

Epistemology

XVth Bled Philosophical Conference

May 28th - June 2nd 2007

Bled, Hotel Kompas

<http://www.bled-conference.si>

Slovenian Society for Analytic Philosophy and Philosophy of Science

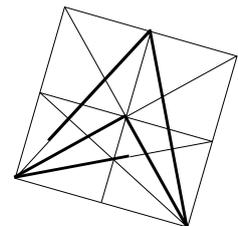
Društvo za analitično filozofijo in filozofijo znanosti

▪ GENERAL INFORMATION

Philosophical conferences at Bled (Slovenia) were initiated, on the suggestion by John Biro, in 1993 at first as a continuation of the IUC - Dubrovnik postgraduate course in philosophy but they gradually started a life of their own, with the help of Eugene Mills. The first week of June at Bled is traditionally reserved for a conference dedicated to various topics in the field of analytical philosophy. Freedom, Determinism and Responsibility is the fifteenth Bled Philosophical Conference. All events take place in Hotel Kompas (Triglav conference hall), Cankarjeva 2, Bled.

▪ ORGANISATION

The conference is organized by a team consisting of Mylan Engel of the Northern Illinois University, Matjaž Potrč of the University of Ljubljana, Nenad Miščević of the University of Maribor, and Danilo Šuster of the University of Maribor. The conference is included in the program of the activities of the Slovenian Society for Analytic Philosophy. A special issue of *Acta Analytica* (<http://rcum.uni-mb.si/~actaana/>) will publish (selected and refereed) papers from the conference.



PROGRAM

Monday, May 28th

9:00-9:15 Welcoming Remarks

Symposium: Externalism, Skepticism, and Closure

9:15-10:00 Ruth Weintraub, “What if Scepticism Is True? An Exercise in Reliabilism”

10:00-10:45 Claudio de Almeida, “Closure, Defeasibility and Conclusive Reasons”

Symposium: Epistemic Probability, Particularism, and Partial Belief

11:00-11:45 Terry Horgan and Matjaz Potrč, “Objective Epistemic Likelihood and Particularist Epistemic Normativity”

11:45-12:30 Brad Amendt, “Deliberation and the Logic of Partial Belief”

Basic Seemings vs. Direct Acquaintance as Basis for Non-Inferential Justification

2:15-3:00 Michael Tooley, “The Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism”

Ad Hominem Arguments: Virtuous or Vicious?

3:00-3:45 Heather Battaly, “Attacking Character”

Symposium: The Value of Knowledge Problem

4:00-4:45 Christian Piller, “The Value of Knowledge Problem”

4:45-5:30 Christoph Jäger and Darrell Rowbottom, “Towards a Contextualist Account of Epistemic Values”

What Must Go: Closure, Easy Knowledge, or Skepticism?

5:45-6:30 Steven Luper, “Easy Knowledge”

Tuesday, May 29th

Symposium: Epistemic Standards: Stable or Variable?

9:00-9:45 Baron Reed, “A Defense of Stable Invariantism”

9:45-10:30 Mikael Janvid, “Defeaters and Rising Standards of Justification”

Symposium: Knowledge and Perspective

10:45-11:30 Boran Berčić, “Argument from Relativity and Inference to the Best Explanation”

11:30-12:15 Patrick Greenough, “Knowledge, Relativism, and the Future”

Symposium: Sosa, Safety, and Knowledge

2:00-2:45 Danilo Šuster, “Sosa on Safety Conditionals”

2:45-3:30 Peter Baumann, “Is Knowledge Safe?”

3:40-4:25 Nenad Miscevic, “Animal Apriority: Sosa and Intuitional Knowledge”

4:30-6:00 Student Session on *Sosa*

Wednesday, May 30th*Externalism, Internalism, and Foundationalism*

9:00-9:45 Gerhard Schurz, “Third-Person Internalism: A Critical Examination of Externalism and a Foundationalist Alternative”

Symposium: Rational Epistemic Disagreement?

10:00-10:45 Michael Lynch, “Epistemic Disagreement”

10:45-11:30 Bryan Frances, “Who Am I to Disagree with David Lewis”

Afternoon Free. Enjoy Bled!

Thursday, May 31st*More: Epistemic Disagreement*

8:30-9:15 Alvin Goldman, “Epistemic Relativism and Reasonable Disagreement”

The Epistemic Value of Philosophical Intuitions

9:15-10:00 Bruce Russell, “Philosophical Intuitions”

Symposium: Responses to the Skeptic

10:15-11:00 Matthias Steup, “Evidentialist Anti-Skepticism”

11:00-11:45 William Edward Morris, “Detached Doubt”

12:00-12:45 Ernest Sosa, "Moore's Proof"

Knowledge Ascriptions and Standards Variability: Semantics vs. Pragmatics

2:30-3:15 Stewart Cohen, "Three Approaches to the Airport Cases"

Knowing Wh__ : The Question-Relative Conception of Knowledge

3:15-4:00 Jonathan Schaffer, "Knowledge in the Image of Assertion"

Symposium: Subject Sensitive Invariantism, Practical Reasoning, and Assertion

4:15-5:00 Jessica Brown, "Practical Reasoning, Knowledge and Subject Sensitive Invariantism"

5:00-5:45 Mylan Engel Jr., "Contextualism, Subject Sensitive Invariantism, and the Knowledge View of Assertion"

Conference Dinner (time and location to be announced)!

