

<p>1.1) Drayson's (Basic) Argument</p> <p>Williamson and Clark & Chalmers both argue for externalism about mental states by using the same appeal to explanatory generality to reject the same facet of Psychological Internalism. Even though these arguments are logically distinct, if you take one argument to be successful, you must also accept the other.</p>	
<p>1.2) Psychological Internalism (PI)</p> <p>A methodological principle of psychological science that claims causal explanations in psychology should only invoke internal states of the subject.</p> <p>It is not a metaphysical claim about mental states or reductionist.</p> <p>This is inherently at odds with content externalist theories.</p>	<p>1.3) Externalism About Mental States</p> <p>The content of your mental states can be determined by factors external to the thinker.</p> <p>Putman: associating the sea with water or <i>twater</i> depends on our social-linguistic environments</p> <p>Williamson: we should conceive of the mind and the external world as dependant variables – therefore, mental states (meaning belief itself, not just it's content) can depend constitutively on the external world and knowledge is a factive mental state</p> <p>Clark & Chalmers: if there is an external entity that interacts with a person in the right kind of way, it can create a coupled system that instructs behaviour in the same way as neural mechanisms – the components external to the mind/body are parts of the cognitive process</p> <p>Any argument for externalism about mental states that attempts to overcome PI, must also overcome the factoring problem.</p>
<p>1.2) The Factoring Problem</p> <p>Often actions are determined by <i>factive propositional attitudes</i> (knowing, remembering, seeing), but this seems to violate psychological internalism.</p> <p>To deal with this, defenders of PI claim that a factive propositional attitudes is a combination of a non-factive propositional attitude and other factors – and that the propositional attitude invokes only internal factors and is the basis of any psychological explanation.</p>	
<p>2.2) Williamson's Burglar</p> <p>A burglar spends all night ransacking a house, risking discovery, because he knew there was a diamond in the house.</p> <p>If this burglar believed that there was a diamond in the house, this would not seem to account for his persistence in looking for the diamond as beliefs (even true beliefs) are less stable than knowledge.</p> <p>There will be some way to factor knowledge into some "maximally specific knowledge-entailing conjunction of internal and external factors" that would adequately explain the burglar's actions.</p>	<p>2.2) Clark & Chalmers' Notebook</p> <p>Otto has memory problems, so keeps a notebook filled with important information. When he wants to go to the museum, he checks the notebook for the address – after which he has the occurrent belief that the museum is on 53rd St. Before checking this notebook, he had the dispositional belief that the museum is on 53rd St – the belief being dictated by something external to the body.</p> <p>There is a way to argue that Otto's dispositional belief is a hybrid of internal mental state (Otto's belief he has recorded the information in his notebook) and external fact.</p>
<p>Argument Against Factoring:</p> <p>Although this conjunction of internal and external factors would provide as accurate an explanation as appeal to knowledge, it is less general.</p>	<p>Argument Against Factoring:</p> <p>Although a conjunction of internal/external factors would provide as accurate an explanation as external dispositional knowledge, it is less general.</p>
<p>2.3) Appeal to Explanatory Generality</p> <p>When making an explanation, we must balance how general our argument is with how accurate our argument is. A proposed explanation must be detailed enough to adequately explain the situation but if given two equally accurate explanations, the more general is preferable.</p> <p>Drayson highlights that both Williamson and Clark & Chalmers appeal to this principle explanatory generality in defending their externalist arguments. They both must overcome the factoring argument of PI to successfully argue that:</p> <p>Williamson: knowledge is a prime mental condition, which plays an ineliminable role in psychological explanation.</p>	

Clark & Chalmers: dispositional belief plays ineliminable role in psychological explanation.

Both argue that, although it is possible for a defender of PI to factor the explanation of the relevant mental states into internal and external components, doing so will result in a loss of explanatory generality. As arguments that are equally accurate and more general are better, Williamson and Clark & Chalmers argue their explanations are preferable.

3.1) Suggested Significance of the Similarities

“I want to suggest that we can gain a new perspective on the relationship between the two approaches by understanding them as having a shared opponent in the proponent of PI, whom they attempt to defeat by appealing to the same explanatory virtues.” – Drayson, p. 161

Williamson would not be able to deny that Otto’s dispositional belief is realised due to factors external to the body without denying the grounds of explanatory generality which he uses himself.

This does not seem to be a problem, as Williamson has a non-reductionist view of mental states and has no commitments about the location of mental states.

Clark & Chalmers would not be able to argue that knowledge is a hybrid of internal mental states and external factors without denying the explanatory generality which underpins their argument.

They must accept that Otto’s knowledge may play a role in psychological explanation distinct from belief. This does not seem to be in contrast with their original argument.

3.2) Clark’s Vehicle Externalism

Clark has since developed a more reductionist perspective on the extended mind. He operates on the assumption that being in a mental state involves physically manifesting a specific mental entity – a cognitive vehicle, which can exist as functional state of the brain, but also outside the human organism. Under this view, Otto’s notebook is the **vehicle** of his belief content.

Clark’s conception of cognition focuses on the role of physical or functional properties (vehicles) rather than semantic features like truth-values. Whereas Williamson holds that knowledge-states play a fundamentally different role in psychological explanations than belief-states – partly in terms of the truth of their content. This contrast leads to two problems:

1) Committing to a mechanistic approach to cognition would usually mean denying that knowledge is a prime mental condition, but Clark cannot deny Williamson’s argument without denying the appeal to explanatory generality which grounds of his own.

2) If mental states in general are non-composite, they can’t be token particulars of vehicles.

If we follow Drayson’s argument that structurally Clark & Chalmers’ and Williamson’s arguments are similar enough that accepting one necessitates accepting the other, then Clark’s new research seems to unavoidably contradict with his old.

4) Problems for Drayson’s Argument

1. Although certainly an interesting comparison, her argument seems to be easy to sidestep. Defenders of vehicle externalism could argue for extended cognition in a way that doesn’t rely on appealing to explanatory generality, or one could claim that Clark doesn’t rely on the argument from explanatory generality (even Drayson admits he does not explicitly refer to the simplicity principle). Or they could simply deny that the other argument is producing a solution as accurate as the factored solution.
2. There is a question of whether the externalist goals of Clark & Chalmers and Williamson are similar enough to make this comparison productive. Clark & Chalmers are trying to overcome internal/external boundaries associated with propositional attitudes Williamson, despite having no commitment either way about the locationality, is arguing about the content of mental states.
3. Drayson is applying a concept to two logically distinct arguments. Because we can bypass this similarity, it does not seem to be metaphysically significant. Additionally, explanatory generality, like the soul, is an appealing concept, which would be useful to explain all kinds of mental phenomena. However, as we cannot concretely measure explanatory generality it becomes, like the soul, epistemologically problematic. Therefore, the use of it makes the basis of the argument unstable.