Ian Evans, Nicholas D. Smith, *Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012)

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The book is not only an up-to-date introduction to the issues of knowledge and epistemology, but also an interesting perspective of what knowledge means for humans and non-human animals. A great deal of attention is given to the current trends on the subject matter, so the reader has access not only to the traditional approaches, but also to the newest theories. Moreover, Ian Evans and Nicholas D. Smith's book frames a theory of knowledge. Structured in nine chapters, the book *Knowledge* proposes the reader in the end a very interesting and extremely well written perspective of knowledge in the human race and not only.

In the first chapter, "Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge," the two authors discuss the epistemological issue of knowledge, and inevitable get to intuition, which they try to eliminate as much as possible. Using Socrates' ideas, Evans and Smith say that in order to turn beliefs into knowledge we need *warrant*, something that differentiates knowledge from other forms of true beliefs. The general idea is that knowledge can be analyzed into more fundamental mental, environmental, and epistemic concepts, especially beliefs, truth and warrant. Discussing on *kinds of knowledge,* Evans and Smith criticize the importance that some authors give to propositions and propose that we conceive knowledge strictly in terms of information. They prefer the informational dimension of knowledge as they valorize the concepts and theories which state that animals are able to have certain degree of knowledge. Their argumentation is based on the fact that non-linguistic animals process information, although they don't use information and they don't process it through language and propositions. What is interesting in this case is the fact that Evans and Smith admit that knowledge depends on mental representations and, as far as we know, non-human animals don't reach mental representation. This problem remains unanswered throughout the book.

Highly influenced by James Pryor's work, Evans and Smith concentrate in their second chapter on Descartes, whom they refer to as an ambitious anti-skeptic, at the same time proposing a moderate anti-skepticism. As we know, Descartes' project discusses the matter of false beliefs and knowledge, aiming to find something about which we can be certain and which would serve as the

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foundation of knowledge. Evans and Smith consider that Descartes embraces an ambitious anti-skepticism approach as he tries to identify which are the things about which we cannot be deceived, stating that we can discuss about indubitable knowledge. On the other hand, the two authors ask "how we can know things *in spite* of the possibility that we might be deceived?" (p. 23). The second chapter shows not only the limits of Descartes as an ambitious anti-skeptic, but also the limits of Descartes' project in terms of knowledge. In one way, the critique of Evans and Smith is not new, as Rudolf Carnap demonstrated in 1933 that the Cartesian reasoning contains a logical error. What Evans and Smith bring is the new perspective on Descartes' fallacious demonstration. If Carnap made in his *L'ancienne et la nouvelle logique* a logical analysis of language and showed that the French philosopher's *Cogito, ergo sum* contains a profound logical error generated by the wrong use of the verb 'to be' in language, Evans and Smith put Descartes' reasoning through an epistemological analysis and show that he disregarded the matter of existence *at a time.* Using his method, say the two authors, "perhaps Descartes can establish his own existence, but it is existence *at that time.* How does one establish one's existence *through time,* and have the same certainty of that continuing existence?" (p. 32).

The pressure of the skeptical paradox is highly visible in the third chapter, "Contextualism":

1. I know that I have two hands.

2. Since my knowing that I have two hands entails that I am not deceived about that (a brain in a vat or deceived by Descartes' demon, etc.), and I also know *this* entailment, then if I know that I have two hands, then I also know I am not being deceived.

3. I don't know that I am not being deceived.

No doubt, as the authors say, this skeptical paradox shaped in this trilemma intrigues as at least one statement has to be false. The big challenge is to figure out which statement must be eliminated. A way of solving the problem is to refer to contextualism, as the verb 'to know' from the trilemma is *context sensitive.* In fact, Evans and Smith show that in terms of philosophy of language different words are sensitive to different features of the context. Something we say can be true in a context and false in another. Following the chapter we see particularities of contextualism, presented by Evans and Smith as quantifier domains, gradable adjectives and knowledge contextualism. Searching for a complex view of contextualism, Evans and Smith use Stewart Cohen's perspective as an internalist, pointing that Cohen thinks of warrants in terms of *rationality* and *justification.* On the other hand, we see Timothy Williamson's perspective on contextualism,

stating that contextualists postulate a semantic blindness. In this respect, Evans and Smith answer to Williamson, saying that he offers a "fallibilist invariantist explanation of our intuitions. If his explanation is as good as, or better than, the contextualists', then we have been given no compelling reason to accept contextualism" (p. 69).

"Warrant of Justification," the fourth chapter, explores the epistemological internalist approach of warrants as justification. In the authors' opinion, justification is a relation between states *internal* to the mind of the one justified. It is of course the case of providing evidence or reasons for the beliefs in question. Justification, just like information, comes in degrees, and in this specific aspect, Evans and Smith show that it is important that when we consider different accounts of justification as warrant, we must have clear three questions: "is the justification a matter of justifiable or justified belief?; is the justification subjective or objective?; and is the justification really adequate for warrant?" (p. 77). Also, the fourth chapter discusses in an interesting way some objections to traditional fundationalism, pointing Fumerton, BonJour, and DePaul's perspectives on the matter. Also, "Warrant of Justification" is a good presentation of Cohen's approach on *easy knowledge*.

