

## Epistemic Justification, Normative Guidance, and Knowledge \*

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**Abstract.** Recently, Pascal Engel has defended a version of a compatibilist view in epistemology that combines both an element of externalism and an element of internalism (Engel 2007, 2012). According to this position externalism has to be adopted about knowledge, whereas internalism has to be endorsed concerning epistemic justification. In this paper I argue that considerations that, allegedly, motivates Engel's internalism about epistemic justification, can be explained equally well, or, indeed, even better by a knowledge based externalist account of epistemic justification.

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\*This paper is dedicated to Pascal Engel. I would like to express my gratefulness to Pascal for his teaching and support. His work has made an important impact on me. In particular his Engel 2000, and his Engel 2007 contributed largely to my initiation to analytic philosophy and contemporary epistemology, respectively. The research work that lead to this article was supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) grant number 100015\_131794 (project *Knowledge, Evidence, and Practice*).

## 1. Introduction

Recently, Pascal Engel has defended a version of a compatibilist view in epistemology that combines both an element of externalism and an element of internalism (Engel 2007, 2012). In short, according to this view, *knowledge* has to be characterized in externalist terms, whereas *epistemic justification and rationality* has to be characterized in internalist terms.

The externalist view about knowledge that Engel favours integrates a version of safety account of knowledge that requires that knowledge is safe belief and does not require that a subject has a reflective access to *p* in order for the subject to know that *p* (see Engel 2012 : 8). Where safety requirement (which is not to be conflated with a necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge) that Engel has in mind is one defended by Timothy Williamson. According to Williamson's account of safety "a belief *P* is safe if the subject *S* could not easily been wrong in similar cases" (Williamson 2000 : 124, see Engel 2012 : 4).

The internalist element that Engel aims to accommodate in his account is the view that possession of epistemic reasons has to be understood ultimately in an internalist sense. According to a paradigmatic, or traditional internalism, when a subject is justified in believing that *p*, she has to have some kind of availability or access to reasons *for p*. Engel accords to the traditional internalist understanding that there is an intuitive force in supposing that it is in a sense essential to (epistemic) reasons for (believing in) a proposition that these reasons are available to the subject who possesses them (cf. Engel 2012 : 1, 9). Nevertheless, Engel demonstrates that internalist access requirement is implausible, because it implies a kind of vicious regress of epistemic support. In short the objection goes as follows : first, we acknowledge the following legitimate question - once, you have an access to a reason *r* for a proposition *p*, why shouldn't you also be required to have an access to the support relation that obtains between *r* and *p* in order to be justified in believing that *p*? Then, we observe that the same question can be iterated, and so on *ad infinitum*. But such an access requirement is too demanding, for it seems it cannot stop the vicious regress in a non *ad hoc* way. Hence, the conclusion follows - internalist access requirement is implausible.

Despite the problems of access internalism, Engel thinks that a version of internalism is true. According to Engel, a sort of *sensitivity* to epistemic reasons counts also as possession of epistemic reasons. In Engel's view, this sensitivity to reasons is best understood in a specific internalist (quasi-externalist) way. Engel accepts a broad sense of epistemic reasons. According to this sense, epistemic reasons include epistemic norms (such as the normative principle of

correctness for belief : "A belief that  $p$  is correct if and only if  $p$  is true" (Engel 2012 : 8), for instance). In order to have a reason for a belief, agent has to possess that reason. If epistemic norms are epistemic reasons, then they also have to be possessed by subjects. It seems reasonable to think that in order for an agent to possess  $N$  as a norm, she has to be guided by  $N$ . The internalist element in Engel's account comes from his commitment to a sort of internalism about normative guidance. For Engel seems to assume that the requirement of normative guidance can be understood only as an internalism-compatible requirement (see for instance Engel 2012 : 9).

The aim of the present paper is to argue that while Engel is right to give justice to our intuitions about possession of reasons and normative guidance, he is mistaken in endorsing a quasi-externalist rather than a full blown externalist account of epistemic justification. For, I will argue, *contra* Engel, one can be externalist about knowledge, externalist about justification or rationality, *and* still accept that one has to be guided by a norm in order to possess it as reason. Notably, I will argue that the crucial intuition according to which one has to have some kind of sensitivity to epistemic norms in order to have justified belief can and, indeed should, be accounted in terms of knowledge.

