1. Reliabilist Theories of Justification

**Question:** Must what is rational for me to believe be a reliable indicator of what is true?

- Reliabilists: yes
- Foley: no

Foley’s formulation of reliabilism:

Reliabilism is the thesis that if one gathered into a set all the propositions which both are epistemically rational for S to believe and are believed by S, it would be impossible for that set to contain more falsehoods than truths. (After all, how could these ‘rational’ beliefs be a reliable indicator of what is true if this were false, and the set contained more falsehood than truths?)

Notice that this is different from Goldman’s formulation. According to Goldman, your beliefs are reliable iff they are caused by a reliable process. Foley takes it that this causal component is not a necessary feature of reliabilism (i.e., it is an *optional* feature of reliabilism).

For the purposes of our discussion, assume that Foley understands ‘what is rational for S to believe’ as equivalent to ‘what S is justified in believing’.

2. The Demon World Objection to Reliabilism

According to Foley’s Demon World objection, reliabilism is false because it fails to provide a *necessary* condition for justification.

**The Demon World:** Remember the Skeptical Hypothesis. It is possible that we are being deceived by an evil demon (or evil neuroscientists) into thinking that all of our beliefs are true. Call this possible world w. Call the actual world in which you are not deceived, α.

From the internal perspective, w is indistinguishable from α. But, our ordinary beliefs in w are false because of the deception.

**Question:** In w, are we justified in believing our ordinary beliefs?

- Reliabilist: No. Everything we believe in w is false, so not a reliable indicator of truth.
- Foley: Yes. They are false, but justified.

Remember: According to internalism, if you were justified in believing p, then all of your internal epistemic duplicates would be justified in believing p too. The externalist about justification says that you and your internal epistemic duplicates can differ with respect to what you’re justified in believing.

Foley’s argument against reliabilist theories of justification:

1. Reliabilism must explain Demon Worlds—i.e., reliabilism must explain the possibility of worlds in which most of what we rationally believe is false.
2. Reliabilism can’t explain Demon Worlds. (Reliabilism rejects Demon Worlds as being possible.)
3. Therefore, reliabilism is false.

3. Internalism vs. Externalism About Justification

**Question:** In order to rationally believe p, must S have cognitive access to the justification for believing p?

- Externalist: No.
- Internalist: Yes.

Goldman is an externalist (of the Reliabilist variety); Foley is an internalist.

According to Foley, the reliabilist errs because she ignores the internal perspective. Consideration of the Demon World has shown us this.
The Demon World shows us that all that is relevant to whether or not a belief that \( p \) is how things seem to S from S’s internal perspective.

4. **Internalism vs. Externalism About Knowledge**

Reliabilists might respond to the Demon World objection by claiming that it is irrelevant given their aims. The objection assumes an internalist conception of justification. But reliabilists might deny that this kind of justification is necessary for knowledge.

Let’s distinguish between internalist and externalist analyses of knowledge. Reliabilism about knowledge will be a variety of externalism about knowledge. It states that a necessary condition on knowledge is that it be produced by a reliable process—regardless of whether an internalist conception of justification is correct.

Foley raises an objection to externalism about knowledge.

5. **The Generality Problem**

Imagine the following type of situation:

S knows something via process X but also knows that X is an unreliable belief-forming process. Variations:

- S knows that s/he has been deceived by an evil demon but no longer is
- S knows that s/he will be shortly deceived by an evil demon but is not now
- S knows that in close counterfactual situations s/he would be deceived by an evil demon even though s/he is not being deceived by the demon in the actual situation.

What kind of processes count as reliable?

- Define the processes too broadly, and no belief can count as justified.
- Define the processes too narrowly, and it may only produce a single token process of a certain type.