Evans and Smith point the matter of defeated justification in chapter five "Justification, Defeaters, and Basing," stating that for the epistemological paradigm it is necessary that justification be *undefeated.* Also, an important aspect vividly discussed by Evans and Smith is the 'basing relation,' useful in distinguishing between a belief that is justifiable and one that is justified. The difference showed in the book is that "a belief must be *based on* the evidence that makes it justifiable." (p. 111) Regarding the basing relation, the two authors provide a most up-to-date introduction on the matter, as they show casual theories of basing and doxastic theories of the basing relation. Also, the book presents Keith Lehrer's perspective on basing relation, pointing that Lehrer challenges the connection between justified belief and the basing relation, and this goes hand in hand with Evans and Smith's intuition that for a belief to be justified by some reasons, it must be based on them.

The sixth chapter, "Externalist Theories of Warrant," considers theories quite different from what we have seen in the last chapters. The most important differentiation is connected to the way these theories refer to warrant. If until now we saw theories that conceived warrant as justifications, now we deal with theories that consider warrant as cognitive processes and the relation that comes between the knower and the known. Therefore, unlike internalists, externalists consider that warrant derives from "facts about the cognition in question that are

external to the epistemic agent's awareness." (p. 124) The chapter starts from Alvin Goldman's question "What is Justifiable Belief?" and states that the answer should be searched in the result of a reliable belief-forming-process, perspective that we call reliabilism. Discussing the externalist theories of warrant, Evans and Smith use Robert Nozick's tracking theory to argue about abstract knowledge, stating that "properly understood, then, the tracking theory (TT) explains why many ordinary cases of knowledge are, in fact, knowledge." (p. 131)

Within the seventh chapter we reach the "Epistemic Evaluation." Here Evans and Smith discuss Jaegwon Kim's writings about the limits of externalism, where he shows that externalists do not explain the evaluative nature of justification, or how or why the satisfaction of certain epistemic norms might be required for knowledge. The chapter shows that we must have norms to value judgments. Epistemic norms are fundamental as they are seen often as advices about how to reach true beliefs. The chapter states that epistemic norms are both categorical and instrumental. At the end of the chapter, after comparing the two approaches and underlining their potential, Evans and Smith state that in their belief "a complete theory of knowledge will accommodate deontological claims about what we ought to believe, consequentialist claims about success in achieving certain goals, procedural claims about which epistemic practices should be followed, and also claims about what does and does not count as epistemically virtuous." (p. 161)

Chapter eight and nine end the book in a very interesting way, talking about "A New Theory of Knowledge, Part 1: The Desiderata and Non-Human Knowledge" and "A New Theory of Knowledge, Part 2: Human Knowledge." These two chapters not only provide a powerful analysis of knowledge, but also a theory of knowledge, remarkably simple in form, as the authors say. Once again, considering that knowledge is being informational rather than propositional, Evans and Smith have five desiderata for an adequate theory of knowledge, stating that non-human animals may achieve knowledge. Evans and Smith's desiderata stand along the externalist conception of warrant, but add a "way to include the requirement that appropriate epistemic evaluations also be satisfied, for knowledge." (p. 181)

As Evans and Smith mention, their approach is not far from the latest research in animal cognition, the study of cognitive and communication behavior of animals. The new theory of knowledge regarding the humans starts and ends with the justification requirement as "we require justification for knowledge in some cases, because that is what is required for the cognitive capacities that are our *natural endowment* to function properly." (p. 183) Also, Evans and Smith

show that, contrary to Plantinga, we will best understand the fact that we have the cognitive capacities that we do as a *natural endowment*. Their presence in us must be explained not by an appeal to some supernatural force, but rather as the result of natural selection. Therefore, the two authors conclude that the account they provide includes elements of internalism, justification and epistemic evaluation and is, therefore, naturalistic.

Finally, in their book *Knowledge* Evans and Smith state that knowledge is what is produced by a cognizer when that cognizer uses "veridically reliable cognitive processes" which function adequate in an environment (p. 203). The ability to reason has an important role in the reliability for our cognitive functioning. But, one of the last statements of the book speaks for itself: "accordingly, knowledge for human beings is the same in kind as knowledge for other sorts of animals: it is what is achieved when our veridically reliable cognitive capacities function properly." (p. 203) In one way, Evans and Smith are right. But, they may be right just because they don't ask a fundamental question regarding knowledge: does knowledge involve self-consciousness? And if so, how do non-human animals reach it, if ever?