In what follows I will, first, present in more details Engel's view and arguments that he proposes for his compatibilist position. I will, then, argue that a purely externalist account can also explain all the data - the intuitions that Engel puts forwards as main reason for accepting a compatibilist position. More specifically, I will argue that knowledge based account of normative guidance can deal with all the relevant intuitions. Moreover, I will claim that knowledge based account of normative guidance is even more plausible than other accounts. This, in turn, will authorize us to endorse a purely externalist position in epistemology. Third, I will claim, that although this resulting position is not faithful to the letter of Engel's account, it is still faithful to the spirit of Engel's approach, so to say. It is faithful to Engel's approach, for it does not conflict with the kind of rationalism that Engel seems to be favourable to.

## 2. Engel on internalist requirements

In his recent paper on knowledge and reasons (Engel 2012), Pascal Engel has advocated a compatibilist view in epistemology. Engel characterizes the view in the following way :

"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." (Engel 2012 : 8).

In short, the compatibilism that Engel endorses is a conjunction of (i) a version of safety account of knowledge and (ii) a version of internalism about reasons and epistemic norms. In what follows I will be concerned with (ii). Ultimately, I will suggest that there is a plausible externalist account of justification that can deal with the data that Engel takes to support (ii). If I am right, then a full blown externalism is preferable, since it is a unified position in epistemology. Other things being equal, a unified theory should always be preferred, since it is theoretically more simple.

Before considering my argument for a full blown externalism, let's consider, first, Engel's account and motivation for (ii). A crucial element in his internalism is assumption about sensitivity to reasons and to epistemic norms of believers. In short, there is a requirement of sensitivity to reasons and epistemic norms that a subject has to satisfy in order to be justified in her belief, according to this assumption. This sensitivity, according to Engel is to be understood in some kind of internalist terms. Hence, a version of internalism about epistemic justification, namely, what he call "quasi externalism", is true, according to Engel. In the remainder of this section we will specify in more details what is this sensitivity to reasons and how view about justification that is based on it differs from other forms of internalism.

**Engel on access, epistemic reasons, and norms** Traditionally, internalist requirements for epistemic justification have been understood as requirements of a certain kind of access to *that* which justifies one's belief. Namely, an access to one's epistemic reasons or evidence, or justificatory basis. Pacal Engel distinguishes, very usefully, various kinds of traditional internalist understandings of this access requirement. Going from the weakest to the strongest, Engel, distinguishes : (first level) the requirement of "an awareness of our reasons and an access to them", where "the access can be only potential and need not be conscious", and even "mere sensitivity to reasons" would count as access ; (second level) the requirement of actual access to reasons where in order for a subject to have a reason she has to have an actual access to them "through reflective second-order beliefs" ; (third level) the requirement of ability to treat reason as reason, where internalists who endorse this understanding of the access requirement "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." (Engel 2012 : 6).

Engel observes that the main motivation for internalist views comes from the observation that we have to base our beliefs on relevant reasons in order for them to be epistemically justified :

"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*." (Engel 2012 : 5).

At the end of the day, however, neither of the traditional characterizations of access requirement will be accepted by Engel. To the contrary, Engel observes that traditional internalist accounts are all vulnerable to the objection from vicious regress.

The main argument that Engel considers against the views that require accessibility of reasons (of any of the three levels that he has distinguished), is the argument from regress. In short, according to this objection, if we accept the view that one's justificatory basis need to be accessible, then we are engaging in a vicious regress, since we also have to accept that we have to have access to the support relation that obtains between the basis for *p* and *p* itself. And so on *ad infinitum*. Such regress requirement is highly implausible. Therefore, it seems very implausible that we have to have access to the justificatory basis (reasons/evidence) in order to be justified.

Some internalists themselves tend to take this objection seriously and adapt their views in accordance. See for instance Smithies, forthcoming, who restricts his version of access internalism to propositional justification, on pain of implausible consequences of infinite regress for access internalism of doxastic justification<sup>1</sup>. Assessment of whether strategy that is used by Smithies is a plausible is not the aim of the present discussion, though.