Friday, June 1st

Symposium: Coherence, Justification, and Knowledge

9:30-10:15 James Van Cleve, "Can Coherence Generate Justification Ex Nihilo?"

10:15-11:00 Ram Neta, "Coherence, the Preface, and the Lottery"

Symposium: Epistemic Justification

11:15-12:00 Marcus Willaschek, "An Attributivist Account of Epistemic Justification"

12:00-12:45 Nikolaj Nottelmann, "Two Puzzles of Justification Transmission in Light of the Deontological Conception of Epistemic Justification"

Epistemic Justification Continued

2:30-3:15 Al Casullo, "What Is Entitlement?"

Epistemology and Degrees of Contingency

3:15-4:00 Miklavž Vospernik, "Epistemological Arguments for Contingency of Natural Laws"

Self-Knowledge

4:15-5:00 Alex Byrne, "Privileged and Peculiar Access"

Knowledge and Moral Intuition

5:00-5:45 Friderik Klampfer, “The Psychology and Epistemology of Moral Intuition(s)”

Saturday, June 2nd

Symposium: Knowledge, Skepticism, and Probability

9:00-9:45 Igal Kvat, “Probabilistic Knowledge, Retraction and Contextualism”

9:45-10:30 Joshua Cowley, “Skeptical Hypotheses: From Possibility to Probability”

Knowledge and Perceptual Content

10:45-11:30 Susanna Schellenberg, “Perceptual Content, Representations, and Relations”

Epistemic Subjectivism and Rational Disagreement

11:30-12:15 Wayne Riggs, “The Risk of (Mild) Epistemic Subjectivism”

12:15-12:30 ***Closing Remarks***

Abstracts

Brad Armendt // Arizona State University, USA

Deliberation and the Logic of Partial Belief

What can rational pragmatic deliberation indicate about the logic of partial belief? Belief clearly influences deliberation. The principle that rational belief is stake-invariant rules out at least one way that deliberation might influence belief. How intimately a belief's strength is related to its guidance of deliberation depends upon which understanding of partial belief is at work. The overtly pragmatic conception derived from Ramsey and de Finetti closely ties strength of belief to deliberation, but the connection is not quite as intimate as often supposed. Probabilism is supposed to be the logic of such belief, but wrong-norm objections cast doubt on defenses of that idea. I explore the conception of partial belief, the demand for 'depragmatized' defenses, and the principle that belief is stake-invariant.

Heather Battaly // California State University Fullerton, USA

Attacking Character

It is commonly thought that we should evaluate arguments by assessing their validity or strength, and the truth or falsity of their premises. Attacking the character of the arguer is nearly always irrelevant and fallacious. But if virtue epistemology is correct, then attacking the arguer's character is precisely what we should do. Hence, the following theses are inconsistent: (AHF) *Ad hominem* arguments are nearly always fallacious; and (VEK) Knowledge requires possession of the intellectual virtues. If (VEK) is true, then attacking the intellectual character of the arguer is legitimate, not fallacious. Which of these theses should we abandon? One might think that the answer is easy: this inconsistency gives us good reason to reject virtue epistemology and (VEK). However, I will argue that though (VEK) is too strong, a weaker version of it is plausible. There are some cases in which the possession of intellectually virtuous motivations and intellectual continence (*enkrateia*) are required for knowledge. Hence, *ad hominem* arguments against the arguer's intellectual motivations will sometimes be appropriate.

Peter Baumann // University of Aberdeen, UK

Is Knowledge Safe?

One of the most interesting accounts of knowledge which have been recently proposed is the safety account of knowledge (see Sosa 1999, Williamson 2000, Pritchard 2005a, b). According to it, one only knows that *p* if one's true belief that *p* could not have easily been false: *S* believes that *p* *fi* *p* (where "fi" stands for the counterfactual conditional). I present a counter-example, and discuss attempts to fix the problem. It turns out that there is a deeper underlying problem which does not allow for a solution that would help the safety theorist. Knowledge is not safe.

