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Entitlement, Opacity, and Connection

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Central to debate over the nature of representational content is the question whether such content can be individuated without essential reference to nonintentional relations between the thinker and the objects or properties represented. Semantic externalism is the view that it cannot be so individuated. Its proponents hold that part of what it is to be a perceptual representation is to bear causal or other sorts of nonrepresentational relations to the relevant subject matter.¹ Semantic internalism denies this claim, and thus insists that a thinker's representational properties, states, and events supervene upon the intrinsic nature of the thinker. Physically type-identical subjects, on this view, necessarily share all the same semantic or representational attributes.

A leading issue in contemporary epistemology concerns the nature of epistemic justification or warrant. Epistemic externalism requires of a justified subject that her belief or beliefs be connected in the right kind of way to truth. According to these theorists, the subjective resources of the believer, though perhaps not wholly irrelevant epistemically, are of derivative importance. The various forms of reliabilism are the most prominent versions of this sort of doctrine. Epistemic internalism, by contrast, typically emphasizes the primacy and significance of that which is available, in some special way, to the believing subject. Here too internalism can be formulated as a supervenience thesis: Two believing subjects who do not differ in those features to which they have special access, in the relevant sense, cannot differ with respect to justification.

There is interesting, philosophically significant overlap and intersection between the semantic and the epistemological debates. It can be approached in different ways. We have argued previously that an adequate theory of justification must be externalist in character. Only thus can the constitutive connection between justification and truth be preserved. But refining epistemic externalism in such a way that it is immune to the most powerful objections requires that one be committed to the truth of semantic externalism. Reliability yields justification

¹ Attention will be confined here to perceptual representational content. While we think that the general externalist view may extend to all types of representation, this restriction will leave us with more than enough to discuss.

only when coupled with the sort of constitutive connection between content and world that semantic externalists have insisted upon.²

Here we take an alternative but complementary approach. We set the semantic and the epistemic debates within a framework structured by two general problems, which we label the 'Connection Problem' and the 'Problem of Opacity' respectively. The former is faced most immediately by internalist doctrines, while the latter is faced most directly by externalist doctrines. What is needed, and what we aim to provide, is an overall theory that combines both semantic and epistemic elements, and which steers a middle path between the general problems. The Connection Problem concerns the question of how a thinking subject relates to the outside world. In its semantic guise this is the problem of explaining how representation is possible. It is a potentially serious difficulty for semantic internalism to explain this possibility, given that it denies any essential connection between representation and that which is represented. Semantic externalism does not face this difficulty, given its insistence on just such an essential connection.

In an epistemological context it is the problem of how justification relates to truth. There are reasons for thinking that the relation is a constitutive one. The Connection Problem is a special problem for epistemic internalism, given that proponents of the view deny the necessity of any real connection between justification and truth. Epistemic externalists do not face this difficulty, inasmuch as they require (by definition) such a connection for justification.

The Problem of Opacity concerns the question of how a cognitive subject relates to herself. Here it is versions of externalism that appear to be on the defensive. In the semantic debate this is the problem of explaining how we know our own thought contents. For most or all versions of semantic internalism, the nature of content is taken to be transparent, in some strong sense or other, to the thinking subject. There would thus appear to be no special difficulty concerning access to such content. Semantic externalism, by contrast, insists upon a possible—and very often actual—gap between individual conceptions and the actual concepts with which one thinks. It is thus at least *prima facie* difficult to see how such a view can account for the authority with which we know our thoughts, or the privileged sort of access we have to them.

In the epistemic realm the Problem of Opacity appears as the problem of explaining how justification relates to that which is subjectively accessible. Again, internalists appear to be relatively well off here. For it is precisely endorsement of the claim that that which justifies one is and must be subjectively accessible, in some way or other, and on most versions of the view, which qualifies one as an epistemic internalist. Externalists, on the other hand, have not typically required any particular positive contribution from the subjective resources of a thinker to her epistemic status. What matters is reliability. It is therefore a problem for

² Majors and Sawyer 2005. The argument of that paper owes a great deal to Burge 2003a.

such theorists to explain how that which constitutes, or contributes to, epistemic standing can be outside the thinker's ken.

The key to unifying the debates, and to providing an adequate and principled solution to the problems, we shall argue, lies in Tyler Burge's notion of entitlement. An entitlement is an epistemic right possession of which does not consist in having reasons, or indeed in anything which is specially accessible to the believing subject. This notion is part of a more general rationalist conception of the way in which norms function to govern our cognitive (and perhaps practical) activity. After looking at the Connection Problem and the Problem of Opacity in more depth, we turn to the task of explaining how the notion of entitlement—or the more general view of norms that supports it—promises to illuminate and, in the end, provide the solution to the two problems. In the concluding section we suggest briefly that the strategy employed here has application as well to the pair of internalism/externalism distinctions within moral philosophy.

Throughout the discussion our aim is breadth rather than depth. By treating the relevant issues from a high level of abstraction, we inevitably skate over details that mark out particular theories; but in so doing we hope to make visible the central interconnections between the various forms of internalism and externalism.

1. THE CONNECTION PROBLEM

The Connection Problem is the problem of how the world and the subject relate. Within the theory of content it manifests itself as a challenge to internalism to explain how representation of an independent, objective subject matter is so much as possible, in the absence of any necessary or constitutive connection between that which is represented and the representational states of the thinking subject. As indicated above, *semantic externalists* face no special challenge here, because of their insistence upon precisely such a connection.³

For the *semantic internalist*, all of a subject's representational states and events could have been exactly as they are, even if she had never been in causal contact with any of the objects or properties that the states and events designate. If thought and reference are determinate, then, it must be the case that an individual's own nonrelationally specified cognitive resources—her phenomenology, so-called 'narrow' descriptions of entities she is disposed to offer, and so on—suffice in themselves to specify the referents of her terms and concepts, as well as the way in which she thinks of these referents. This must be the case if there is no necessary connection between world and thought.⁴

³ Classic externalist works include Putnam 1975; Burge 1979, 1986. Of course, Putnam is not in this early paper an externalist about mental content. But he came to embrace the view.

⁴ Versions of semantic internalism—we include two-factor theories under this general rubric—are defended by Dennett 1983; Fodor 1987; Loar 1988; and Segal 2000.

It is quite dubious, however, whether this set of ideas is so much as coherent. Set aside for the present the many thought experiments which are widely thought to refute semantic internalism. There are more basic conceptual reasons for thinking that the internalist's picture of the relation between world and mind is radically mistaken.⁵ Suppose that a subject represents something, under a certain mode of presentation, as being a certain way. Perhaps she thinks that water is wet. If internalism is correct then something about the subject's own cognitive resources must make it the case that her representation is indeed of water, rather than something else. But now suppose that there is a liquid, *twater*, which the subject cannot discriminate from water. The crucial question for the semantic internalist is this: What makes it the case that our subject is thinking about water rather than *twater*? Since, by hypothesis, the subject cannot discriminate between the two liquids, and since internalism is committed to there being something in a thinker's cognitive repertoire that accounts for all the facts of representation, there appear to be only two options. Either the internalist admits that such a thinker does not in fact represent water rather than *twater*, or she denies the possibility of the sort of indistinguishability we have been describing.

Neither move is plausible pre-theoretically. We take the latter to be obviously untenable. So far from being impossible, there are actual cases of such indistinguishability. Jadeite and nephrite provide one example. And the former gives up altogether on the idea of objective reference. A thought about water is not a thought about the infinitely many possible liquids which are superficially indistinguishable from water. It is about water. Representation is representation *as such*.

