

EPISTEMOLOGIA CONTEMPORÂNEA EM DEBATE

Infinitism and Inferential Externalism

Infinitismo e externalismo inferencial

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Abstract: The purpose of this essay is to show that the version of epistemological infinitism defended by Peter Klein is externalistic in character. I present the most important questions infinitism is supposed to resolve and also present the fundamental difference regarding internalism and externalism in epistemology. I conclude with an indication of what would be the best way to understand infinitism and how to evade the problems that emerge from Klein's externalist infinitism.

Keywords: Infinitism. Externalism. Internalism. Epistemic Justification. Skepticism.

Resumo: O propósito deste ensaio é mostrar que a versão de infinitismo epistemológico defendida por Peter Klein é uma forma de externalismo. São apresentados os problemas mais importantes que o infinitismo deve resolver e também a diferença fundamental entre internalismo e externalismo em epistemologia. Como conclusão, é apresentada uma indicação sobre a melhor maneira de entender o infinitismo e como superar os problemas que surgem da forma externalista de infinitismo defendida por Klein.

Palavras-chave: Infinitismo. Externalismo. Internalismo. Justificação epistêmica. Ceticismo.

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From a structural point of view¹, all theories of knowledge or epistemic justification² can be interpreted as alternative responses to the Agrippa's trilemma. The trilemma can be seen as the description of the modes of all possible reasoning. According to Sextus Empiricus, the most prevalent source of ancient skepticism, the process of justification of a particular opinion necessarily takes one of the following three paths: (a) the mode of hypothesis, (b) the mode of infinite regress, and (c) the mode of reciprocity³.

Here is how Sextus himself describes the modes: "In the mode deriving from infinite regression, we say that what is brought as a warrant for the matter in question itself needs another warrant, which itself needs another, and so *ad infinitum*."⁴ The mode of hypothesis is described this way: "The mode of hypothesis occurs when the Dogmatists, being thrown back *ad infinitum*, begin from something which they do not establish but claim to assume simply and without proof."⁵ And the mode of reciprocity is defined by Sextus as follows: "The reciprocal mode comes about when what ought to be confirmatory of the matter in question requires warranty from the matter in question." He then concludes that: "thus being unable to assume either matter for the establishment of the other, we suspend the judgment about both."⁶ The same conclusion goes for the other two modes as well. As it is known, universal suspension of judgment (*epoché*) is the intended result of the pyrrhonian modes.

According to the pyrrhonians, the Agrippa's trilemma exhibit the equality of weight and credibility, or "equipollence" (*isostheneia*), of any proposition. So the skeptic, finding no better reason to prefer one proposition to another, suspends the judgment about both. The rational undecidability revealed by the modes should then induce any rational being into suspension of judgment.

¹ By "structure point of view" I mean the theories that are not primarily concerned with what *generates* justification, but rather with what has been called *transference* of epistemic justification. See ALSTON, William, *Epistemic Justification*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989, and AUDI, Robert, *The Structure of Epistemic Justification*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

² I assume that epistemic justification is a necessary condition for knowing. Throughout this essay, I will use terms like "warrant" as a synonym with "justification".

³ Strictly speaking, there are five modes, or *tropes*, which are attributed to Agrippa: discrepancy, relativity, infinity, assumption and circularity. However, the modes of discrepancy and relativity are different in character from the other three. The way to correctly understand the difference, and also the relation between the modes, is that discrepancy and relativity trigger the trilemma. The modes of discrepancy and relativity are supposed to show that if someone presents a claim as more than mere personal opinion, she can very reasonably be asked to explain why she believes so. And then she will face the other three modes.

⁴ See SEXTUS EMPERICUS, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, translated and edited by BARRY, R. G., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935, 4 v., I, p. 166.

⁵ Id. *ibid.*, p. 168.

⁶ Id. *ibid.*, p. 169.

The reasons why the trilemma leads to suspension of judgment are straightforward: (a) having epistemological interests in mind, we are not supposed to either simply assume something to be the case or believe what we want⁷; (b) if circular reasoning is admitted, one would be able to prove anything by the mere expedient of assuming it to be so⁸, and (c) we clearly cannot run through an infinite series of justifications.