Boran Bercic // University of Rijeka, Croatia

Argument from Relativity and Inference to the Best Explanation

In this paper author offers an analysis of one type of standard skeptical arguments - notorious Aenesidemus' ten modes, presented by Sextus Empiricus in *The Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. The general pattern of Aenesidemus' arguments is: P1: In circumstances C_1 object x looks ϕ . P2: In circumstances C_2 object x looks not- ϕ . P3: Object x either is ϕ or is not- ϕ . P4: We have no way to find out whether x really is as it looks in C_1 or as it looks in C_2 . K: Therefore, we have to suspend judgment about x 's being ϕ . However, Aenesidemus goes wrong here: P4 is false. As far as the hypothesis that x is ϕ enters into the best explanation of the fact that x looks not- ϕ in C_2 , we are justified in accepting the belief that x is ϕ . This view supports a coherentist and inferential picture of our knowledge. Also, a number of Aenesidemus' examples may be explained away as cases of violation of a pragmatically justified convention, conflation of secondary and primary properties, etc. Therefore, the author believes that Aenesidemus' modes pose no serious threat to our knowledge, although they do show that things need not be as they appear to us.

Jessica Brown // The University of St Andrews, UK
Practical Reasoning, Knowledge and Subject Sensitive Invariantism

A number of authors have recently suggested that knowledge is the norm of practical reasoning, or reasoning about what to do (e.g. Fantl and McGrath, Hawthorne, Stanley). If they are correct, then one constraint on any account of knowledge is that it respects this connection. In particular, it's been argued that the connection favours one controversial account of knowledge, subject sensitive invariantism, or SSI, according to which whether one knows that p depends in part on the stakes. I argue against the claim that knowledge is the norm of practical reasoning. This seriously undermines the case for SSI.

Alex Byrne // MIT, USA
Privileged and Peculiar Access

Self-knowledge exhibits two distinctive characteristics. First, beliefs about one's own mind are more likely to amount to knowledge than beliefs about others' minds (privileged access). Second, one knows one's own mind by a method that has no application to others' minds (peculiar access). Any theory of self-knowledge must explain these two characteristics. The paper makes some suggestions.

Albert Casullo // University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA
What is Entitlement?

In his seminal paper, "Content Preservation," Tyler Burge defends an original account of testimonial knowledge and its relationship to a priori knowledge. The originality of the account is due, in part, to the fact that it is cast within a novel epistemic framework. The central feature of the framework is the introduction of the concept of *entitlement*, which is alleged to be a distinctive type of positive epistemic support or warrant. My focus in this paper is Burge's conception of entitlement and there are three primary issues that I wish to address. What is the relationship between entitlement and the more traditional concept of justification? In what sense is entitlement epistemically externalist? Has Burge introduced a new epistemic concept or merely coined a new term for a familiar epistemic concept.

Claudio de Almeida // PUCRS, Brazil

Closure, Defeasibility and Conclusive Reasons

Wherein it is argued, on the basis of new counterexamples, that: (a) as popularly construed, epistemic closure does fail; (b) the conflict over which principles of epistemic closure should command attention involves a number of very surprising errors; (c) when successfully put into perspective, closure failure can be seen not to be anything like the catastrophe that some claim it is (or would be); (d) convergence between opposing factions in the debate is within reach for reasonable minds. References include Robert Audi, Anthony Brueckner, Stewart Cohen, Fred Dretske, Richard Feldman, Gilbert Harman, John Hawthorne, Peter Klein, Jonathan Kvanvig, Douglas Odegard, Doris Olin, John Pollock, Sherrilyn Roush, Gail Stine, Crispin Wright, among others.

Stewart Cohen // Arizona State University, USA

Three Approaches to the Airport Case

The airport case (along with DeRose's bank case) seems to show that knowledge ascriptions involve some kind of standards variability. I discuss three attempts to explain this. The first locates the variability in the semantics of 'knows', the second places the variability in the circumstances of the subject, and the third locates the variability in the pragmatics of knowledge ascriptions.

Joshua Cowley // Bilkent University Ankara, Turkey

Skeptical Hypotheses: From Possibility to Probability

A common argument for skepticism begins by considering an ordinary belief, such as, "I am wearing a watch," and a skeptical hypothesis, such as, "I am a brain in a vat," and proceeds as follows: 1. If I know that I am wearing a watch, then I know that I am not a brain in a vat. 2. I do not know that I am not a brain in a vat. Therefore, 3. I do not know that I am wearing a watch. However, a weakness in this argument lies in the fanciful nature of its skeptical hypothesis. For the argument to be convincing we must accept that the mere logical possibility of P is sufficient to conclude, "I do not know that not P." This paper explores some skeptical scenarios which leave the realm of fantasy and enter the realm of reality. These scenarios are lived by real people and there is a small but very real probability that you are one of them.