<sup>1</sup>Where a propositional justification determines what a subject is justified in believing, independently of whether she actually believes it or not. Whereas doxastic justification concerns her actual beliefs, namely, whether a subject is doxastically justified in believing that *p* depends on whether the subject has propositional justification for *p* and whether she has actually based her belief in *p* on the right grounds. See for more details on this distinction Swain 1979, Korcz 1997 and many others. For the same distinction in a different terminology see the distinction between *ex ante* and *ex post* justification, in Goldman 1979.

Despite the failure of traditional internalist accounts, however, Engel still holds that a version of internalism has to be accepted. He accepts a kind of the internalist requirement without endorsing the internalist understanding of access requirement :

“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.” (Engel 2012 : 5)

According to Engel’s view, there is no requirement of having a reflective or even only conscious access to  $r$  in order to have  $r$  as one’s epistemic reason for  $p$ . One has only to be sensitive to *epistemic norms*, such as truth norm of belief formation, for instance<sup>2</sup>. This is how what Engel labels “internalist requirement on reasons” has to be understood - it is not about (internalist) access to some propositional content, it is rather about subject’s sensitivity to norms that govern belief formation. Hence, Engel states :

“Such normative principles [e.g. as “A belief that  $p$  is correct if and only if  $p$  is true”] 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.” (Engel 2012 : 8).

To resume then, according to Engel’s broad sense of “epistemic reasons”, epistemic norms also count as epistemic reasons. Epistemic norms, however, can remain implicit. That is, it is not required that one has an (internalist) access to them (of first, second or third level sort) in order to possess them. However, their possession is to be understood in internalist terms. For Engel seems to assume that sensitivity to norms is something that only internalism can account for. Hence, a version of internalism has to be accepted, according to Engel.

It is natural, however, to ask what exactly does internalism about sensitivity to epistemic norms means.

<sup>2</sup>Engel presents some of epistemic norms, discussed by a number of philosophers, such as Pollock and Cruz 1999, Boghossian 2008. These norms include, among others the following ones for instance : (Truth norm) “A belief that  $p$  is correct if and only if  $p$  is true”, (Evidence norm) “A belief that  $p$  is correct if and only if it is based on sufficient evidence” (Engel 2012 : 7).

The sensitivity to epistemic norms, as Engel understands it, seems to be characterized by an "implicit guidance" by a norm that a subject has :

"Even the most general norm for belief, the truth-norm (i) [the truth norm of the footnote 1] 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." (Engel 2012 : 8).

The last sentence of the quote may lead to a confusion, if one takes the contrast between "internalist" and "quasi-externalist" to denote mutually exclusive positions. The underlying idea is that we should understand the sensitivity to epistemic norms not in traditional internalist accessibilist terms. It is not required that we have reflective or conscious access to these norms. However, Engel, maintains that implicit guidance is a sort of internalist requirement.

### 3. Internalism, guidance, and knowledge

In the previous section we have seen in some details what Engel's "internalist elements" of his compatibilist view are supposed to be. We have seen that Engel rejects traditional internalist requirement of reflective or conscious access to one's epistemic reasons. We have also seen that Engel advocates a view according to which in order to be justified one has to be sensitive to epistemic norms. The sensitivity in question has not to be understood in reflective or conscious access terms. However, the mere fact that it implies a kind of implicit guidance, makes it, according to Engel, an internalist requirement on epistemic justification.

In this section, I aim to challenge the assumption that implicit normative guidance constitutes an internalist requirement for epistemic justification. My view is that, if there is anything that is genuine implicit guidance by an epistemic norm, then it is fully compatible with the view that all the epistemic reasons (or evidence) that a subject has supervenes the subject's knowledge. Moreover, it seems that there are some reasons to think that a knowledge based account of normative guidance explains best some of the features of normative guidance.