Therefore, according to pyrrhonism, the trilemma shows that we do not possess any positive degree of epistemic warrant for believing and, consequently, that we are not rationally entitled to maintain any of our beliefs. We may of course still believe what we believe, but if we do so, it will be either by means of dogmatism or poor reasoning⁹.

The trilemma arises in two slightly different situations. One of them is when our aim is to dialectically justify a particular opinion of ours. Whereas in the dialectical process of justification of a particular belief, the person who puts forward a claim will need to provide some sort of epistemic warrant to what she or he has claimed. This is a natural and predictable result since every person involved in a dialog is generally entitled to ask how the other person *knows* to be true what she is claiming, rather than only guessing or assuming the claim to be true¹⁰. The least that can be expected in such a situation is some sort of explanation why the person thinks her claim is true.

Suppose a person *S* makes a claim, say *p*. Any questioner is enabled to ask whether *p* is something *S* is assuming to be true or whether *p* is something *S* knows to be the case. If *S*'s answer is that she is only assuming the claim to be true, end of the story: *S* has failed in providing what the situation required. On the other hand, if *S*'s answer is that she knows *p*, the questioner is then entitled to ask how does she know *p* is true. In response, *S* will have to advance something in support of her

⁷ As William James once put it: "There are two ways of looking at our duty in the matter of opinion. [...] *We must know the truth*; and *we must avoid error* – these are our first and great commandments as would-be knowers." See JAMES, William, *The Will to Believe*, New York: Dover, 1956.

⁸ This observation dates back to ARISTOTLE, *Posterior analytics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1901, I 3: "The upholders of circular reasoning are in the position of saying that if *A* is, *A* must be a simple way of proving anything".

⁹ It is normally said that the specific pyrrhonian view is not that knowledge has been proved impossible. The consequence of pyrrhonism would rather be to suspend judgment about the proposition we are considering, including the proposition "Knowledge is impossible," since we do not have justification to believe that it is true that knowledge is impossible to be obtained. See POPKIN, Richard, *The History of Skepticism from Savanarola to Bayle*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, and PORCHAT, Oswaldo, *Vida comum e ceticismo*, São Paulo: Ed. Brasiliense, 1993.

¹⁰ The most traditional way to ask for the epistemic justification of some opinion is through the question "How do you know?". See POLLOCK, John, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*, Rowman & Littlefield, 1999, p. 7.

claim (evidence, credentials, testimony, etc), say r . Whatever r may be, the question can then be reinstated: is r something S knows or only a guess? If the answer is that r is something S is only assuming to be true, end of the story: again, S has failed in providing what the situation requested. On the other hand, if r is something S claims to know, the questioner will once again be entitled to ask how does S know r is true.

At this point, S will find herself either facing a never-ending process (since every knowledge claim triggers a new question), or begging the question (going back to something S already cited to support her original claim), or simply having nothing else to say (which is epistemically equivalent to simply assume the claim to be true).

When S tries to explain why she thinks some proposition is true – when she tries to justify a knowledge claim – she will be driven into the trilemma. And the consequence of that, according to the skeptics, is the establishment of rational undecidability followed by suspension of judgment. In other words, when we try to justify our belief that p is true, we will be forced into an infinite regression, a circle or we will arbitrarily stop at certain point. None of these alternatives seems to be rationally acceptable since they do not give any epistemic credibility to our original claim.

If it is true – as it seems – that “when any proposition, advanced as a claim to knowledge, is challenged, there are only three ways of responding:

1. Refuse to respond, i.e. make an undefended assumption.
2. Repeat a claim made earlier in the argument, i.e. reason in a circle.
3. Keep trying to think of something new to say, i.e. embark on an infinite regress,” and that “there is no fourth option, any attempt to justify a given belief will fail, either by being interminable or by terminating in an evident unsatisfactory way.”¹¹

The second situation comes up when we, in soliloquy, epistemically evaluate our beliefs. While evaluating our own beliefs, we examine the epistemic grounds for our opinions. The epistemic evaluation of our beliefs consists of trying to find out what makes our believing in general, or a belief in particular, more than pure guessing or mere wishful thinking. In this case, we examine the epistemic grounds for our beliefs imagining all possible situations in which we could put into question the epistemic quality of our opinions. One important difference regarding the first

¹¹ See WILLIAMS, Michael, *Unnatural Doubts*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 60. In the same passage, Williams says the following: “It could be said that it looks like we are somehow obliged to engage in a process that at the end will not improve our original standing. The skeptical position seems to be that we have no option but to provide reasons to what we believe, but in doing so we will inevitably fail.”

situation is that when we epistemically evaluate our beliefs we have the opportunity to put all our beliefs into question at once: if in the dialectical scenario we consider one belief at time, in the soliloquy scenario we may consider, at some extension, the basis for our whole belief system¹².