A related point is that this internalist move makes a fundamental error about the *function* of representation. In all minded animals, nonhuman as well as human, representational systems evolved to allow the organism to deal with its environment. The environment, in every case, contains particular kinds of things. Our environment, for example, contains water but not *twater*. Thought has a representational function in presenting truth. It is not true that our environment contains *twater*. It is implausible, therefore, that in everyday thoughts ascribed with 'water' in oblique position, we represent *twater*—or any of the infinitely many other distinct liquids superficially indiscernible from water.⁶

Semantic internalism is thus poorly placed to solve the Connection Problem. If there were no necessary or constitutive connection between world and mind, thinkers would be unable to represent objects and properties in the world as such. The Connection Problem does not arise for semantic externalism. The reason our subject thinks about water rather than *twater*, for the externalist, is that she has been in causal contact with (or bears some other relevant nonintentional relation to) water, but not *twater*. On this view, which was the dominant one

⁵ For reasons not mentioned here see Sawyer (forthcoming).

⁶ Most of these points against internalism have been stressed by Burge. See, among other papers, his 2003a, 2003b.

in philosophy until Descartes's reorientation, thought is not independent of the way the world is.⁷

There is an important Connection Problem for *epistemic internalists* as well. This is the problem how justification or warrant relates to truth. There are strong reasons—conclusive reasons, in our view—for thinking that the two are essentially or constitutively connected. We will mention two of them. First, this relation to truth is at least a large part of what distinguishes epistemic from other sorts of justification, such as moral or prudential justification. If a consideration does not bear in any way on the truth of a content, then it does not provide epistemic warrant for belief in that content. Second, it is a commonplace that belief aims at truth. Truth provides the representational norm for the propositional attitude of belief. Justification, or warrant, is a property of belief, and provides its epistemic norm. It plausibly accrues to a particular belief only insofar as the latter is well placed to achieve its representational norm of truth. This is because belief's primary epistemic norm is a measure of how well an organism is doing, given its capacities and limitations, with respect to its function of accurately representing the world. But its representative function just is to present truth. Any adequate account of epistemic justification or warrant must therefore respect the constitutive connection between epistemic norms and truth.⁸

Epistemic internalism is, roughly, the doctrine that justification supervenes upon the subjective resources of the believer, or that to which the believer has special access. Some versions require that a justified subject have, and base her belief on, reasons; others that she have evidence, and base her belief on it; still others merely—for perceptual belief, anyway—that her belief be based on the relevant sort of experience. Many versions require only that a subject be acting, in forming her belief or making a judgement, in an epistemically responsible manner.⁹ The problem for internalism is that none of these conditions suffices to place belief in the necessary relation to truth, the relation claimed above to amount to fulfillment of belief's central epistemic norm. The reason for this is that a believer's subjective resources, or those things to which she has special access, do not in general, and taken by themselves, suffice to put her in an objective relation to truth.

Basing one's belief that *p* upon reasons is insufficient for justification. The reasons might be quite poor. They may have no tendency whatever to show that *p* is true. It is not open to the internalist, furthermore, to require that one base

⁷ Actually it is not at all clear that Descartes himself was a semantic internalist; see Burge 2003c. Nevertheless he did inaugurate the internalist tradition, both in philosophy of language and mind, and in epistemology.

⁸ Cf. Burge 2003a: s. I.

⁹ Versions of epistemic internalism, all of which combine one or more of the elements we have separated out here, are put forward by Bonjour 1985; Feldman and Conee 1985; Moser 1985; Steup 1988; and Pryor 2000.

one's belief on *good* reasons. For either one can specify what counts as 'good' without invoking alethic considerations, or one cannot. If one can, then having good reasons will not suffice to put a (putatively) justified believer in the requisite relation to truth. And if one cannot, then the view will have lost its qualifications as internalist, inasmuch as a relation to truth is required, after all, for justification.

It is important to notice that requiring that a subject *believe* her reasons to be truth-conducive is inadequate. This is for two reasons. First, it makes higher-order cognitive capacities—the ability to think about reasons, beliefs, truth—essential to having justified beliefs. It is neither philosophically nor empirically plausible that this is the case. Second, it is widely acknowledged in the contemporary literature that epistemic responsibility is insufficient for justification.¹⁰ But being epistemically responsible just is believing on the basis of what one takes to be truth-conducive reasons.

It is worth taking a moment to reflect here. While many today, including some internalists, acknowledge that epistemic responsibility is insufficient for justification, no internalist to date has offered an adequate explanation of why this is the case. We think that the explanation lies in the constitutive connection between justification and truth. To have an epistemically justified belief is to have a belief that is well placed to achieve the representational norm for propositional attitude content—truth. But being epistemically responsible does not suffice for being thus well placed. This is because one's cognitive or perceptual faculties, including one's ability to reason, might be seriously defective. This would certainly affect, in a negative fashion, one's ability to form true beliefs. But one might nevertheless be doing as well as could reasonably be expected, given one's circumstances. Therefore one could be as epistemically responsible as possible and still be in a poor position to achieve truth, even in one's normal environment. This is why epistemic responsibility does not suffice for justification.

If this explanation is correct then epistemic internalism is inherently problematic. This is not because all versions of internalism require only epistemic responsibility for justification. Many versions do not focus on the notion of responsibility. But the explanation offered above appeals to an objective sort of connection between justification and truth that the internalist cannot countenance. Offering a detailed defense of the explanation and its constituent claims is not our purpose here. What we do wish to emphasize is the need for internalists to explain why epistemic responsibility does not suffice for justification. Mere acknowledgement of the fact is not enough. We think that epistemic internalism, at least as classically conceived, cannot survive recognition of the fact that epistemic responsibility is insufficient for justification.

The same basic problem afflicts views that require for justification only that one's belief be based upon evidence, or perceptual experience. Justification

¹⁰ See Plantinga 1993: chs. 1 and 2; and also Pryor 2001: 112–14. Pryor's paper contains additional relevant bibliographic information.

requires that one be connected in the right sort of way to truth. But having evidence, or perceptual experiences, does not suffice to put one into any objective relation to truth. This is because the evidence could be poor, or radically misleading; and the perceptual experience might be wildly inappropriate to that which causes it. Again, while it might be the case that requiring that the evidence be good, or the perceptual experience appropriate, suffices to overcome this difficulty—and thus to put one into the right sort of connection to truth—this is not a move open to the epistemic internalist. For what it is to be 'good,' or 'appropriate,' in the relevant senses, is to link up in the right sort of way to truth. To require such a link is precisely to abandon internalism.

We think that these facts about justification have been obscured by a fallacious line of reasoning. It is quite tempting to argue as follows: My recently envatted twin and I are both justified in many of our perceptual beliefs; but she is almost completely unreliable in forming such beliefs; therefore justification cannot require any objective connection with truth. We have called this the 'Internalist Fallacy' (2005: 268). It is a fallacy because requiring of justified belief an objective connection with truth does not imply that one's belief-forming mechanisms must be reliable in any environment into which one might be placed. No relevant belief-forming mechanism is reliable in all possible worlds. Some proper subset of these worlds must be privileged. The challenge to the theorist of justification is to say which subset is crucial for justification.

Needless to say, the various forms of *epistemic externalism* do not suffer from the Connection Problem; for they require reliability, of one form or another, for justification.¹¹ They do, however, face the Problem of Opacity, to which we now turn.

2. THE PROBLEM OF OPACITY

The Problem of Opacity concerns how the cognitive subject relates to herself. In the semantic realm it takes the form of the problem of accounting for our knowledge of our own thoughts, in particular their intentional contents. It has been common at least since Descartes to hold that one's knowledge of one's own thoughts is special, in at least two ways. It is authoritative, since there are definite limitations on the sorts of errors that one can make.¹² There are no such limitations with respect to one's knowledge of the empirical world. Further, one appears to have a privileged kind of access to one's own thoughts. One does not normally have to observe one's behavior in order to know what one thinks. One can simply reflect on the matter. One's knowledge of the contentful mental states of others, by contrast, has almost always been taken to be necessarily based upon behavior.

¹¹ Forms of epistemic externalism are defended by Goldman 1986; Sosa 1991; and Burge 2003a.

¹² See Burge 1988, in particular the discussion of brute error at 657 ff.