Mylan Engel Jr. // Northern Illinois University, USA

Contextualism, Subject Sensitive Invariantism, and the Knowledge View of Assertion

The *knowledge view of assertion* [KVA] holds that knowledge is *the* norm governing assertion. According to the KVA norm, one should flat-out assert that *p* only if one knows that *p*. Both Keith DeRose and John Hawthorne embrace the knowledge view of assertion, and both claim that the knowledge view of assertion supports their preferred account of the semantics of knowledge ascriptions better than any competing account. I argue that the knowledge view of assertion harmonizes rather poorly with each of their respective semantics for knowledge ascriptions. I show that both of their semantic accounts give rise to *the problem of semantic ignorance vis-à-vis knowledge ascriptions*, in that both accounts have the result

knowledge ascribers will often fail to know what propositions are expressed by their knowledge-ascribing sentences. I then show that this semantic ignorance creates a serious problem for advocates of the knowledge view of assertion, at least where asserting epistemic propositions is concerned. The upshot is this: When coupled with the KVA norm, both SSI semantics and gap-view semantics have the untoward result the knowledge ascribers will frequently deserve censure for uttering the knowledge-ascribing sentences they utter. To avoid this counterintuitive result, they must either jettison the KVA norm or abandon their preferred semantics. Either way, the knowledge view of assertion fails to support their preferred semantics.

Bryan Frances // Fordham University, USA

Who Am I to Disagree with David Lewis?

Philosophers often find themselves in disagreement with contemporary philosophers they know full well to be their epistemic superiors on the topics relevant to the disagreement. This looks epistemically irresponsible. I offer a detailed investigation of this problem of the *reflective epistemic renegade*. I argue that although in some cases the renegade is not epistemically blameworthy, and the renegade situation is significantly less common than most would think, in a troublesome number of cases in which the situation arises the renegade is blameworthy in her disagreement with recognized epistemic superiors. I also offer some thoughts on what it would mean for philosophical practice for us to refrain from being renegades. Paper is available at: <http://www.fordham.edu/philosophy/frances/disagreement.pdf>

Alvin Goldman // Rutgers University, USA

Epistemic Relativism and Reasonable Disagreement

This paper advances a new conception of relativism called "Objectivity-Based Relativism". It occupies a middle ground between two more extreme forms of relativism, descriptive pluralism and epistemic nihilism. Unlike epistemic nihilism, this form of relativism does not deny that there is an objectively correct system of epistemic norms. Unlike descriptive pluralism, it does not merely assert that different communities and cultures actually accept diverse epistemic norms; it also asserts that members of these communities are justified in (some of) these acceptances. The paper also discusses to a limited extent the issue of reasonable disagreement. Even if epistemic objectivism is true, it argues, there are reasons why two or more people who share their evidence with one another can be epistemically reasonable in having different credal attitudes toward a proposition.

Patrick Greenough // The University of St. Andrews, UK

Knowledge, Relativism, and the Future

John McFarlane (2003, forthcoming) has argued that the open future gives rise to the following puzzle: On the one hand, it is plausible to think that my assertion that there will be a sea-battle tomorrow is neither true nor false at the time of utterance. On the other, at the end of the next day with a sea-battle raging (or not), it seems plausible to say that my utterance was true or was false. Call this "The Perspective Paradox". To resolve the paradox, McFarlane thinks that utterance truth should be relativised to a context of assessment. I show that McFarlane's relativism runs into trouble with respect to various epistemic versions of The

Perspective Paradox whereby he is committed to the implausible result that epistemic probability, safety, knowledge, and assertibility are all relative to a context of assessment. One dire consequence of such assessment-sensitivity is that future contingents are all unassertible at the time of utterance.

Terry Horgan and Matjaž Potrč // University of Arizona, USA and University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Objective Epistemic Likelihood and Particularist Epistemic Normativity

This paper will articulate and defend two key ideas. First is the idea that justified belief is grounded in relations of *objective epistemic likelihood* that obtain between a given belief and other items of information available to the cognitive agent. The relevant notion of likelihood, which we call “transglobal likelihood,” will be characterized in a manner similar in spirit to the form of reliability for belief-forming processes called “transglobal reliability.” Second is the idea that transglobal likelihood is too complex a feature to conform to general principles; the normative standards for transglobal likelihood are “particularistic” in nature, rather than being systematizable by exceptionless rules. The argument for these claims will be similar in spirit to our argument for particularism about *semantic* normativity.

Christoph Jäger & Darrell Rowbottom // University of Aberdeen, UK , Universities of Edinburgh and Bristol, UK

Towards a Contextualist Account of Epistemic Values

The value problem in epistemology is to explain why knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief. Or so it is commonly construed. Various solutions to the quandary have been proposed, but so far none has gained wide acceptance. Perhaps, then, we should abandon the idea that knowledge *is* more valuable than mere true belief. This is what we shall argue, but with one important qualification: Knowledge is not *generally* more valuable than mere true belief. Certain epistemic contexts, however, are ruled by diachronic aspects of the truth goal of believing. In these contexts the properties that turn a true belief into knowledge add extra value to the belief. For example, in addition to the truth of a belief currently under consideration we are often interested in the subject's future performances as a reliable epistemic agent. According to the contextualist account of epistemic values we propose, epistemological value monism can be preserved. But the value problem should be reformulated. The task is not to explain why, but rather *when* knowledge is more valuable than true belief.