The epistemic appraisal of our believing will lead us again to an infinite regress, a circle or an arbitrary stopping place. In many epistemic relevant aspects, this second situation does not differ from the first: the context has changed, the way we put into question our beliefs may also have changed, but the justification of our knowledge claims ends up once again in the same unsatisfactory manner.

Hence, when thinking about the epistemic grounds for our own beliefs we are in no better position than when we are involved in a dialogue. We still have only three options and these options seem to lead to suspension of judgment.

The epistemic grounds for our beliefs will generally take a form of a reason. When we provide a reason to believe that some proposition p is true it is supposed that we have some level of epistemic warrant to that belief. Having a reason to believe that p is true consists of an indication about the truth-value of p ¹³. Of course, having some reason to believe p does not necessarily guarantee p 's truth, however it gives us a fallible but important indication of the truth of p ¹⁴.

The reasons we may provide for our beliefs normally take a form of other belief(s). In general, having a reason to believe p is true means that we have another proposition, r , that justifies p , and the proposition r normally is another belief of ours. So we infer p from r . This means that most part of our epistemic justification is inferential, i.e. that we normally justify one opinion inferring one belief from another¹⁵.

Theories assorted by the name “foundationalism” prescribe an optimistic version of the pyrrhonian mode of hypothesis. According to all branches of foundationalism, there are certain “hypothesis” that we

¹² The idea of putting the whole belief system into question at once may be, though, quite complicated. See e.g. WILLIAMSON, Timothy, *Knowledge and Scepticism*, to appear in JACKSON, F. and SMITH, M., *The Oxford Handbook of Analytic Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, [forthcoming].

¹³ See CONEE, Earl and FELDMAN, Richard, *Evidentialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

¹⁴ Having a reason should not be in principle considered a necessary condition to have justification for believing. There are theories that would deny that having or providing reasons is a necessary condition to have an epistemically justified opinion. To these theories, certain connection or experiences are the sort of things that will warrant (part of, at least) our beliefs. Nevertheless it is uncontroversial that at least part of our epistemic justification depends on having reasons.

¹⁵ See DAVIDSON, Donald, *A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge*, in: LEPORE, Ernest (ed.), *Truth and Interpretation. Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, p. 307-319.

are entitled to make, or there are certain “assumptions” that can be rationally made.

For any variety of foundationalism, there must exist a particular type of belief – the *foundational* or *basic* belief – that can be rationally held even if we do not possess reasons to support them. The foundational belief should be somehow immediately, non-inferentially justified, and the rest (of the superstructure) of the belief system will depend, in one way or another, on this *foundation* for its own justification.

The fundamental idea is that the basic beliefs are not arbitrary even though we have no other belief to support them. In this sense, for foundationalism, basic beliefs are not beliefs for which we do not have supporting reasons, but rather beliefs for which reasons are not necessary.

One particularly important consequence of foundationalism is that not all justification is inferential. Hence, we may have a justified belief of which justification is not based on other belief(s). The epistemic optimism of foundationalism resides in its account of basic beliefs and decisively depends on the idea that those beliefs are somehow non-inferentially justified.

Theories identified by the name “coherentism” prescribe an optimistic version of the pyrrhonian mode of reciprocity. As its name indicates, instead of thinking of *circularity*, as the pyrrhonians suggest, we should think of *coherence*. So, rather than describing justification in terms of a belief *a* deriving its epistemic warrant from a belief *b*, and *b* ultimately deriving its epistemic warrant from belief *a*, belief *a* or *b* will be warranted, or epistemically justified to us, because of the way they may cohere with our background system of beliefs. The central idea of any form of coherentism is that epistemic justification depends on the coherence of a set of beliefs instead of depending on foundational beliefs¹⁶.