It is widely held that there is a special problem for *semantic externalism* here. This view, as noted, holds that what determines the nature of thoughts about an extensive range of entities and properties lies partly outside the thinking individual's own physical make-up and discriminatory abilities. It implies that two physically and phenomenologically (intrinsically) indistinguishable thinkers can differ with respect to their intentional mental states, given the appropriate sorts of variation in the relevant speech communities or physical environments. But if what determines the nature of one's thoughts is often not something accessible, in the relevant respect, to the thinking subject herself, then the special nature of our knowledge of our own thought contents seems to be put in jeopardy. It is thought to be unclear how, on the externalist conception, knowledge of one's own thoughts can be authoritative in the sense mentioned above. For one is not authoritative about the external determinants of these thoughts. And it is often claimed to be mysterious how one could have the sort of privileged access to one's thoughts that much of philosophical tradition has thought to obtain, given that one's access to that which partly determines the nature of one's thoughts does not have this sort of privilege. Externalism appears to make thought content opaque to the thinker.

It is sometimes taken for granted that *semantic internalism* does not face the Problem of Opacity. For this view is precisely the denial that anything outside the milieu of the subject herself can be relevant to determining the contents of her thoughts. But matters are not nearly so straightforward. For one thing, internalism is often formulated as a local supervenience thesis: No difference in thought content without a difference in intrinsic physical properties. But one does not have any special authority over, or any privileged access to, one's intrinsic physical properties. A more important problem is that no viable internalist model of self-knowledge has ever been offered. There are very serious difficulties facing any attempt to construct such a view.¹³ So it may be granted that the Problem of Opacity is particularly urgent, at least at first glance, for the semantic externalist; but until a coherent internalist model of self-knowledge is made available, the internalist herself has a good deal of work to do here.

Epistemic externalism also faces the Problem of Opacity. Here the difficulty is understanding how a subject's belief can be justified or warranted when the subject herself has no reasons supporting the belief. More generally, it is the problem of explaining how elements outside of a thinker's ken can make it the case that her beliefs are justified. The problem is at its starkest for pure reliabilism, the view that all that is required for epistemic justification is the reliability of one's belief-forming processes. Cases in the literature show that pure reliability is neither necessary nor sufficient for epistemic justification.¹⁴ It is not necessary, because one's recently envatted twin presumably shares one's epistemic status

¹³ See e.g. the discussions in Burge 1988 and Davidson 1987.

¹⁴ See for example Bonjour 1985: ch. 3.

with respect to perceptual beliefs; but she is almost completely unreliable with respect to such beliefs. It is not sufficient, because one can imagine a case in which things are set up in such a way that beliefs about a given subject matter simply pop into one's head, as it were. It may be the case that one is completely reliable about the subject matter; perhaps a meddling super-scientist sees to it that one is always right. Nevertheless one is intuitively not justified with respect to these beliefs. In each case the problem for pure reliabilism is that putatively epistemic elements which are opaque to the believing subject appear not to make the relevant sort of epistemic difference (or perhaps any epistemic difference at all). Whether these objections apply to other forms of reliabilism depends upon the details.

Epistemic internalism, at least as classically conceived, does not face the Problem of Opacity. For it is precisely the view that only elements within one's ken make an epistemic difference. Some recent forms of internalism bear little obvious relation to the classical version, of course, and so it should perhaps be left open whether they might not face a version of the problem. But we will not pursue the matter here.

We have not attempted to conduct a dispassionate survey of the various problems facing internalist and externalist accounts of content and justification. The reader will see where our sympathies lie. And we have looked only at those problems which seem to us most basic, and (relatedly) which are most important in seeing how the two internalism/externalism controversies intersect. Of the two problems we have discussed, the Connection Problem is the most fundamental. Only if it is solved will a theorist have accounted for the *very possibility* of representational content, in the semantic realm, or of epistemic justification, in the epistemic realm. The Problem of Opacity concerns how a subject relates to her representational contents, or, in the epistemic realm, how that which is accessible to a subject bears on her epistemic status. Without the relevant sort of connection to the world in either case there can be no such thing as representational content, on the one hand, or epistemic justification, on the other. Consequently there can be no problem of explaining how a subject's own perspective relates to these things.

This means that externalism, both semantic and epistemic, is at a clear dialectical advantage. Only the semantic externalist, we believe, has any chance at all of accounting for the possibility of representational content; and only the epistemic externalist has any chance of accounting for epistemic justification. Problems of opacity are certainly important; but they arise only secondarily.

3. ENTITLEMENT

We have said that we take Burge's notion of entitlement—or, better, the objectivist conception of norms which underlies it—to be the key to solving the two problems. We hold in addition that reflection upon the issues raised by

this conception points the way toward an illuminating general framework for understanding the ways in which the two internalism/externalism controversies interact and impact one another. It is the business of this section to explain these claims in more detail.

We begin by distinguishing the notion of entitlement we will be employing from the various other conceptions which have appeared in the literature in recent years. The term 'entitlement' is used in a number of distinct, even incompatible ways. One must be careful to understand what precisely is the property or relation that a given thinker associates with it, lest confusion arise. Discussion of the ways in which these alternative conceptions fall short of grounding the genuinely epistemic property we are interested in also leads naturally to consideration of the way in which our view handles the Connection Problem.

Conceptions of entitlement are most naturally divided into those which purport to be epistemic—and thus to relate the believing subject to truth, in some way or other—and those which do not. While we do not take seriously conceptions of entitlement which are not epistemic, they are mentioned here for the sake of orientation and completeness.

Paul Boghossian has employed a conception of warrant, which he sometimes calls 'entitlement', that does not require the possession of reasons or a rationale on the part of the believing subject (Boghossian 2000, 2003). His primary concern is with our justification for using basic rules of inference. Familiar Carrollian and Quinean considerations suggest that our most fundamental and basic patterns of deductive inference cannot themselves be deductively justified. It is obscure, furthermore, how there could be an inductive (or even abductive) justification for our use of them. Yet we are intuitively justified in such use.

Boghossian's idea, the main elements of which he takes from earlier work by Christopher Peacocke (1992), is that we need not possess a classical internalist sort of justification for such practice, if the practice bears the right sort of intimate relation to possession of the concepts involved in reasoning. More specifically, one is entitled to a given pattern of inference if employment of that pattern is constitutive of possessing the associated concepts, concepts we necessarily employ in reasoning.

What I am urging is that that entitlement is precisely what flows naturally from a conceptual-role account of the meanings of our logical words. . . [that] our problem about our entitlement to employ a rule of inference reduces to that problem [of what makes a rule meaning constituting], a problem that any conceptual-role semantics faces. (Boghossian 2000: 250)

There is more wrong with this line of thought than we have the space to go into here.¹⁵ The central problem is that the fact—if indeed it is a fact—that we must employ certain patterns of inference in order to possess the relevant concepts in

¹⁵ Two further problems: It is highly questionable whether conceptual-role accounts of meaning and content, for whatever sorts of terms or concepts, are defensible; and it is doubtful whether there are many (or even any) concepts the mere possession of which requires that one be disposed

no way shows that we are epistemically warranted in such employment. Epistemic warrant bears an essential and constitutive connection to truth. An epistemically warranted belief must be well placed, in some sense to be specified, to achieve belief's representational norm of truth. An epistemically warranted deductive practice must be well placed to achieve the preservation of truth. But being forced, by the nature of the concepts involved, to engage in a given practice in no way shows that the practice leads, or even is likely to lead, to the preservation of truth. It can at most show that one is not being epistemically irresponsible in engaging in the practice. And epistemic responsibility, as we have already argued, and as is now widely recognized, is quite insufficient for epistemic warrant.¹⁶

More or less the same holds for several other recent accounts of entitlement, including those by Fred Dretske, Crispin Wright, and Martin Davies. Dretske follows Burge in taking an entitlement to be an epistemic right that does not require the possession of reasons.¹⁷ But his explanation of why we are entitled to the relevant range of beliefs has nothing to do with truth. Dretske is impressed by the fact that many of our perceptual beliefs are formed spontaneously and automatically. They are not under our control. He infers from this that we are blameless in holding them, despite the fact that we have no reasons for them, and can offer no relevant rationale. A conception of warrant on which being warranted does not entail being well placed to achieve belief's representational norm, truth, is simply not epistemic. It can have nothing directly to do with epistemic warrant or justification.