Before we discuss my view, however, we should first consider why one would think that implicit guidance by an epistemic norm should be understood in internalist terms. In order to succeed in this task, it might be useful to ask ourselves what is implicit guidance. But before considering what is implicit guidance, we have to say something more about one central distinction that we have used only in an unspecified way until now. Namely, we have to specify in more detail what exactly internalism and externalism about epistemic justification amounts to.

A common way to distinguish internalism from externalism about epistemic justification in contemporary epistemology is to appeal to *non-factive mental states*. In short, any position that states that epistemic justification a subject has of her beliefs, supervenes on her non-factive mental states, is an internalist theory of epistemic justification. Where by non-factive mental states we understand states that do not entail the truth of their content (see for instance Wedgwood 2002a for this canonical understanding of non-factive mental states). Whereas an externalist theory of epistemic justification is any theory that deny internalism about epistemic justification. We can formulate this distinction more precisely in the following way :

**Internalism about epistemic justification** Necessarily, if two subjects,  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  are internally alike, then  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  are equally alike with respect to what epistemic justification they have for their beliefs. (See, for instance, Bonjour 1999, Audi 2001, 2007, Wedgwood 2002a, Huemer 2001, Conee and Feldman 2004, 2008, Silins 2005).

**Non-factive mental states** Non-factive mental states include beliefs, seemings, apparent experiences, appearings, feelings, imaginings, desires, hopes, wishes, etc. These states have in common that they do not require the truth of their content (see Wedgwood 2002a).

**Externalism about epistemic justification** It is false that necessarily, if two subjects,  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  are internally alike, then  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  are equally alike with respect to what epistemic justification they have for their beliefs.

One sort of externalism about epistemic justification is a view that endorses evidentialism about justification (in short, the view that justification is deter-



mined by one's evidence) and epistemicism about evidence (the view that evidence that one possesses supervenes on one's knowledge)<sup>3</sup>.

**Evidential Epistemicism** Necessarily, if  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  are alike with respect to what they know, then they are alike with respect to what evidence they possess. (Cf. Williamson 2000).<sup>4</sup>

With these precisions in mind we can now turn to the question of normative implicit guidance and its alleged implication of internalism about epistemic justification.

A good place for gaining a deeper insight about Engel's view about implicit normative guidance of epistemic norm is his views about the norm of belief. In short, according to Engel and other so called normativists (e.g. Wedgwood 2002b, Shah 2003, Shah and Velleman 2005), the correctness condition of belief (i.e. the condition that states : "For any P, a belief that P is correct iff P is true" Engel 2013 : 2) constitutes main and unique norm of belief. In a sense the correctness condition is constitutive of belief (see Engel 2013 : 3). This normativist understanding of the correctness condition is expressed by Engel in the following principle :

"(NT) It is the *norm* of belief that one ought to believe that P if and only if P is true." (Engel 2013 : 3)

Normativist accounts of correctness of belief have met various objections. In response, normativists have defended their approach in subsequent work. Pascal Engel has largely contributed to this debate. Our aim, however, is not to enter into this debate here. Such task would take us much further than what we can discuss in the present work. We present the debate about normativism about correctness of belief only as long as it can help us to understand better normative guidance. Which in turn is indispensable for assessing properly Engel's compatibilism.

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<sup>3</sup>In general, in this paper, we treat the question of possession of reasons (which we take to be equivalent to the possession of evidence or justificatory basis) as the question of epistemic justification. This, however, is not precise enough. One could coherently endorse internalism or externalism about justification without endorsing the corresponding view about possession of reasons. For one could think that reasons are not necessary or sufficient for justification. Such position, of course, is incompatible with evidentialism. For our purposes, however, this distinction is not crucial.

<sup>4</sup>Where knowledge does not supervene on one's non-factive mental states. Thanks to Julien Dutant for pointing to me this possibility.

The debate concerning normativism about correctness condition of belief has been partially a debate about normative guidance of epistemic norms. For, a prominent objection against normativism has been relying on the assumption that correctness condition cannot constitute a norm of belief because it cannot guide belief formation (see notably Glüer and Wikforss 2009). In a sense (NT) is, the objection goes, impotent and, hence, cannot be the norm of belief. The argument presupposes that in order for a principle to be a norm for someone, it should be able to guide the subject. Norm has to have, as it was famously put by Peter Railton, a normative force and a normative freedom (Railton 1999, see also Engel 2013 : 8).