Mikael Janvid // Stockholm University, Sweden

Defeaters and Rising Standards of Justification

The purpose of this paper is to refute the widespread view that meeting a challenge to a knowledge-claim always requires a rising of the original standards of justification. To that purpose the distinction between undermining and overriding defeaters will be used. Differentiated by how specified the challenge is, three kinds of challenges will be considered. In all three of them, the rising standards of justification model fails to capture the dialectic of justification in the case of undermining defeaters. Last, the skeptical challenge will briefly be given a similar analysis.

Friderik Klampfer // University of Maribor, Slovenia
The Psychology and Epistemology of Moral Intuition(s)

In the last two decades, experimental psychologists have increasingly taken up the issue of ordinary moral judgment and reasoning. A host of biological, psychological, social, cultural and so on forces that shape our more or less spontaneous moral judgments have been identified. The renewed interest has thus offered valuable insights into, and alternative explanations of, often contingent origin and/or content of even our most widely shared and deeply held moral intuitions.

The relevance of psychological findings for normative philosophical disciplines, such as moral epistemology and moral methodology, remains obscure, however. While some philosophers were quick to see moral intuitions epistemically discredited once and for all, still others denied any direct or even indirect normative bearing of such empirical research. The paper aims to evaluate the implications of the psychology of moral intuitions for their epistemic status and argues for the need to reconsider their traditionally privileged role in moral inquiry.

Igal Kvat // Hebrew University Jerusalem, Israel
Probabilistic Knowledge, Retraction and Contextualism

In this paper I first outline the main points of my probabilistic analysis of knowledge ascriptions. I then proceed to account for the retraction phenomenon during the encounter with the skeptic that follows from this analysis. On this account, the truth-value of the knowledge ascription doesn't change despite retraction. This account of the retraction phenomenon is thus entirely non-contextualist.

Michael Lynch // University of Connecticut, USA
Epistemic Disagreement

Sometimes, when we disagree, we disagree not over the facts, but over epistemic principles, or principles regarding what counts as evidence or as a reliable belief-forming method. Some of these "epistemic disagreements" are basic in that they consist in disagreements over basic epistemic principles: that is, over principles that cannot be justified by appeal to any other epistemic principle. In this paper, I discuss whether the problem of basic epistemic disagreement should encourage us to be skeptical about the objectivity of our basic epistemic principles.

Steven Luper // Trinity University, USA
Easy Knowledge

Only two ways of solving the problem of easy knowledge are compatible with closure and the rejection of skepticism. What I will call the *reverse argument* accepts closure and rejects any analysis of knowledge that allows easy knowledge. It rejects the possibility of easily knowing things by blocking knowledge that makes it possible. The second approach, which I have

defended elsewhere, also accepts closure and easy knowledge too. I call this the *easy argument*. In this paper I will briefly defend the easy argument, by showing that we cannot block easy knowledge without rejecting closure or embracing skepticism.

Nenad Mišćević // University of Maribor, Slovenia & CEU, Hungary
Animal Apriority: Sosa and Intuitional Knowledge

The paper presents some challenges facing truth-focused virtue-theoretic approach to intuitions using as inspiration and target Sosa's account of intuitional knowledge offered in his John Locke lectures and elsewhere. The technical-logical challenge, not even addressed by Sosa's account, is to specify aptness and adroitness properties for beliefs in necessary truth(s). The explanatory challenge concerning first-order ("animal") a priori beliefs is to account for our capacity reliably to form them. The justificatory problem concerning second-order a priori justification is the dilemma between foundationalism, which threatens circularity, and coherentism, which, in the guise of wide reflective equilibrium, threatens aposteriority. I argue that the two-level truth-centered Sosa-style virtue epistemology, which I find the best option available, should embrace second-level coherentism and weaken the apriority.

William Edward Morris // Illinois Wesleyan University, USA
Detached Doubt

Recent work on epistemological scepticism characterizes the sceptical philosopher's challenge to what we ordinarily take ourselves to know to be rooted in the demand for a certain kind of understanding of our epistemic position. Satisfying this demand, and achieving this kind of understanding, requires that we examine our beliefs according to the criteria summarized in the acronym, TOAD a Total Objective Assessment, from a Detached perspective, of our knowledge. The sceptical philosopher maintains that when we undertake this examination of "all our knowledge all at once" from a detached 'external' standpoint, we will find contrary to what we think and say in ordinary life that we never know anything about the world around us. Here I assess the coherence of the sceptical philosopher's demands by considering the notion of an "argument context," a situation where movement from premisses to a conclusion is possible. I argue that when we spell out the conditions that are minimally constitutive of an argument context, we will find that there is no possible argument context in which we could attempt to assess "all our knowledge all at once." Far from being a "view from nowhere," then, the perspectiveless perspective the sceptical philosopher demands as a condition of the objective assessment of our epistemic position turns out to be no view from anywhere: there is no coherent perspective that could satisfy TOAD.