Wright has developed several ostensible conceptions of epistemic entitlement (2004a, 2004b). He thinks that when we act in accordance with certain dominant practical strategies; when we accept propositions which are fundamental to developing important cognitive projects; when we accept that which is indispensable to decision making and acting; and when we accept that without which no sense can be made of our enquiries as investigations into an objective subject matter—we are entitled to do so despite our lack of justification in the traditional sense. As these descriptions of the conceptions indicate, it is the apparent fact that without acting or accepting in the ways in question we cannot engage in cognitively and practically fundamental projects that, for Wright, warrants our so acting and accepting. But again, none of this has anything to do with truth. It is easy to imagine creatures who cannot but judge and behave in certain

to make certain specific inferences. On these points see especially Burge 1986 and Peacocke 2004: s. 6.2. Cf. also Williamson 2003.

¹⁶ In related work Boghossian explicitly affirms that his topic is justification in the sense of epistemic responsibility, despite the fact that mainstream epistemology largely rejects the view; see Boghossian 2002: 40–1. He does not discuss any of the reasons for this rejection. Wright 2002: 60–1 follows him here, which partially accounts for the problems with Wright's view of entitlement mentioned below. The general difficulty is mentioned by Williamson 2003: 250.

¹⁷ In his 2000, M. Williams takes Dretske to mean by 'entitlement' R. Brandom's notion (briefly discussed below); this despite the fact that Dretske explicitly claims to be following Burge's very different understanding. The error renders much of Williams's critique impotent.

ways—and who, consequently, must so judge and behave in order to carry out their cognitive projects—but who are nevertheless so poorly adapted to their normal environments, and who reason so poorly, that they completely lack epistemic warrant. Wright's various conceptions of entitlement do not therefore have any epistemic relevance.¹⁸

Davies is sensitive to some of the problems in Wright, and he has tried to salvage what he can by developing a notion of negative entitlement. For Davies the notion of epistemic warrant is closely tied to that of cognitive achievement. He thinks that there are entitlements which are not warrants, because they do not stem from any achievement on the part of the believing subject. We are entitled, more specifically, not to doubt those propositions which we lack antecedent reason or warrant for doubting.¹⁹ The problem with this is that the mere fact that we lack reasons for calling into question a certain belief or judgement by no means shows that we have an epistemic right to it. Here is one way to make the point: Either we have epistemic warrant, in the first place, for the belief or judgement, or we do not. If we do, then whatever grounds the warrant is the source of our epistemic right—not the fact that we lack reasons for doubting it. If we do not, then we have no right to the belief or judgement in the first place, and the fact that we have no articulable grounds for doubting it is wholly beside the point. Like appeals to judgement-patterns which partially constitute the possession of certain concepts, and to cognitive behavior which is not epistemically irresponsible, or that we cannot avoid, Davies's conception does not connect the relevant beliefs or cognitive practices of subjects to truth. It therefore has no bearing on the issue of specifically epistemic entitlement which is our concern.²⁰

It bears emphasizing that we do not dispute the particular claims these writers make concerning which are the beliefs, practices, and judgements to which we are entitled. We agree that thinkers are typically entitled to basic logical inferences, and to certain beliefs for which they can offer no justification

¹⁸ Wright shows some sensitivity to this problem, which partially accounts for the fact that he focuses on the attitude of accepting that *p*, rather than believing that *p*; see 2004b: 175 ff. But apart from the fact that this immediately renders his proposal largely epistemically irrelevant, it is a confusion to infer from the fact that one lacks evidence for believing that *p*, that one cannot be epistemically warranted in believing that *p*. Wright, in common with others (including Davies; see below), has failed to understand the force of Burge's conception of epistemic entitlement. We elaborate upon this point later in the section.

¹⁹ Davies 2004. Davies attempts a kind of synthesis of the views of Burge and Pryor 2000; see Pryor 2000. Though Pryor does not use the term 'entitlement' (see n. 24), his notion of immediate justification is similar in certain respects to that of entitlement. Like the other putative explanations of entitlement surveyed here, however, Pryor's has nothing to do with truth. He thinks their peculiar phenomenology is what explains our immediate justification for certain perceptual judgements. We explain why this is inadequate, and also go into more detail on Dretske and others, in Majors and Sawyer 2005: s. IV.

²⁰ The same problem afflicts H. Field's notion of 'default reasonableness'; see Field 2000: 119 ff. A default reasonable proposition, for Field, is a proposition which can be reasonably believed without any evidence. His explanation makes clear that the notion has nothing to do with truth. It is therefore not a conception of warrant, or of any other epistemically significant property.

or rationale. We agree that we are entitled to certain very basic beliefs and practices which we have no reasons or rationale to support. Our disagreement concerns the *explanation* of the various entitlements cognitive subjects possess. Explaining epistemic entitlements perforce requires showing how the beliefs or practices in question tend toward truth, or truth-preservation, at least in normal circumstances. Non-epistemic accounts of entitlement, such as those we have just reviewed, precisely fail to do this.

There are, apart from the Burgean notion considered below, two extant conceptions of specifically epistemic entitlement; that is, conceptions which connect entitlement with truth, in a constitutive way. Robert Brandom uses the term 'entitlement' to pick out a certain sort of epistemically deontic status. His view is, nearly enough, that one is entitled to that which one's linguistic cohorts will let one get away with saying. 'Entitlement is, to begin with, a social status that a performance or commitment has within a community' (1994: 177). One is entitled to a given belief or judgement just so long as one is not challenged to justify it. This is an understanding with affinities to Davies's notion of negative entitlement. It is of course a question why we ought to consider it a specifically epistemic understanding, given that, as we have emphasized, epistemic warrants or entitlements must connect belief with truth. From a pre-theoretic standpoint, the issue of what one can get away with saying has precious little to do with what is true. The answer is that Brandom has a radically anti-realist conception of truth. To a first approximation, being true for him just is being agreed upon in a certain sort of way. There is therefore a technical sense, perhaps, in which his conception is epistemic. But we mention the view only to set it aside. We think this sort of anti-realism indefensible.²¹

The other alternative to Burge's understanding of specifically epistemic entitlement is put forward in recent work by Christopher Peacocke. The necessary connection between entitlement and truth is enshrined in Peacocke's first principle of rationalism, according to which a transition is one to which a thinker is entitled only if it is truth-conducive, in a specific sort of way that Peacocke develops (2004: 6 ff.). This view of entitlement is taken initially from Burge, and is largely compatible with our Burgean view. But there are difficulties. The most important of these is Peacocke's insistence that judgements or transitions to which we are entitled must be rational from a thinker's own point of view. This claim is incompatible with the fact that some higher non-human animals, and most very young human children—members of both of which groups lack the concepts necessary to think contents concerning that which is rational—are entitled to many beliefs for which they have no reasons. Nor is it compatible with Peacocke's own insistence that entitlement accrues to a thinker through a

²¹ Brandom may prefer to put the point by saying that 'true' functions in a prescriptive, rather than a descriptive, way. But the problems remain. For a recent critical treatment, with which we are in sympathy, see Peacocke 2004: s. 1.2.

particular sort of truth-conduciveness in her beliefs or transitions. That which one takes to be rational has, in many cases, nothing to do with what is actually rational or warranted, because it has nothing to do with what is truth-conducive in the relevant kind of way.²²

We have said that entitlement on Burge's understanding is an epistemic right possession of which does not consist in having reasons for one's belief. The sense in which reasons warrant belief is fairly clear. To have a reason for one's belief that *p* is to have another belief, or set of beliefs, which lend support to the former; support is provided when it is probable (or, in the deductive case, necessary) that *p* is true, given the truth of the supporting belief or beliefs. Because epistemic entitlement does not involve reasons, there must be some alternative way of showing, in a given case, that the beliefs to which one is entitled tend toward truth. There must be another way of showing, that is, that one has an *epistemic right* to the range of beliefs in question. What this way is differs from case to case.²³

Notice that it is a mistake to think that those who distinguish entitlement from justification are attempting to deal with difficult epistemological problems by linguistic fiat or stipulation. The work done in an account which appeals to entitlement is not done merely through the introduction of the term 'entitlement'. The term is introduced to mark the important fact that not all warrants or epistemic rights are conferred upon beliefs in the same way. Some warrants involve reasons and evidence; others do not. The various kinds of warrant are different enough that it is helpful to mark the distinction linguistically. But the real work done by an account of entitlement comes in explaining why it is that we are entitled to the class of beliefs in question. It comes in connecting those beliefs with truth.²⁴

²² These and other problems with Peacocke's most recent book are discussed in Majors 2005.