Now, as it happens in philosophy, it comes out that it is notoriously difficult to say something uncontroversial and at the same time more substantial than that there is this necessary condition of normative guidance as normative force and freedom for any norm.

Recently, Peter Railton has proposed an insightful analysis of normative guidance (see Railton 2006). In particular, he has distinguished two substantial accounts of normative guidance. Where a substantial account has to identify "mental acts", "states of mind" or "attitudes" that underwrite normative guidance by a norm for a subject (see Railton 2006 : 13). According to one of the two views, the relevant mental *relata* underwriting normative guidance by a norm *N* of a subject *S* is *acceptance* of *N* by *S*, whereas according to the second it is *endorsement* of *N* by *S*. Where accepting is not the same as believing, even though it is ultimately depending on some beliefs (see Railton 2006 : 20), and endorsement has to do more with subject's judgemental rather than psychological part of agency (see Railton 2006 : 23). At the end of the day, however, Railton does not endorse any of these two views as universal characterization of normative guidance. He judges that describing normative guidance as acceptance without identifying which mental *relata* underwrites acceptance is not sufficient for a substantial account of normative guidance (see Railton 2006 : 16). It seems reasonable to Railton that the relevant kind of mental state is not belief (Railton 2006 : 20). Nevertheless, he acknowledges that the relevant states that underwrites norm-acceptance (i.e. normative equivalent to doxastic acceptance), has to be belief-like. A natural candidate according to Railton for such state is endorsement (Railton 2006 : 20). However, Railton also argues that in certain cases it makes sense to describe subjects as not being normatively guided by their judgement, but rather by psychological aspects of their agency, such as their (moral) character for instance (see Railton 2006 : 31). Hence, it seems that endorsement is not the mental state that underwrites normative guidance neither. For, it does not account for all

cases of normative guidance. Instead, Railton proposes to accept a pluralism of mental *relata* that can underwrite normative guidance. In Railton's view, we should abstain from proposing a universal characterization of normative guidance. We should rather accept that what normative guidance is can be best explained "from inside-out", that is, by considering every particular case and every particular agent and her perspective. Hence, according to Railton :

"No privileged attitude—of endorsement, acceptance, or identification—accounts for the role of norms in shaping our lived world and contributing to the reasons for which we act. Humble *internalization* of norms without the self's permission, approval, or identification, like humble acquisition of beliefs without the benefit of judgement or reflection, provides much of our substance as agents."  
(Railton 2006 : 31-32)

Independently of whether Railton is right in rejecting acceptance, endorsement any other unification and universal account of normative guidance, we can observe here one crucial point that seems to be accepted by many within that debate. Namely, in order for a subject to be guided by a norm, she has to internalize it in some way or another. That is, if a special connection between a given norm and central parts of one's agenthood has not been established, it is not the case that the norm guides the subject. It seems that the majority in the debate about normative guidance will accept this point. In difference to others, Railton only thinks that in terms of universal characterizations nothing more can be said about normative guidance. The rest of the picture about normative guidance has to be filled "from inside-out", according to Railton.

Crucially, however, from the fact that normative guidance via internalization of norms supervenes on some mental *relata* it does not follow that internalism about epistemic justification is true. There is no reason to think that the requirement of internalization favours internalism about epistemic justification over externalism. Why should we think that internalization of norms supervenes on one's non-factive mental states? Indeed, if one is willing to grant, as is Railton and Engel with respect to epistemic norms, that normative guidance does not have to be explicit, that is, that an agent in order to be guided by a norm does not have to have reflective or conscious access to the norm, then it seems that there is no other independent reason to think that internalization of norms supervenes on one's non-factive mental states<sup>5</sup>. For

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<sup>5</sup>Of course, I also think that there is no good reason for holding that internalization of norms supervenes on reflective or conscious access to norms. For as Williamson has shown, there is good

it is usually accepted that reflective and conscious access has to be understood in terms of non-factive mental states. And I don't see any other reason that could motivate the view that internalization of norms *has* to supervene on one's non-factive mental states.