Ram Neta // UNC Chapel Hill, USA
Coherence, the Preface, and the Lottery

Lots of philosophers (not just coherentists) think that coherence is important. But what is coherence, and how is it important? In this paper, I answer these questions. Along the way, I defend multipremise closure, and then show how a probabilist can still solve the preface paradox and the lottery paradox.

Nikolaj Nottelmann // University of Southern Denmark,
Two Puzzles of Justification Transmission in Light of the Deontological Conception of Epistemic Justification

The deontological conception of epistemic justification (DCEJ) has it that at least one salient sense of the notion of epistemic justification may be captured in terms of deontic concepts like permission, obligation and blameworthiness. Despite some famous arguments to the contrary by William Alston and others, recent years have witnessed a growing awareness that DCEJ is at least feasible. In particular it does not stand and fall with the truth of doxastic voluntariness, the view that objects of epistemic evaluation like beliefs are subject to direct voluntary control. Nevertheless, few arguments have been advanced in favour of DCEJ apart from appeals to rather shaky intuitions. I argue that more robust support for DCEJ may be gained from scrutinising certain famous puzzles of justification transmission failure, which, given a proper version of it, DCEJ handles much better than competing conceptions.

Christian Piller // University of York, UK
The Value of Knowledge Problem

One of the significant differences between practical philosophy and theoretical philosophy is that, although many similar issues arise when we deal with conceptions of rational action on the one hand and of rational (or justified) belief on the other, there is no strict analogue to the concept of knowledge in the practical domain. (Many people have questioned whether any true and justified belief amounts to knowledge, but no analogous question arises for those actions, which are both successful and justified.) Nevertheless, the Problem of the Value of Knowledge (Is knowledge more valuable than true belief, and if so, why?) has something of an analogue in the practical domain: Is a successful action, which is done for good reasons, more valuable than the 'same' action done for bad reasons? How we answer this question depends on how we understand 'the value of justification'. I will argue, first, that there need not be any such value and I will then explore the ramifications of this position for the Value of Knowledge Problem.

My position emerges in confrontation with the following problem. (Initially I spell out this problem in terms of probabilistic goodness. I will introduce other variations of the problem as I go along.) Three claims, all not implausible, seem to be in tension with each other.

- (1) The normativity of probabilistic goodness is derived from the normativity of goodness.
- (2) (What has) probabilistic goodness need not be good.
- (3) We always ought to care about (the things which have) probabilistic goodness, i.e. probabilistic goodness is always normative.

Claim (1) tells us that the normativity of probabilistic goodness is always derived from something else. According to (2) however, this ground need not always be present. Nevertheless, says (3), probabilistic goodness is always normatively significant. One of these claims, it seems, has to be given up. Objectivists, like GE Moore, would give up (3). For him, only (actual) goodness counts. 'The only possible reason that can justify any action', Moore tells us in *Principia Ethica*, 'is that by it the greatest possible amount of what is good absolutely should be realized'. Decision theorists, like John Broome, tells us that goodness is a probabilistic notion. What Moore would call 'actual goodness' is probabilistic goodness with a probability of one. The tension is resolved by giving up (2). Instrumentalists about

practical reason could deny (1). The normative status of means, they say, is not derived from the value of ends they are means for. According to this position, it is a misunderstanding to try to account for the normativity of what promises a chance of success in terms of value.

Similar positions arise when we replace probabilistic goodness with a belief's being justified (and goodness with truth) in our formulation of the problem. The good of justification as it applies to beliefs, we could claim, is derived from the good of truth. These goods, however, can come apart. Nevertheless, we should always care about the epistemic status of our beliefs. Again, we might be able to account for the normativity of justification without relying on the idea that justified beliefs are made 'better' by their being justified.

Baron Reed // Northern Illinois University, USA
A Defense of Stable Invariantism

I argue on behalf of an account of knowledge that is invariantist—i.e., the semantic value of knowledge attributions does not vary from context to context—and stable, in that it does not take knowledge to be affected by practical considerations. I show how a view of this sort, using nothing but the basic resources of fallibilism, can provide both a resolution to the lottery paradox and a satisfying explanation for the appeal of skepticism.

Wayne Riggs // University of Oklahoma, USA
The Risk of (Mild) Epistemic Subjectivism

It is generally assumed that there are (at least) two fundamental epistemic goals: believing truths and avoiding the acceptance of falsehoods. As has been noted often, these goals are in tension with one another. Moreover, the norms governing rational belief that we should derive from these two goals depend on how we weight them relative to one another. But it is not obvious that there is one objectively correct weighting for everyone in all circumstances. Indeed, as I shall argue, it looks as though there are circumstances in which a range of possible weightings of the two goals are all equally epistemically rational.