²³ The term 'entitlement' first appears in Burge's work in Burge 1993. But the notion developed out of earlier historical work Burge had done on Frege, in particular the essays collected in part III of Burge 2005. See also Burge 1996, 1998a, 2003a. Burge uses the term 'warrant' to cover both entitlements and justifications—where the latter essentially involve reasons. Unlike Plantinga's conception, Burgean warrants are defeasible.

²⁴ Pryor complains about the popularity of the term 'entitlement.' He says, more specifically, that 'Burge, Peacocke, Davies and Dretske . . . prefer the terms "entitlement" and "warrant" to "justification." I insist upon "justification."' It ought not to have the undesired associations they hear it to have.' (See Pryor 2004: 371–2.)

There are a couple of problems with this. First, while the claim may be true of Peacocke, it is false of the others that Pryor lists. Dretske, following Burge, reserves the term 'entitlement' for a specific kind of epistemic warrant. Each of them recognizes justification as a distinct, though still perfectly useful, concept. There is no sense in which they *prefer* 'entitlement.' Davies differs from Dretske and Burge in thinking that entitlement is not a form of epistemic warrant. But even for him it is simply false to say that he prefers 'entitlement' to 'justification'. The terms have disjoint and non-empty extensions. (We think that Pryor has confused the views of these thinkers with the very different sort of claim, associated with W. Alston, and also Plantinga, to the effect that the term 'justification' has outlived its usefulness.) Second, whether a term *ought* to have undesired associations is surely not to the point. What matters is that it does (when it does).

Our present interest is less in the details of the particular legitimizations or deductions of our entitlement to various classes of beliefs, than in the objective view of norms which supports the general idea of an entitlement. How can it be possible to have warranted belief in a given content when one has no reasons, and can offer no rationale, for the belief? The key point to notice is that, as beings who represent an objective subject matter, we are necessarily subject to representational and epistemic norms. These norms are objective in character. It is an a priori truth that representations function accurately to depict a subject matter (whatever other functions they may be given). All representational contents have veridicality conditions. The sort of veridicality at issue with propositional content is truth. The representational norm—or correctness condition—which governs belief, as a cognitive propositional attitude, is therefore truth. Beliefs fulfill this norm only insofar as they are true.

It is widely agreed, however, that a belief can be correct, in another sense, without being true. One can believe what one ought epistemically to believe without one's belief being true. Epistemic warrant does not entail truth. Epistemic warrant is a measure of how well placed one's beliefs are, given one's limitations and cognitive capacities, to meet their representational norm.

Meeting the norms of belief, therefore, both representational and epistemic, is a matter of relating in the right sort of way to truth. But one can bear the right sort of relation to truth, in many cases, without having reasons for one's belief. The objective norms which govern representation determine whether one is warranted in a given belief. And one can fulfill these norms, in at least many cases, without having reasons for one's belief.²⁵ We say more about how this works, in the perceptual case, just below.

Objective norms also have a place, we believe, in the individuation of intentional mental states and events. Ways of talking and thinking about objective matters are necessarily responsible, in at least many cases, to the ways in which others employ terms and concepts; and, more fundamentally, to the natures of the entities and properties represented. This shows up not only in the possibility that an individual can be mistaken about what one of her words means, or in the explication of one of her thoughts or concepts. It is manifest also in the possibility that entire communities can make errors concerning the natures of many kinds of concepts.²⁶ These points will be elaborated upon below.

4. SOLUTIONS

We now set out our solutions to the Connection Problem and the Problem of Opacity against this background picture of the way in which our thinking is

²⁵ Cf. Burge 2003a as well as the other papers mentioned in n. 23.

²⁶ See Burge 1986 and 'Frege on Sense and Linguistic Meaning', in Burge 2005.

governed by objective norms. In the next, penultimate section, we will discuss the sense in which the picture provides a unified way of viewing the internalism/externalism debates in semantics and epistemology. More speculatively, we will suggest in closing that the other two main internalism/externalism debates in philosophy—those in ethical theory—can themselves be seen to conform to the schema we set out for understanding the corresponding debates in semantics and epistemology.

Because our view is externalist both in semantics and epistemology, the Connection Problem is not a serious difficulty. Take first the semantic case. We think that representation of any objective empirical subject matter requires causal, or other sorts of nonintentional relations to obtain between representer and that which she represents. Paradigmatic cases of perceptual representation involve causal contact between the thinker and the subject matter of her representations. Now the possibility of representing that which does not exist shows that not all cases fit this simplest sort of model. One might perhaps be mistaken about the existence of water, for example, despite the fact that one has many thoughts containing the concept *water*. But it is plausibly necessary that one bear the requisite sorts of nonintentional relations to *some* entities in order to possess the concept *water*. One could presumably not have the concept were one not in causal contact either with water, or with some thinker or thinkers who have theorized about the existence of water.²⁷ Empirical representation as such, then, requires the obtaining of causal relations between the thinker and that which is represented, or at least between the thinker and some other related entities or properties. A deep, individuating connection is therefore a necessary condition upon the very possibility of perceptual representation.

In the epistemic realm externalism is equally well placed to solve the Connection Problem, though here certain difficulties arise. The problem is to account for the constitutive connection between warrant or justification and truth. As we saw earlier, only such a connection allows us to distinguish between epistemic and other kinds of justification; and only such a connection allows us to account for the fact that belief necessarily aims at truth. To say that some constitutive connection between belief and truth is necessary for justification is to say that justification requires reliability. But it is not a simple matter to say in what sense a belief-forming process must be reliable in order for its deliverances to be epistemically justified.

As already indicated, the problem is that reliability in the world the subject happens to inhabit is neither necessary nor sufficient for justification. It is not necessary, because the perceptual beliefs of one's twin, who was recently transported into a world controlled by a malevolent demon, are intuitively as justified as are one's own. She has all the same perceptual experiences, and appears to have the same evidence more generally. But she is almost completely

²⁷ Cf. Burge 1982.

unreliable in forming perceptual beliefs. And this sort of reliability is not sufficient for justification, because it is easy to imagine a subject who is accidentally reliable, and therefore not justified.

There are a number of ways of attempting to overcome these difficulties. We will not review them here.²⁸ Our contention is that the difficulties for pure reliabilism can be overcome only by invoking anti-individualistically individuated representational content. It is true that reliability in the world the subject happens to inhabit is not necessary for justification. What is necessary, however, is that a subject be reliable in the kind of world relative to which the natures of her perceptual intentional contents are individuated and explained. And it is true that reliability is not sufficient for justification. What is sufficient, though, is reliability coupled with the sort of constitutive connection between representational state and world that the semantic externalist insists upon.

A potential problem for our view is the Problem of Opacity. Indeed, the more easily a view overcomes the Connection Problem, the more difficult it is to account for the relation between the subject and herself. Within semantics the problem is to explain how we could have privileged and authoritative access to our intentional mental states, when the very natures of those states are dependent upon relations to the environment for their individuation; relations to the obtaining of which one has no special or authoritative access. Our Burgean response comes in two parts. First, there is a species of self-knowledge, called 'basic self-knowledge', which we are guaranteed to have on purely formal or structural grounds.²⁹ These cases are analogous to the cogito cases that so interested Descartes. Take, for example, the judgement 'I hereby judge that writing requires concentration.' This is a second-order claim about one's mental states. One is not only thinking the relevant thought, but judging that one is thinking it. Now the notions of writing, requirement, and concentration are all plausibly externally individuated. There is no guarantee that a subject, in thinking contents containing these notions, has an adequate or complete understanding of their essential natures. She may well make mistakes about them. The question thus arises how she can know what she thinks, when she thinks with these notions, given that she has no privileged or authoritative access to their real natures.