One important consequence of coherentism is that all justification is inferential: since a belief is justified exclusively in virtue of its coherence with other beliefs, nothing but a belief can justify other belief¹⁷.

Infinitism is a much less popular theory than either coherentism or foundationalism. Nevertheless, it shares a common feature with both: infinitism is also an optimistic version of one of the modes described by Sextus. To infinitism, the infinite regress, when properly understood, is not vicious.

¹⁶ What exactly “coherence” means is a complicated question. It definitely implies logical consistency but it is also clear that this is a necessary condition, not a sufficient one. Nevertheless, the point here is only to give a rough idea of what a coherence theory of epistemic justification would be.

¹⁷ See DAVIDSON, Donald, op. cit., p. 307-319.

According to Peter Klein, the sole major contemporary defender of infinitism¹⁸, this theory holds that the structure of justificatory reasons must be infinite and non-repeating.

Klein's infinitism is based on two principles: the principle of avoiding circularity (PAC) and the principle of avoiding arbitrariness (PAA).

- PAA: For all p , if a person, S , has a justification for p , then there is some reason r , available to S for p ; and there is some reason r' available to S for r ; etc.
- PAC: For all p , if a person, S , has a justification for p , then for all r , if r is in the evidential ancestry of p for S , then p is not in the evidential ancestry of r for S .

According to Klein, "It is the straightforward intuitive appeal of these principles that is the best reason for thinking that if any beliefs are justified, the structure of reasons must be infinite and non-repeating"¹⁹. Infinitism meets the conditions presented by PAC and PAA by claiming that, for a belief to be justified, there must be an infinite chain of non-repeating reasons available to S . PAA relies crucially on the notion of *availability*. For Klein, a reason for a belief must be available in both an *objective* and a *subjective* manner.

For a belief to be *objectively available* to S there must be some property that is sufficient to convert a belief into a proper reason. There are many possible accounts of objective availability and Klein notes that infinitism is compatible with any of these accounts. The essential point here is that infinitism relies on some account of objective availability in order to ensure that a belief that is part of a justification for p in fact makes p likely to be true.

For a belief to be *subjectively available* to S , the belief must be in some relevant way accessible to S . Klein's account relies on the idea that one must have a disposition to form a belief about any member of the infinite set of reasons. However, it is not required from S to have occurrent beliefs in every reason of the infinite set. So, infinitism does not claim that in order to have a justified belief it would be necessary to have an infinite number of justified beliefs.

As for coherentism, infinitism states that there is no such a thing as non-inferential justification. Infinitism holds that a belief is justified in virtue of its connection with an infinite and non-repeating chain of propositions that would serve as reasons.

¹⁸ See also TURRI, John, On the Regress Argument for Infinitism, in: *Synthese*, 166 (2009), p. 157-163, and FANTL, Jeremy, Modest Infinitism, in: *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 33 (2003), p. 537-562.

¹⁹ See KLEIN, Peter, Human Knowledge and the Infinite Progress of Reason, in: *Philosophical Studies*, 134 (2007), p. 1-17.

From a skeptical point of view, of course, infinitism, coherentism and foundationalism only masquerade the fact that there is only one rational alternative: suspension of judgment.

I do not intend to criticize either foundationalism or coherentism. My intention is only to present what seems to me the most serious problem with Klein's infinitism. Contrary to the common criticism against infinitism²⁰, its problem has nothing to do with the picture it proposes for the structure of epistemic justification. Infinitism's fundamental idea – namely, in order for a belief to be justified it will be necessary an infinite and non-repeating chain of reasons – seems correct. Also, the main motivation for infinitism – namely, neither foundationalism nor coherentism can be rationally sustained by its defenders – seems correct as well. Hence, I will not contend that infinitism correctly describes the only possible justificational structure and, as Klein has shown, that both foundationalism and coherentism cannot be rationally practiced by its defenders²¹. The problem with infinitism lies on a particular feature of the theory, at least as it is presented by Klein. It has to do with the *externalistic* character of Klein's infinitism.

