). Both in the perceptual and in the logical case, one can be aware of the content of one's cognitive activity without reflecting upon it, and one can be justified in inferring and perceiving without this justification being conclusive. In this case the justification is merely *prima facie*. A number of philosophers (Burge 1993, Peacocke 2004, Wright 2004) have accepted the idea that there can be a kind of *prima facie*, immediate, justification by default, which they call *entitlement*. There are a number of notions of entitlement, and they differ relative to the various kinds of cognitive achievements such as perception, testimony, inference or self-knowledge. But they all purport to capture the idea that there is a positive epistemic status which is intermediate between internal and external justification, but which shares features of both. To be entitled to a perceptual belief or to inferring a conclusion is to have cognitive support, and in this sense a reason, for the belief, although this support can be defeated. But it need mean that one is justified in having the belief, nor that one can access to the content of one's reason (in the perceptual a case we typically do not). When one is entitled to a conclusion, one can be compelled to it, but one need not be certain of it, in the sense in which a number of philosophers have accepted the idea of "primitive certainties" which resist any doubt and undermining (Mulligan 2006). Neither does one need to have access to the source of the entitlement, which, for most cognitive processes, comes from our natural endowments.

Entitlement has some of the characters of internalist reasons, but not all (Cassullo 2007). It gives, like internalist reason, a warrant to the subject to believe something. It implies, like internalist reasons, a form of epistemic evaluation. But unlike internalist reasons, it is merely *prima facie* not meant to give full and complete justification for a belief, especially in the perceptual case where it can be overridden. And it is not associated with access, nor with any second-order reflective belief about one's reasons and their groundedness. Hence it is not committed to the potentially regressive view of inferential internalism.

In general one is entitled to believe something because of the existence of epistemic norms governing belief in general and various kinds of belief in particular, such as these (Pollock and Cruz 1999, Boghossian 2008):

- (i) A belief that *p* is correct if and only if *p* is true
- (ii) A belief that *p* is correct if and only if it is based on sufficient evidence
- (iii) If it perceptually seems to you that *p*, then you are *prima facie* rationally permitted to believe that *p* (*perception*)

(ii) if you are permitted to believe that p and that if p then q , then you are *prima facie* rationally permitted to believe q (*deduction*)

(iii) if you have observed n As which are Gs, then you are *prima facie* rationally permitted to believe q (*induction*)

It would be a mistake to consider that these norms give one *reasons* to believe something in particular circumstances, although they obviously specify the *kind* of reasons that one might have for believing. It would be wrong also to consider that in order to obey these norms, or simply to be sensitive to them, one has to have a conscious access to them and that one needs to infer from them justifications for one's beliefs. This would commit us to an implausible deontological conception of justification and to a kind of inferential internalism leading to the familiar regress. Such normative principles need not be explicitly before the mind of believers, nor do they need to figure in their doxastic deliberations as explicit prescriptions which they would have to follow consciously. Their cognitive status can remain largely implicit. They can nevertheless figure among our reasons to believe in a broad sense. As Pollock and Cruz suggest: "Epistemic norms must be able to appeal directly to our being in perceptual states and need not appeal to our having beliefs to that effect. In other words, there can be "half-doxastic" epistemic connections between beliefs and nondoxastic states that are analogous to the "fully doxastic" connections between beliefs and beliefs that we call 'reasons'. I propose to call the half-doxastic connections 'reasons' as well, but it must be acknowledged that this is stretching our ordinary use of the term 'reason'. "Reasons are always reasons *for* beliefs, but reasons themselves need not be beliefs." (Pollock and Cruz 1999: 88). Even the most general norm for belief, the truth-norm (i) need not imply more than an implicit guidance. A familiar feature of belief is that it is transparent to truth – if one tries to figure out whether to believe that P, the best way to answer this question is to ask oneself whether P. This feature is enough to explain why we are sensitive to the truth norm (Shah 2003, Engel 2010). Although these epistemic norms have been most of the time invoked by internalist, we can understand them in a quasi-externalist sense.

5. *Epistemic compatibilism*

The view suggested here is a form of epistemic compatibilism about knowledge. It combines externalist elements - since it allows a definition of knowledge as ungettierized safe belief, and does not require access - with internalist elements –since beliefs have to be sensitive to reasons and to epistemic norms. It thus seems open to the kind of objections that have often been raised against such views (Berneker 2006). In particular if knowledge is defined, in externalist fashion, as the product of a reliable, safe or virtuous process, and if it is in addition required that the subject has at least a sensitivity to epistemic norms, how can this sensitivity play a genuine role in the possession of knowledge by the subject? Isn't in purely epiphenomenal? Moreover, to be entitled, in whatever sense we can give to the notion, is to have a *prima facie* epistemic right or be in position to know, but it does not amount to knowing. One can argue that entitlement is truth conducive, but it is not factive, and its definition is a weaker epistemic status than knowledge. Indeed the notion of entitlement, or that of warrant, are in general invoked in the context of discussions of scepticism, as the kind of epistemic status which could allow us to rebut the pretensions of the sceptic without falling into his doubts and trapping by adopting a dogmatic conception of knowledge (Wright 2004). The fact that one kind of notion of justification can be more appropriate in answering one kind of epistemological challenge – e.g scepticism – but not another – e.g Gettierisation – has led some epistemologist to propose the idea that there is a set of "epistemic desiderata" each of which can be considered as necessary, but non of which can be said to be sufficient in

evaluating claims of knowledge (Alston 2005). But this kind of pluralistic view, although it reflects the present state of epistemology, cannot be satisfactory. Knowledge is knowledge, and cannot be divided. I have, however, suggested that one can, accept an externalist conception of knowledge, although a non radical one, which is both based on the notion of safety and which accepts a quasi externalist notion of reason and of epistemic normativity (Engel 2007).

One feature, however, of the traditional notion of reason, is resistant to a strong externalist conception: the epistemology of the relation of *being a reason for* and the kind of knowledge that we can have of epistemic reasons and norms seem to be purely *a priori*. Entitlement itself is also, on most views, an *a priori* status. It is inconsistent with the notion of normativity to suppose that normative relations are ultimately purely factual. It is at this point that the classical concerns of the philosophers whom the philosophical tradition has called “rationalists” come back into the picture. Indeed Reason wouldn’t be Reason if it were not, in some sense, “pure” (Bonjour 1996, Peacocke 2004). But we should not assume, here too, that the notion of *a prioricity* is too be understood in purely internalist terms. If there is room for a (quasi) externalist conception of reason and of normativity, then there should also be room for a (quasi) externalist conception of normativity. It is at this at this point that the philosophy of reasons to believe can meet the concerns of classical philosophers for the unity of Reason.

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