In the ordinary sense of self-knowledge, one knows what one thinks when one knows the contents of the relevant mental states. And with cases of basic self-knowledge, one's knowledge of one's first-order mental state contents is logically guaranteed by one's very exercise of the second-order abilities. One cannot make the second-order judgement that one is judging that writing requires concentration without thinking the content that writing requires concentration.

²⁸ These ways are discussed in Majors and Sawyer 2005: s. V. That paper contains a more complete statement of the argument for our version of epistemic externalism. Here only a brief summary is provided.

²⁹ For this thesis, and the arguments to come, see Burge 1988; cf. also Sawyer 2002.

The second-order judgement would not be what it is, were its subject matter a different first-order content.

Of course, one can imagine variations in one's social and physical environment which would, after a while, occasion changes in one's first-order propositional contents. But if the circumstances are different enough to make it the case, for example, that one does not, in uttering the word-forms 'Writing requires concentration', judge that writing requires concentration, then they are different enough to change the character of one's second-order judgement as well. It is quite impossible for there to be disconnection between first- and second-order contents, in cases of basic self-knowledge; this is, again, because the natures of the first-order contents partially constitute the second-order contents. There could be no variation in the former without variation in the latter. They are logically locked onto one another.

Not all self-knowledge is basic in this sense, however. The majority of cases of self-knowledge are not logically self-verifying. We can and sometimes do make mistakes about the contents of our thoughts. But it does not follow from this that nonbasic cases of self-knowledge are empirical, in the sense that we have no authority over, or privileged access to them. The explanation of our entitlement to nonbasic cases of self-knowledge has to do with the necessity of such knowledge to the very enterprise of critical reasoning.³⁰ If we were not normally *correct* about our intentional mental contents; if we were not normally *entitled* to the higher-order claims and judgements we make about them, and with them; and if, further, we did not normally have *knowledge* of our first- (and, more generally, lower-) order intentional mental states—then we could not engage in the practice of critical reason: The practice of subjecting one's reasoning to rational review, and of acting upon such review. Since no coherent form of skepticism denies the possibility of critical reasoning, this suffices to ground nonbasic cases of self-knowledge.

Some have apparently held that in order properly to be said to know one's thoughts one must be able to distinguish the components of these thoughts from all possible counterfeits. But externalism seems to foreclose on this possibility. For there is a sense in which one cannot tell, as it were from the inside, whether one is thinking with a concept C, or a concept C* which picks out entities or properties subjectively indistinguishable from those in the extension of C. If therefore it is indeed a condition upon the possibility of self-knowledge, as traditionally construed, that one be able to distinguish one's thought components from all possible counterfeits, then externalism seems to rule out the possibility of such knowledge.

We think it is clear that this is not a reasonable requirement. No one thinks that our perceptual knowledge is impugned by the fact that we cannot distinguish the objects of our perception from all possible subjectively indiscernible yet

³⁰ See Burge 1996 and also 2000.

distinct alternatives. The objectivity of perception guarantees that there are such alternatives. More to the point, though, is a simple distinction between what our thoughts are, and that which makes them so. One normally knows the identity of one's thoughts, for reasons covered a few paragraphs back. In cases of basic self-knowledge, one knows the identity of one's thoughts in the very act of thinking the relevant higher-order contents. The former partially constitute the latter. One cannot therefore make a mistake about them. In nonbasic cases, while error is possible, knowing the contents of most of one's thoughts is necessary to the very functioning of critical reason. It is simply a confusion to think that one must know, in order to know what one is thinking, all of the background conditions that must obtain in order for one to think one's thoughts. This is made manifest by considering knowledge of kinds in special sciences other than psychology. It would be ludicrous to insist that one must know what sorts of functional relations individuate hearts, in order to know what a heart is, or that one has a heart. Knowing one's thoughts does not require either being able to discriminate them from all possible counterfeits, or knowing all of the background conditions which make possible the thinking of the thoughts.

We have already touched upon our solution to the Problem of Opacity for epistemic externalism. The general worry here is that, in locating the source of epistemic warrant outside the thinking subject, externalism makes these epistemizing factors opaque to her. How can considerations which lie outside the ken of a believer epistemically warrant her beliefs? We take two interrelated lines of response here. First, the Problem of Opacity is at its most serious for pure reliabilism. But we have allowed that reliability as such is neither necessary nor sufficient for epistemic warrant. When the view is modified to overcome the most powerful objections in the literature it becomes much less clear whether there is a real worry along these lines. We require for perceptual warrant that a subject's perceptual states—and, by extension, her perceptual beliefs—be individually connected to the environment in which the states are formed; and that the subject be reliable in this sort of environment.³¹ It is far from clear that the counterexamples to pure reliabilism touch this sort of view.

Second, we follow Burge in holding that every warrant has a psychological element over and above that trivially bestowed by the fact that warrant is a property of belief. All perceptual entitlements, for example, essentially involve perceptual states. Perceptual states are, in an intuitive sense, internal to a thinker; though it bears emphasizing that not all thinkers are conceptually sophisticated enough to think about their perceptual states—so it would be misleading to say that all warrants involve elements to which one has privileged or authoritative access.³² Other entitlements rest partly upon understanding, which is, or crucially

³¹ Again, see Burge 2003a: esp. 530–7; cf. also Majors and Sawyer 2005: section VI.

³² For this reason we think it is misleading to view Burge's conception of epistemic warrant as a compromise between epistemic internalism and externalism. It is true that justification, on his

involves, an internal propositional state of the subject. Again, however, the crucial fact is that the view differs in significant ways from pure reliabilism. It is not subject to the counterexamples which plagued earlier versions of the doctrine.

5. OBJECTIVE NORMS

Our two central goals in this chapter are to articulate, and point toward solutions to, the Connection Problem, and the Problem of Opacity, on the one hand, and to set out a new and helpful way of viewing the two internalism/externalism disputes, on the other. In the previous section we argued that the forms of externalism do not in fact face the Connection Problem, and can overcome the Problem of Opacity. In the present section we try to set out an illuminating way to view the disputes in more general and abstract terms—an 'organizing principle'.

We think that the battles waged today between internalists and externalists, in both the theory of content and epistemology, are best viewed as the central contemporary manifestations of a perennial contest in philosophy, that between empiricism and rationalism. The key issue concerns *the source of the norms which govern thought and judgement*. Empiricists have traditionally been inclined to hold that such norms, to the extent that they are genuine, are grounded in features of the thinking subject herself, or the human species at most; whereas rationalists have been apt to insist that the relevant norms are grounded at a much deeper level, and that their normative force does not depend upon any sort of ratification by the individual thinking subject, or even a community of thinkers. And it does not depend upon specifics of our natures as animals. It is only a relatively slight exaggeration and oversimplification to put the point by saying that for the rationalist the norms are objective, and for the empiricist they are subjective.³³

It is what Burge has called 'intellectual norms' which are at issue in the debate over the nature of representational content. Our ways of thinking and talking about objects and properties are answerable to the ways in which the most competent speakers of our language use the corresponding terms; and, more

view, is in certain respects closely associated with internalism (as entitlement is with externalism). But the similarity is rather superficial. For internalists have traditionally been prone to require that a warranted cognitive subject be able to justify her beliefs to the skeptic. But on the Burgean view we favor, being justified, or having reasons, does not guarantee even having the ability to think about justification, belief, or reasons. Higher nonhuman animals, and young human children, have justified beliefs, but lack the concepts necessary to think about their epistemic status, much less to defend it against the skeptic. So we think that the view offers little real solace to the epistemic internalist.