Traditionally, externalism in epistemology is defined in opposition to its much more traditional competitor, internalism. Roughly, internalist accounts of justification are based on the idea that the person is – at least can be – aware of the basis for justified belief. For internalism, epistemic justification ultimately depends on some sort of *subjective access* to what justifies a belief: the factors needed for a belief to be epistemically justified for a person must be cognitively accessible to that person.

Theories that somehow or another deny this requirement will be considered externalists. So, for externalism, a person's belief might be justified solely in virtue of particular facts or relations, which are unconnected – *external* – to the subjective appreciation of the person.

In the words of Fred Dretske, the distinction between internalism and externalism is presented this way:

Externalists [are] those who think knowledge is a matter of getting yourself connected to the facts in the right way (causally, informationally, etc.), whether or not you know or understand that you are so connected [...]. Internalists, on the other hand, [are] those who require for knowledge

²⁰ See for example GILLET, Carl, *Infinitism Redux? A Response to Klein*, in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 66 (2003), p. 709-717; CLING, Andrew, *The trouble with Infinitism*, in: *Synthese*, 138 (2004), p. 101-123; BERGMANN, Michael, *Is Klein an Infinitist About Doxastic Justification?*, in: *Philosophical Studies*, 134 (2007), p. 19-24, and GINET, Carl, *Infinitism is Not the Answer to the Regress Problem*, in: STEUP, Matthias & SOSA, Ernest (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, p. 283-290.

²¹ See KLEIN, Peter, *Human Knowledge and the Infinite Regress of Reason*, op. cit., p. 297-325.

some justificatory structure in an agent's beliefs [...]. It isn't enough to be tracking (Nozick's term for being properly connected to) the facts. One must also know, be justified in believing, having a reason to think, one *is* tracking the facts. [Internalists] require not just information, but information that *that* is what we are getting²².

As for infinitism there is no such a thing as non-inferential justification, Klein's infinitism will be a type of what has been called *inferential externalism*, which holds that one can arrive at a justified belief *p* by inferring it from *r* without being aware of the epistemic connection between *p* and *r*. According to Fumerton, inferential externalism deny the second clause of the Principle of Inferential Justification:

PIJ: To be justified in believing *p* on the basis of *r* one must not only be (1) justified in believing *r*, but also (2) justified in believing that *r* makes probable *p*²³.

Klein is actually quite clear regarding the externalistic character of his infinitism. According to him:

Let me make the distinction between the three views of justification absolutely clear. The 'thin' view (the one I think is correct) holds that *S has a justification for p on the basis of r* entails that (a) *S believes r* and (b) *r is reason for p*. It does not require that, in addition, either (1) *S believes that r is a reason for p* or (2) *S is justified in believing that r is a reason for p*. The 'moderately thick view' (the one I think is plausible) adds (1) to the thin view. The 'extremely thick view' (the one I think cannot be correct) adds (2) and presumably (1) as well to the thin view²⁴.

In rejecting that a person would need to have at least an indication of the quality of the evidence she is using to maintain her beliefs in order to be justified in believing what she believes, he associates himself to a form of inferential externalism.

Consider Klein's account of what would justify for *S* the belief that *p* ("a snowstorm is likely"). For *S* to be justified in believing *p*, there must be an infinite chain of non-repeating reasons both subjectively and objectively available to *S*. Supposed that *r* is the belief "dark clouds are gathering." On Klein's view, this reason (and *r* 1, *r* 2 and so on *ad infinitum*) must be both objectively and subjectively available to *S*. In other words, with respect to *r* it must be the case that there is some

²² See DRETSKE, Fred, *Perception, Knowledge and Belief*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 82.

²³ See FUMERTON, Richard, *Metaepistemology and Skepticism*, Boston: Rowman & Littlefield Press, 1995.

²⁴ See KLEIN, Peter, Human Knowledge and Infinite Regress of Reasons, in: *Philosophical Perspectives*, 13 (1999), p. 322.

objective account that ensures that r does indeed mean that p is likely to be true and also it must be the case that S has a disposition to form the belief r . The “thin view” entails that S must believe that “a snowstorm is likely” and that “dark clouds are gathering” is a proper reason for the belief that “a snowstorm is likely.” But, as for all types of inferential externalism, for Klein’s Infinitism S does not need to be aware of the *objectivity* of the reason she is using to believe p is true. In other words, S does not need to have a clue about the effectiveness of the justifiers she is using.

