Karl Popper's view on justification is outlined in his comments upon Fries' trilemma: (i) dogmatism; (ii) infinite regress; and (iii) psychologism. The latter is understood by him as the doctrine—characteristic for the Vienna Circle—in which there is a kind of statements that can be justified by reference to observation alone. Popper rejects psychologism on the score that statements can be justified only by some other statements. Given the theory-impregnation thesis, observation can at best motivate one to accept a statement but can never provide one with conclusive reasons for doing so. This apparently leaves us with the choice between dogmatism and infinite regress. Since dogmatism is obviously out of question, infinite regress seems to be the only alternative. Popper, however, holds that this kind of regress is innocent, for in science, unlike mathematics, there is no place for justification. Science consists of conjectures and refutations.

Still, to refute or falsify a hypothesis, some statements, the so-called basic statements, have to be accepted beforehand, even if only tentatively. The question is whether they can be rationally accepted. Popper is somewhat ambiguous about that question. To clarify his position, let us consider first some attempts to account for the rationality of the acceptance of basic statements which were made by his disciples but rejected by him.

Popper's basic statements are singular statements about events. They resemble statements of the kind called observation statements in the Vienna Circle, except that they cannot be accepted on the basis of observation alone. One solution to the problem of rational acceptance of basic statements is offered by John Watkins. Apart from 1-level statements, as he calls Popper's basic statements, he considers autopsychological reports, i.e. reports about the subject's sensations, which he calls 0-level statements. The latter are taken to be infallible, for the subject cannot be wrong about what he or she senses. Now, 1-level statements are said to be rationally accepted when they provide us with the best explanations of (infallibly) accepted 0-level statements.

Why is this proposal unacceptable for the Popperian orthodoxy? It is not that it neglects the theory-impregnation thesis. Watkins fully admits theory-impregnation of 1-level statements. Next, 0-level statements are not intended to replace the former in their role as basic statements. The role of autopsychological reports in
lending some support, as it were, for basic statements does not consist in any mysterious mental power to decide some statements—which is possibly a hallmark of psychologism in Popper's sense of the term. The putative explanatory relations between 1-level and 0-level statements are said to depend on our theories rather than on our psychological dispositions or inclinations. If this is so, why don't we block the regress with this form of fundamentalism?

What is wrong with Watkins's account, as I see it, is its commitment to the view that autopsychological reports are infallible. There are examples of situations in which we may be mistaken about our sensations or feelings. It happens sometimes that I feel hungry. I go to the kitchen, open the fridge with a variety of food, and after some reflection I realise that I do not feel like having anything. I conclude then that I must have been mistaken about my feeling of being hungry. Rather, I must have been exposed to some kind of stress, other than that of the direct need for food. Similarly, post-Freudians have always tried to persuade us that we may be mistaken about our emotions. We tend, for example, to push our hostility towards some people into the unconscious. Examples of that kind run counter the widespread intuition that there is no difference, given the success grammar of perception terms, between seeming to sense or feel something and genuinely sensing or feeling. Consequently, it appears implausible to accept first-person authority, or assume that we have privileged epistemic access, in reflection, to our mental states.

Another departure from the Popperian orthodoxy is offered by Elie Zahar. He tries to combine the Popperian tradition with that of phenomenology. Instead of Watkins's autopsychological reports, he suggests taking 0-level statements as descriptions of noemata constituted on the occasion of observations. 0-level statements, so conceived, can take the role of the empirical basis over 1-level statements. While their descriptions may be theory-impregnated and therefore fallible, the presence or absence of certain noemata is something that can be established beyond any doubt. Again, by introducing motifs borrowed from phenomenology, Zahar aims at blocking the regress while avoiding psychologism. Noemata are, after all, phenomenologically reduced and hence non-psychological entities.

Still, noemata are supposed to be accessible in reflection in an epistemologically privileged way. And it is this epistemic privilege and first-person authority which cannot be accepted by the orthodox Popperian. To conclude, what Popper opposes in his discussion of Fries's trilemma is internalism rather than psychologism. Popper's opposition to internalism takes the form of his theory of World Three.

The internalist thesis is that in order to be justified in believing p, one is bound to believe that one is justified in believing p. In other words, if one does not believe that one is justified in believing p, one is not justified in believing p. This is so because being justified is a mental state and it is a mental state of the sort which, in Chisholm's classical formulation, is accessible in reflection.

Suppose that I take part in a TV game. I am asked what is Popper's first name. I choose correctly the answer "Karl" among four alternatives. But I am not sure whether I am justified in believing that. I may think at that moment that I am
making a sheer guess. For the internalist, in the circumstances, I am not justified in believing that Popper's first name is Karl.

Rejecting first-person authority, however, one has to admit that I may be wrong in thinking that I am making a sheer guess. I may have learned Popper's first name in a reliable way and then forgot it. The question may have set my unconsciousness to work and produced the correct answer. The fact that at the moment I am not aware of the source of my belief and its reliability is, from that point of view, irrelevant for the question of my being justified or not in believing it. This is the core of externalism.

So far, the only seriously discussed form of externalism is Goldman's reliabilism. For the reliabilist, one is justified in believing \( p \) when one has arrived at the belief in question using a reliable method of belief-formation, independently of whether one is aware of how one has arrived at that belief. Consequently, I am justified in believing that Popper's first name is Karl when I have learned it from a reliable source, independently of whether I am aware of how I have learned it.

Whether Popper's World Three theory is a form of externalism or not is difficult to say. This is because Popper "does not believe in beliefs", i.e. knowledge is not for him a sort of belief. Instead of the subject's mind, objective knowledge inhabits World Three, the world of minds' products: theories, hypotheses, problems, arguments, etc. Another difficulty is that the internalist-externalist controversy is about the nature of justification. Popper, however, rejects the very question of justification, at least as far as scientific rather than mathematical knowledge is concerned. Still, it does make sense within the Popperian framework about ones rational tentative acceptance of a hypothesis. Consequently, one can possibly draw from Popper's writings a lesson about the internalist-externalist controversy, provided that rational tentative acceptance is taken as a substitute for justification. Whether that lesson can be drawn and what it may look like, I leave open to question for the time being.

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