It seems that common understanding of the term "internalization of norm" is that of acquisition by a subject of a deeply agenthood-impacting and strong connection between her and a norm. This also seems to be the core of the usage that Railton makes of this term. But acquisition of a deeply agenthood impacting and strong connection between a subject and a norm need not necessarily be underwritten by a non-factive mental state. Hence, it seems that internalization of norms does not imply internalism about epistemic justification or about epistemic reasons.

Moreover, there is a reason to think that normative guidance supervenes on agent's knowledge. For a natural way of explaining what internalization of norms is, is to claim that it is a kind of learning. Surely, it is a special kind of learning, it is learning of norms, but it is learning nevertheless. But a common way to describe what learning is, is to characterize it as a kind of acquisition of knowledge (it is important for what will follow to notice that we don't claim that all acquisition of knowledge is learning). That is, when a subject learns that *p*, then the subject comes to know that *p*. If we are right about these two last assumptions, then it follows that when one internalizes a norm, one comes to know a norm. Therefore, internalization of norms is acquisition of knowledge.

Interestingly, in describing one particular case of an agent acquiring normative guidance by a norm, Railton himself refers to it explicitly as learning. He describes a case of a subject, Felicity, who comes from modest rural region, and has got a scholarship for attending an expensive college in a different region. She believes that her success depends on her being able to overcome her rural manners, and, as states Railton, on her ability to "generally learn to comport herself in accord with the Upper Middle Class Professional norms". Felicity learns the relevant norms and takes them to guide her everyday actions (Railton 2006 : 19). Hence, according to Railton, acquiring normative guidance is, at least in this case, underwritten by learning.

Now, it is important to notice that we allow to classify as learning not only acquisition of beliefs, but also acquisition of certain moral (and other) traits

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reason to think that for any non-trivial mental condition *C*, it is never the case that we can always know that we are in *C*. This applies also to reflective and conscious access. See Williamson 2000, 2007.

of character, for instance. This in turn commits us to the view that there may be different kinds of knowledge, or at least different kinds of acquisition of knowledge. But this assumption does not seem to be theoretically costly. Indeed, it seems plausible, independently of our discussion, to suppose that we can have theoretical knowledge, as well as practical knowledge (often referred to by the term "know-how"), and knowledge of norms<sup>6</sup>. The existence of different sorts of learning and knowledge in turn seems to fit well with Railton's observation about internalization of norms. Namely, it fits well the observation that internalization of norms doesn't involve only the judgemental part of agenthood, but it depends also on psychological part. Knowledge based account of internalization of norms then may provide grounds for a unificatory account of normative guidance.

Furthermore, another reason that speaks in favour of knowledge based account of internalization of norms is that knowledge guarantees the stability aspect that is necessary for normative guidance. It is reasonable to think that normative guidance is stable. That is, when someone is guided by a norm, then she will be guided by it in various contexts. In particular, it is not easy for someone to lose a norm that she has acquired. Hence, a plausible account of internalization of norms has to pay sufficient attention to the stability feature of normative guidance. Knowledge, contrary to many non-factive mental states, possesses the desired stability aspect. In the sense that once someone has a bit of knowledge, she cannot easily lose it, all other things being equal. Hence, it seems that knowledge is the best candidate for guaranteeing the stability feature of normative guidance.

To conclude, internalization of norms does not imply internalism about epistemic justification, at least, as long as one is willing to abandon strong internalist accessibilism. Furthermore, there are also reasons to think that internalization of norms is underwritten by acquisition of knowledge. Hence, there are reasons to think that normative guidance supervenes on knowledge. But if we are right about this point, then it seems that there is no more motivation to endorse a compatibilism of the sort that Engel has proposed. For a more simple and hence theoretically preferable view is a full blown externalism (i.e. externalism about knowledge *and* externalism about justification). Moreover, there is no other plausible competing view (in particular a full blown internalism is not an option). Therefore, we should prefer a full blown externalism.

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<sup>6</sup>Which is not to say that knowledge can be non-propositional. See Williamson and Stanley 2001, Stanley 2011.