Bruce Russell // Wayne State University, USA
Philosophical Intuitions

It is standard philosophical practice to appeal to intuitions. Gettier examples are supposed to evoke the intuition that a subject does not have knowledge even though he has a justified true belief. Intuitions are employed in discussions of the nature of acting freely, of personal identity, and of causality. I argue with Bealer that intuitions are intellectual seemings and that they have evidential force. I take up the critics who say they do not because they have no role in determining the essence of natural kind terms (Kornblith) or that disagreement among students shows that they are unreliable (Weinberger). I argue that many terms of interest to philosophers are not natural kind terms and that what they are interested in is how a term *should be* used, not how it is used.

Jonathan Schaffer // University of Massachusetts-Amherst, USA

Knowledge in the Image of Assertion

According to Williamson's (2000) knowledge account of assertion (KA), one should only assert what one knows. What light might KA shed on knowledge? How must knowledge be shaped, if made in the image of what one may assert? DeRose (2002) argues that KA entails contextualism. Hawthorne (2004) argues that KA best fits subject-sensitive invariantism. I will draw on Stalnaker's (1979) account of contexts to sketch a model of discourse in which contexts are questions and assertions are answers. I will then combine the answer-based conception of assertion with KA, to argue for a question-relative conception of knowledge.

Susanna Schellenberg // Australian National University

Perceptual Content, Representations, and Relations

I defend a way of thinking of perception as both representational and relational. I argue that a view on which perception represents objects is compatible with a view on which perception is a matter of standing in relation to objects, if the content of experience is understood in terms of potentially gappy content schemas. I show that by acknowledging that perception is both relational and representational, the problems of pure relational and pure intentionalist accounts can be avoided. In contrast to pure relationalism, the view I defend can explain how veridical and hallucinatory experiences may be phenomenologically indistinguishable. Both experiences share a content schema that grounds the phenomenal character of the experience. But in contrast to pure intentionalism, the view I defend can explain the differences between the two experiences with regard to their content. In the case of a hallucinatory experience, the content schema is gappy. In the case of a veridical experience, the gap is filled by a de re modes of presentation of an object.

Gerhard Schurz // University of Düsseldorf, Germany

Third-Person Internalism: A Critical Examination of Externalism and a Foundationalist Alternative

In the first part of my talk, the fundamental role of justification in the conception of knowledge is illuminated from an evolution-theoretic and application-oriented viewpoint. It is argued that the externalistic redefinition of knowledge in terms of external conditionals for which no justification may be available makes this new notion of knowledge rather useless. In the second part, an alternative foundation-oriented conception of knowledge is developed, which is called "third person internalism". It intends to combine the important insights of externalism with the insight into the fundamental role of justification. In the third and final part, "third person internalism" is applied to contextualistic positions, leading to a constraint on contextualism which makes contextualism compatible with a foundation-oriented epistemology. In the concluding section, I sketch new possibilities for a foundation-oriented account to knowledge and justification.

Ernest Sosa // Rutgers University, USA

Moore's Proof

An account of Moore's "proof" and its place in Moore's epistemology.

Matthias Steup // St. Cloud State University, USA

Evidentialist Anti-Skepticism

I argue that evidentialism offers the resources for an effective response to the brain-in-the-vat argument, and I discuss whether this response is question-begging.

Danilo Šuster // University of Maribor, Slovenia
Sosa on Safety Conditionals

According to subjunctivism, what is distinctive about knowledge is captured by certain subjunctive conditionals. One formulation invokes a sensitivity conditional, the other invokes a safety conditional. According to the mainstream view, such conditionals do not contrapose. But all interesting counterexamples to contraposition are of the form “(even) if ..., then (still) ...”, where the truth of the consequent is not connected, not “sensitive” to the truth of the antecedent. “Even ifs” play a crucial role in the radical sceptic scenario. Safety was meant to capture the idea of “easy possibility” - how difficult or easy might it be for a proposition to be false. Truth tracking is silent about “easy possibilities” - how difficult might it be for a proposition to be false. Contextualism (DeRose) is one way to add this dimension to sensitivity, relevant alternatives (Dretske) is another. Given that the failure of contraposition is limited to “even ifs” there seems to be no significant difference between safety and sensitivity if sensitivity is used with a suitable device to determine »closeness«.

Michael Tooley // University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
The Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism

In his book *Skepticism and the Veil of Perception*, Michael Huemer advanced the following principle concerning when a belief is *prima facie* justified (The Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism):

(PC) If it seems to *S* as if *P*, then *S* thereby has at least a *prima facie* justification for believing that *P*.

If the belief that *P* is *prima facie* justified for *S*, however, and *S* has no evidence against *P*, then, if *S* believes that *P*, that belief is non-inferentially (or foundationally) justified for *S*. So we have the following thesis:

(PC*) If it seems to *S* as if *P*, and *S* has no evidence against *P*, then *S* is non-inferentially justified in believing that *P*.