³³ Needless to say, we are not here concerned with defending historical claims concerning the views of empiricists and rationalists. But we do think that a historical case for our claims can be made.

fundamentally, to the natures of the entities themselves. This is the source of semantic externalism. My belief that I have arthritis in my thigh is mistaken, because the term 'arthritis' is not used in such a way, in the relevant linguistic community, that it is correctly applied to rheumatoid ailments outside the joints. This is a case of incomplete understanding. My belief that sofas are religious artefacts, rather than pieces of furniture meant for sitting, on the other hand, need not stem from incomplete understanding of the term 'sofa.' I may simply have a deviant theory about what sofas are. In this case the error is due to failure to grasp, not the way in which a term is used, but the actual nature of the entities referred to by the term. In both cases the norms are grounded in something more objective than the thinker's own considered practice. And in the second kind of case the norms are grounded even more deeply than the practice of the linguistic community as a whole. It is primarily in this sense that semantic externalism is a form of rationalism.

Semantic internalism, by contrast, disowns any commitment to normative authority, of the relevant sort, beyond that which is certified by the practices and commitments of the individual thinking subject. There is a sense in which an individual, on this view, cannot make a mistake about the contents of her thoughts and words. She is herself taken to be the source of such norms as govern her thought about (ostensibly) objective matters.

The dependence of thought upon the way the world is, and the possibility of incomplete understanding (both of meaning and of cognitive value), have arguably always been an important part of the rationalist picture. The Connection Problem, in its semantic guise, arises precisely because thought and world are not independent, and cannot be taken to be so if we are to account for the possibility of representation. And the key to the solution to the Problem of Opacity here is, in part, to recognize that there are different levels of understanding of thought content. The fact that one does not recognize one or more essential features of a concept one thinks with has no tendency to show that one does not know one's own thoughts, in the sense relevant to understanding first-person authority and privileged access. No more does the fact that one misunderstands the use experts make of the corresponding term threaten these features of self-knowledge. One can think with a concept, and know what one thinks when one employs it, without having attained mastery of the nature of the concept, or even of the associated linguistic meaning. This is because the intellectual norms which govern our thinking about objective matters are not of our own making. We are responsible to them. And we severally meet this responsibility in differing degrees.

The connections between externalism and rationalism—and internalism and empiricism—are if anything even more clear in the epistemic case. The classical epistemic internalist thinks that it is completely up to the individual whether she meets her epistemic obligations. The source of the norms is effectively thought to be located within her. If she does all that she can, or all that can reasonably be

expected of her, then she cannot fail to meet them. The externalist, by contrast, recognizes that belief and judgement are governed by norms ultimately grounded in the function of representation, which is to present veridicality or truth. Being epistemically responsible is neither necessary nor sufficient for being true, or even being well placed to achieve truth. It is not necessary, because not all believing creatures have the conceptual wherewithal to think about things like reasons, truth, and belief. And there can be no question of epistemic responsibility where these concepts are absent. It is not sufficient because doing the best that one can cognitively does not suffice to place one in the sort of relation to truth that meeting representational or epistemic norms consists in. If one is poorly adapted to one's normal environment, if one is malfunctioning perceptually or cognitively, then one will not meet the epistemic norms which necessarily govern one's beliefs and judgements.

The Connection Problem arises within the epistemic milieu because of the function of representation, and the nature of epistemic warrant. This function, and this nature, are such that only a view which can account for the constitutive connection between warrant and truth will be satisfactory. And the Problem of Opacity, here, is to show how cognitive elements without the ken of thinkers can nevertheless warrant their beliefs. Again the key, for the externalist, is to recognize that, because the norms which govern belief and judgement are not of our own making, satisfying the norms requires more than merely that everything be 'in order' on the inside of the thinker. Thus the objectivity of epistemic norms guarantees that not all epistemically significant elements will reside within the thinker herself. In this way the debate between epistemic internalists and externalists can be viewed as part of the Homeric struggle between *empiricists*—who, if they acknowledge epistemic norms in any substantive sense at all, locate them within the resources of the thinking subject—and *rationalists*—who view such norms as grounded in representational function, or a function of reason, which is not itself something over which the individual has authority or control.

6. MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Before closing we would like briefly to illustrate how the organizing principle we have suggested illuminates and unifies the internalism/externalism debates in semantics and epistemology can be applied as well to the corresponding disputes in moral philosophy. There are two internalism/externalism debates in moral philosophy. The first concerns the relationship between moral judgement and motivation. The second concerns the relationship between moral reasons and an agent's 'subjective motivational set.' In each case we think that the most profitable, general way to view the conflict is by seeing it as part of the larger battle between rationalism and empiricism. Furthermore, the Burgean conception of

norms as objectively governing our cognitive activity suggests particular positions with respect to each debate.³⁴

It should be noted at the outset that the Connection Problem and the Problem of Opacity do not have clear application to the internalism/externalism debates within moral philosophy. Our focus here will be on the way in which the Burgean conception of norms illuminates the debates, and points toward solutions to the attendant problems.

Judgement internalists see a conceptual connection between moral judgement and motivation. On their view, no one who sincerely judges that she ought to ϕ can fail to be motivated, to some extent at least, to ϕ . Certainly the motivation may be outweighed by other considerations, or the agent may be weak of will. But there must be *some* motivation, if she genuinely makes the judgement. Proponents of this view often appeal to the phenomenology of moral judgement. When I recognize that I ought to ϕ , this is not like recognizing that the weather is fair. I *feel* that I ought to ϕ , and this just is to be motivated to do it. Moral obligations seem necessarily to force themselves upon us.³⁵

Judgement externalists deny this. They agree that in most cases there is motivational commitment on the part of those making moral judgements. But they think that the connection is not a necessary one. Most people one knows are motivated to act in accordance with their moral judgements, perhaps. But this is because one is not acquainted with many moral freaks or monsters; not because there is any sort of conceptual connection between moral judgement and motivation.³⁶ Externalists often support their position by claiming the conceivability of the *amoralist*. This is a person who seems sincerely to judge that he ought to ϕ , yet nevertheless is not motivated in the slightest actually to ϕ . Both sides seem to agree that if the amoralist is possible, then judgement internalism is false. As we say, the externalist presses for such a possibility. But for the internalist the case is misdescribed. Certainly we can imagine a person uttering the word-forms 'I ought to ϕ ', and yet not being motivated at all to ϕ . But to move from this to the claim that it is possible sincerely to judge that one ought to do such and such, without being motivated to do it, begs the question at issue. The issue is precisely whether, in uttering the relevant word-forms, such an agent would indeed be making a sincere and literal moral judgement.

³⁴ In this section we go beyond that to which Burge has officially committed himself, though we think that the views we outline are congenial to his general perspective. We do make clear use of his demonstration of the possibility of incomplete understanding of words and concepts; see the papers cited in n. 26. And it ought to be noted that there are some remarks in Burge 1998b: 250 ff., which suggest the sort of account we set out concerning moral judgement and motivation. Our remarks here also seem consistent, finally, with the brief discussion of practical norms in Burge 2003d: 327.

³⁵ Classic defenses of judgement internalism include McDowell 1979; Hare 1981; and Smith 1994

³⁶ Externalist accounts are advanced in Brink 1989; Svavarsdóttir 1999; and Shafer-Landau 2000.

This is the most difficult case for our suggested framework, in large part because there is no obvious way to characterize judgement internalism as a supervenience thesis. It is the only one of the four distinctions which resists such treatment. And to make matters worse, we think that both sides to the dispute are mistaken. In every other case, we believe, it is clear that externalism is the most plausible view. But the debate between judgement internalists and judgement externalists arguably rests upon a false presupposition.