The difference between infinitism and reliabilism, for instance, is that infinitism’s vocabulary favors terms such as “reasons” instead of terms as “reliability.” In a certain sense, this difference may be quite significant, but what is important here is that these theories are linked by the rejection of any *high-level* requirement according to which in order to have justification to believe p is true on the basis of r one must have justification that r justifies p .

The number of recent externalists in epistemology may suggest that many will think there is nothing wrong at all with Klein’s view. I think there are many problems with that. At this time, I will just cite one: as it has been noticed, any theory that does not impose high-level restraints, will allow for bootstrapping²⁵. In other words, if we follow theories like Klein’s infinitism, we will be able to know that we know in an unacceptable manner²⁶. If we are serious about Goldman’s recommendation that “a plausible theory ought to have the property that knowing that one knows is more difficult than simply knowing,”²⁷ we will have to recognize that Klein’s infinitism has a major flaw.

The solution to this problem would be to accept that we need some sort of indication of the quality of our reasons in order to have justification to believe on the basis of these reasons. We should accept a version of what Klein called the “extremely thick view,” substituting the “ S is justified in believing that r is the reason for p ” in the condition (2) for “ S has justification for believing that r is the reason for p .” The crucial idea is that in order for S to have justification to believe p based on reason

²⁵ Another important problem could be presented this way: “the very ease with which the reliabilist [or any inferential externalism] can respond to epistemological questions *at all levels* will, ironically, convince many that there is a kind of epistemological question we want to ask that [inferential externalists] cannot formulate given his analysis of epistemic concepts”. See FUMERTON, Richard, op. cit., p.188.

²⁶ See VOGEL, Jonathan, Reliabilism Leveled, in: *Journal of Philosophy*, 97 (2000), p. 602-623; COHEN, Stewart, Basic Knowledge and the Problem of Easy Knowledge, in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 65 (2002), p. 309-329; FLORES, Tito, Epistemic Levels, the Problem of Easy Knowledge and Skepticism, in: *Veritas*, 50:4 (2005), p. 109-129.

²⁷ See GOLDMAN, Alvin, *Epistemology and Cognition*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986, p. 57.

r , S must have some sort of indication about r 's appropriateness for justifying p .

Would the acceptance of some reformulation of the second clause of the PIJ (a reformulation that would replace the "justified in believing" in the second clause for "justification to believe") imply that infinitism would become unbearably complex? It does not seem so. If infinitism is not complex enough considering first-order justification, it won't be the second-order justification that will make it too complex. In the same way it is not necessary to have an infinite chain of *justified beliefs* in order to have justification for believing a certain proposition p , we won't need to have a super-complex chain of *justified beliefs* in order to have justification that we use appropriated reasons. All we need is to have justification available and disposition to form beliefs. Again, as it is for first-order justification, we only need that the reasons to believe that our reasons are appropriate are available to us.

All of this does not imply neither that S needs to *believe* that r is the reason for p nor that S is *justified in believing* that r is the reason for p . The point is that a responsible infinitist should understand first and second-order justification in the exact same way: the explanation why there is no problem in having and infinite and non-repeating chain of reason to have justification to believe p is the same why there is no problem in having and infinite and non-repeating chain of reasons to have justification that our justifiers do justify what we believe.

Hence, the distinct characteristic of adult human knowledge or justification is not the mere presence of reasons, or the capacity to produce reasons for beliefs. Some sort of deeper reflexivity is needed: the distinct characteristic of adult human knowledge or justification is to produce what we can identify as good reasons to believe, i.e. the capacity to evaluate what we use to epistemically base our beliefs.

So, the correct view about epistemic justification – the one that should be assumed by any infinitist – is the one that holds that S has a *justification for p on the basis of r* entails that (a) S believes r and (b) r is a (proper) reason for p and (c) S has *justification available to believe* that r is a (proper) reason for believing p . The decisive point is that without the awareness of the quality of the epistemic connection between r and p S cannot have justification to believe p on the basis of r in the first place.

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