I shall argue that there are strong objections to (PC), and (PC*), and that both are untenable. But I shall also consider whether one can arrive at a sound account of the conditions under which one is non-inferentially justified in believing something if one formulates things in terms of basic seemings, so that one has, instead of (PC) The Restricted Principle of Phenomenal Conservatism:

(RPC) If it seems to *S* as if *P*, and if its seeming to *S* as if *P* is not based upon its seeming to *S* as if *Q*, for some *Q*, then *S* thereby has at least a *prima facie* justification for believing that *P*.

Then one would have, instead of (PC*):

(RPC*) If it seems to *S* as if *P*, and if its seeming to *S* as if *P* is not based upon its seeming to *S* as if *Q*, for some *Q*, and if *S* has no evidence against *P*, then *S* is non-inferentially justified in believing that *P*.

I shall argue that this account is also problematic, and that one should instead adopt an account according to which whether a belief is *prima facie* justified is a matter of the states of affairs with which one is, at least potentially, directly acquainted.

James Van Cleve // University of Southern California, USA
Can Coherence Generate Warrant Ex Nihilo?

Most foundationalists allow that relations of coherence among independently justified beliefs can enhance their overall level of justification or warrant. In light of this, some coherentists ask the following question: if coherence can elevate the epistemic status of a set of beliefs, what prevents it from generating warrant entirely on its own? Why do we need the foundationalist's basic beliefs? I address that question here, drawing lessons from the instructive case of independent witnesses who corroborate each other's testimony.

Miklavž Vospernik // University of Maribor, Slovenia
Epistemological Arguments for Contingency of Natural Laws

The received view about natural laws is that they are metaphysically typically contingent, i.e. in another possible world they could have been different. This seems to be the legacy of the so-called regularity theory of laws which claims that laws are nothing but mere regularities. Namely, if we take a law of nature to be only a regularity manifested in a state of affairs *R*(a,b) it is natural to consider this state of affairs other than it is. This legacy was taken over even by the rival necessitarian theory, which claims that laws invoke a certain relation of nomic necessity (although they are not metaphysically necessary, e.g. Armstrong, 1983). The only view that was not reluctant to abandon contingency was the recent dispositionalist account of laws of nature (e.g. Bird, 2004). The standard objection to this view (laws of nature as necessary truths) is that laws of nature are discovered a posteriori. But this argument is not conclusive, since the distinction between a posteriori truths and a priori truths is an epistemological one. (Kripke) There are epistemological arguments against contingency as well, for instance the argument that makes appeal to the principle of sufficient reason (Armstrong, 1983), the one that makes appeal to causal powers (Shoemaker, 1980), etc.

Although epistemological arguments with ontological conclusions are generally difficult to estimate, my paper shall survey the above listed arguments and try to rank them. I am going to argue that the major asset of the epistemic arguments for (and against) contingency is that they show that contingency could be something that comes in degrees and so according to them, the question to be asked is not whether the laws are contingent or necessary, but how contingent they are.

Ruth Weintraub // Tel-Aviv University, Israel
What if Scepticism is True? An Exercise in Reliabilism

There are, broadly speaking, two strategies for contending with sceptical arguments. The first, combative one, attempts to rebut the argument (and perhaps even show that its conclusion is false). And it is - at least with respect to some arguments (Hume's argument against induction, for instance) - not very promising. The second strategy is *acquiescent*. It involves an attempt to show that while the sceptic may be right in claiming that (some or all of) our beliefs are unjustified, his claim is less threatening than it appears. In this paper I consider some familiar attempts to pursue the second strategy, and explore the prospects for a new one.

Marcus Willaschek // Institut für Philosophie, Universität Frankfurt/M. Germany
An Attributivist Account of Epistemic Justification

The paper presents the outlines of a larger project concerned with a family of concepts here called "defeasible attributive concepts" (DAC). These can be characterized by the following two features: (1) If some object a satisfies a set of standard conditions for the application of a concept F , then a person S is default-entitled to applying F to a , unless one of the defeating conditions DC_{1-n} obtains. (2) If S is *conclusively* entitled to applying F to a , then a is F . (Roughly, an entitlement to apply a concept F is *conclusive* if *either* closest scrutiny does not reveal any potential defeaters *or* all potential defeaters thus revealed can be successfully rebutted.) Thus, DACs do not capture discourse-independent properties, since their truth-conditions can be spelled out completely in terms of entitlements and defeating conditions.

It will be suggested to analyze epistemic justification as DAC along the following lines: (1) If some person S_1 with respect to her belief that p satisfies some set of standard conditions for being attributed epistemic justification (conditions that typically provide unproblematic epistemic access to the fact that p , e.g. through perception or memory), a person S_2 is entitled to hold S_1 to be justified in her belief that p , unless some defeating condition DC_{1-n} obtains. (2) If S_2 is *conclusively* entitled to attributing epistemic justification to S_1 with respect to the belief that p , then S_1 is epistemically justified in her belief that p . (S_1 and S_2 may be identical.)