As we have seen, internalists insist upon a conceptual connection between moral judgement and motivation. Externalists deny the existence of such a connection, because they think it is possible—as in the case of the amoralist—to judge that one ought morally to ϕ , and yet be completely unmotivated to ϕ . Yet the claims, first, that there is a conceptual connection between moral judgement and motivation, and, second, that the amoralist is conceivable, may not be genuinely incompatible. The tacit assumption shared by both parties to this dispute is that if there is a necessary connection between two concepts, then anyone who possesses the two concepts must (in some manner or other) recognize or manifest this fact. This appears to be false. Knowledge is factive. It is a necessary part of the concept *knowledge* that if one knows that p , then p . Yet one sometimes has to debate the point with students. These students are making a mistake about the concept, which is possible only if they possess the concept. That is to say, there is a conceptual connection between knowledge and factivity; yet it is perfectly possible for one to possess both of the relevant concepts and fail to recognize, in theory and in practice, the obtaining of the connection. Examples abound. Causation is either transitive or not transitive, and by conceptual necessity. Yet it is possible (indeed actual) to debate the matter. Therefore the obtaining of a conceptual connection does not necessitate its recognition by anyone who possesses the relevant concepts.

The upshot is that it seems possible that both sides are correct in their primary contentions. Indeed, we think that this may be the most plausible view to take of the matter. It is true that there is a conceptual connection between moral judgement and motivation. But it is also true that it is possible sincerely to make a moral judgement, and yet fail to be motivated, to even the slightest degree, to act in accordance with it. The reason for this is that it is possible, and indeed quite common, incompletely to grasp concepts. One possesses the concept *knowledge* just in case one thinks thoughts of which it is a constituent. Yet one can think such thoughts without recognizing, again in theory or practice, the factivity of knowledge. And this despite the fact that it is a conceptual truth that knowledge is factive. The relevance of this to the present dispute is clear. One can possess the concepts which make up the moral judgement that one ought to ϕ , without understanding them sufficiently that one is automatically compelled or motivated to act in accordance with it. Anyone with a complete grasp, or fully reflective understanding, of the concepts involved in the judgement would be motivated to ϕ . But complete grasp of the concepts involved is not a necessary

condition upon making the moral judgement. And that is why the amoralist is possible.

Despite the fact that this particular internalism/externalism dispute fits only awkwardly into our organizational schema, it is clear that our central idea has application to it. As is the case in semantics, here the central mistake of the internalist is to fail to see the possibility of an incomplete understanding of notions or concepts. It is just that here the externalist makes the same mistake. On the more promising view which we have adumbrated, there are degrees of understanding.³⁷ At the lowest level is the simple ability to think with the relevant notion. At an intermediate level, one can not only think with the notion or concept, but one can offer illuminating and correct explications of the concept. Finally, at the highest level of understanding, one gets it right. One sees, or otherwise respects, the constitutively necessary aspects of the notion involved. What is true about judgement externalism is that one may judge, at a lower level of understanding, that one ought to ϕ , without being in any way motivated to ϕ . Such a being is conceptually deficient, to be sure; but this does not prevent him from sincerely and literally making the relevant judgements. What is right about judgement internalism is that one cannot possess a full, reflective understanding of the notions involved in a moral judgement without being motivated to act in accordance with it. Needless to say, there is no space here adequately to set out, much less defend this view. For the present we note merely that it is fully in the spirit of classical moral rationalism—at least in certain cases, failure to (be motivated to) act in accordance with the dictates of morality is a failure of reason and understanding.

Reasons internalism is the view that one has moral reason to ϕ only if one's 'subjective motivational set,' or immediate extensions of it, provides one with a motive to ϕ .³⁸ Thus one has reason to save the drowning child immediately before one only if one has, broadly and loosely speaking, some (potential) conative element which favors performing the requisite actions. *Reasons externalism* is the denial of this claim. For the externalist, one might have a moral reason to ϕ despite the fact that one has no interest, no desire, no conative element whatsoever which favors ϕ -ing. Reasons stem directly from obligations, or from objective values, on this kind of view; and there is no need to take a detour through the vagaries of one's conative make-up.³⁹

Reasons internalism can be formulated as a supervenience thesis: No two agents who do not differ with respect to their subjective motivational sets can differ with respect to their reasons for action. This view is the direct descendant of one long associated with Hume—reason has as such no power to motivate; therefore where there is practical reason, or reason to act, there must be desire.

³⁷ See Burge 1986: 713.

³⁸ See Williams 1981, both for the classic defence of reasons internalism, and for the 'subjective motivational set' terminology.

³⁹ For defence of reasons externalism, see Parfit 1996; McDowell 1998; and Shafer-Landau 2003: chs. 7 and 8.

Contemporary proponents of internalism are willing to be more flexible than Hume was about the kind of conative element necessary for the presence of moral reasons. But the basic structure of the view is the same. Reasons externalism can be seen as the denial of the supervenience thesis.

There is a direct parallel between reasons internalism and epistemic internalism. Each view holds that what makes something—belief, judgement, action—rational, or provides a reason for it, must be internal to the thinking subject. To put the views crudely: Theoretical rationality is necessarily provided by reasons, and practical rationality is necessarily provided (at least in part) by desires, or other conative elements. But we saw above that this restrictive view of theoretical rationality is implausible. It does not do justice to the aim of belief and judgement, which is truth. Epistemic internalism would be appropriate were the aim of belief and judgement *perceived truth*. But the fact that epistemic responsibility is insufficient for justification shows that this is not in fact the relevant aim. Belief and judgement aim at truth in an objective sense—they are representationally or epistemically as they ought to be only if they relate in the right kind of way to actual truth.

Likewise we hold that reasons internalism fundamentally distorts the nature of practical rationality. It is no more plausible that only a desire, or other conative element, could make an action rational—that is, provide reason for an action—than that only other beliefs or reasons, on the part of the subject, could provide epistemic warrant for her beliefs or judgements. If a person's epistemic status is a measure of how well she is doing with respect to the function of representing veridically, then a person's moral status is arguably a measure of how well she is doing with respect to doing the morally right or good thing. In neither case are the agent's subjective resources, whether cognitive or conative, what is crucial.

What is crucial is how well the subject is doing with respect to the constitutive aim of the activity in question. We saw that the constitutive aim of belief is derivable from the function of representation, along with the fact that belief is a propositional or conceptual attitude. We will not try here to attempt a parallel derivation of the aim of action. What is crucial to note at this point is that ordinary moral practice does not in fact relativize either moral obligations or reasons for action to the subjective motivational sets of moral agents. It is a revisionary proposal that one has reason to help the drowning child out of the lake only if doing so furthers some end one has. Reasons internalists have, we think, felt forced into holding this view because they have failed to see how elements outside the moral agent's desiderative profile could bear positively on the agent's reasons for action. But the version of epistemic externalism we have defended here in effect shows how this is possible: External elements bear on rationality when they bear on the agent's ability to meet the categorical norms—or the associated constitutive aims—which necessarily govern her as a representational or rational agent.

Here again, and in large part because of the extended parallel with the epistemological debate, the way in which our central organizing principle bears on the debate is fairly clear and straightforward. Reasons internalists are the empiricists, defending the deflationary view of norms as indexed or relativized to the subjective (this time conative) resources of the agent. And reasons externalism, in the form at least in which we have suggested it be defended, is precisely the view supported by the rationalist's conception of norms as objectively governing our cognitive and practical activity.

We have looked at four internalism/externalism distinctions, and argued that each of them is most profitably viewed as part of a larger battle between empiricism and rationalism. Furthermore, we think that the Burgean conception of objective norms which we have defended, and tried to elucidate, provides the key to finding the most plausible position within each debate. With respect to the nature of representational content, and also the controversy over the connection between moral judgement and motivation, the important point is to recognize the possibility of incompletely understanding meanings, and imperfectly grasping concepts. This is made possible, in each case, by the fact that our understanding and explication is answerable to external and objective intellectual norms. The norms are not of our making. With respect to the nature of epistemic warrant, and the nature of reasons for action, the key is to see the link between having warrant, or having reasons, and fulfilling the norms set by the constitutive aim or function of the activity in question. Again it is the objectivity of the norms which underwrites the possibility of reason's outrunning our subjective cognitive and conative natures.

No doubt work remains to be done in understanding how the various internalism/externalism disputes relate to one another and are most profitably viewed in abstract terms. What we have tried to do here is to suggest an organizing principle which illuminates central features of each such dispute, as well as their interconnections. On the conception we have recommended each can be seen as a microcosmic manifestation of the great and ancient debate between empiricism and rationalism

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