#### 4. Conclusion : Knowledge and Rationalism

In this paper we have presented and opposed Engel's comptabilism - the view that externalism has to be adopted about knowledge, whereas internalism has to be endorsed concerning epistemic justification. We have argued, that the main considerations that, allegedly, motivates Engel's internalism about justification, can be explained equally well, or, indeed, even better by a knowledge based externalist account of epistemic justification. The considerations that have motivated Engel to adopt internalism about epistemic justification concern normative guidance aspect of epistemic norms. Engel claims that our belief formation is subjected to epistemic norms. These norms have to be understood as part of subject's epistemic reasons. To have a justified belief, one need to possess epistemic reasons in favour of that belief, in particular, it is not enough that some reasons merely exist in favour of that belief. Possession of epistemic norms by a subject has to be understood in internalist terms, because of the nature of normative guidance, according to Engel. For one has to be guided by the norm in order for her to have that norm. And normative guidance, according to Engel has to be understood in internalist terms. We have shown, however, that there is no conclusive reason for thinking that normative guidance supervenes on one's non-factive mental states (according to paradigmatic statement of internalism about epistemic justification, possession of epistemic reasons supervenes on subject's non factive mental states). Moreover, there are good reasons for thinking that normative guidance supervenes on knowledge. If we are right then there is no independent motivation for Engel's internalism about epistemic justification. This authorise us to conclude that we have better to accept a full blown externalism, rather than compatibilism.

There rests, however, one last possible worry for our argument. A worry that can be also found in Engel 2012. According to this line of worry, a full blown externalism rules out a plausible version of traditional rationalism. In these closing remarks we consider briefly this objection and respond to it. In short, we think that a kind of rationalism is compatible with the knowledge based externalism.

According to a version of rationalism, norms are *a priori* relations. According to some views, having norms is even a prerequisite of agenthood (see Railton's discussion of kantian positions in Railton 2006). What is important for our purposes is that, according to this understanding of norms, norms are not learned. Our central argument against internalist view of normative guidance supposed that norms are learned. We claimed that internali-

zation of norms is learning of norms. But learning is acquisition of knowledge. Hence, to acquire norms is to acquire knowledge. Normative guidance does not supervene on non factive mental states, according to our conclusion, since, knowledge is not a non factive mental state. Now, if norms are not learned, but are rather accessed *a priori*, without any learning, or at least some norms are not learned, then our conclusion doesn't follow, it seems. For learning has nothing to do with having norms according to this picture. One may think that this is the kind of objection that Engel has in mind when he states that : "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" (Engel 2012 : 9).

This objection fails to undermine our argument, however. For our argument can be restated in purely rationalist terms. It suffice to replace learning of norms, by *a priori* knowledge of norms. *A priori* knowledge is not a non factive mental state. Hence, even if norms are prerequisites and are accessed in a *a priori* way, there is no conclusive reason to think that normative guidance supervenes on non factive mental states.

Engel states that :

"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 factual." (Engel 2012 : 9)

Indeed, Engel is right, norms contrast with facts. To say that something ought to be the case, is fundamentally different from saying that something is the case. However, it is not inconsistent with the notion of normativity to suppose that normative relations are known. Only a strongly empiricist externalism would be inconsistent with the notion of normativity, as Engel understands it. Only, an externalism that states that all knowledge comes from learning would be resistant to what Engel calls "the traditional notion of reason". We haven't based our argument on this kind of externalism, however.

Crucially, Engel himself states that the possession of epistemic norms is knowledge of norms, when he claims that "(..) the kind of *knowledge* that we can have of epistemic reasons and norms seem to be purely *a priori*" (*ibid*, my

italics). Engel talks about *a priori* knowledge, but *a priori* knowledge is a kind of knowledge. Hence, there is no reason to suppose that normative guidance supervenes on non factive mental states and not on knowledge, even if a kind of traditional rationalism is true.

We can therefore conclude that we have shown that our argument for a full blown externalism holds. And knowledge based account of normative guidance is compatible with and, indeed, friendly to the rationalist spirit of Engel's approach.

## 5. Références

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