Contextualism – Kontekstualizem
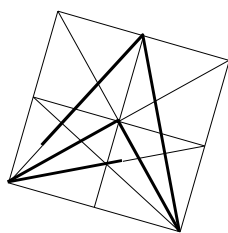
XIIth Bled Philosophical Conference

12. Konferenca o analitični filozofiji

May 31st – June 4th 2004 / 31.5. – 4.6. 2004

Bled, Hotel Kompas

Slovenian Society for Analytic Philosophy and Philosophy of Science

Društvo za analitično filozofijo in filozofijo znanosti

Ljubljana 2004

PROGRAM

Monday, May 31st

1:15   Welcoming Remarks

1:30-2:30   Boran Berčić, "On the Nature of Philosophy"

2:45-3:45   Marina Sbisa, "Two Brands of Contextualism: Propositional and Evaluational"

Tuesday, June 1st

Symposium: Contextualism in Ethics

9:00-10:00   Elvio Baccarini, "Moral Contextualism"
11:30-12:30   Alastair Norcross, "Two Approaches to Ethical Contextualism"
10:15-11:15   Miroslava Andjelković, "Enthymemes and contextualism"

12:30-2:30 Lunch

2:30-3:30   Nenad Miščević, "Is apriority context-sensitive?"
 3:45-4:45   Matjaž Potrč and Vojko Strahovnik, "Justification and Context"

Wednesday, June 2nd

11:00-1:30   *Student Session*

Marina Bakalova, CEU Budapest	*Sosa's Theory of Knowledge*
Martina Fürst, University of Graz	*Qualia as the Basis of the Knowledge-Argument*
Smiljana Gartner, University of Maribor	*Particularism*
Tea Logar, Georgetown University	*Humanity as a Conception of Practical Identity*
Maja Malec, CEU Budapest	*A Contextualist Approach to A Priori Knowledge*
Micheal Raunig, University of Graz	*The Apriority of the Material Properties of Inference*
Tomaž Strle, University of Ljubljana	*Determinism and Possibilities*

Thursday, June 3ʳᵈ

Symposium: Contextualist Semantics in 'Knowledge' and 'Explanation' Attributions

9:00-10:00   Nikola Kompa, "The Semantics of Knowledge Attributions"
10:15-11:15   Wayne Davis, "Contextualist Theories of Knowledge"
11:30-12:30   John Carroll, "What Are the Pragmatics of Explanation?"

12:30-2:30 Lunch

Symposium: Epistemic Contextualism I

2:30-3:30   Duncan Pritchard, "Contextualism, Scepticism, and Warranted Assertibility
              Manoeuvres"
3:45-4:45   Elke Brendel, "Why Contextualists Cannot Know They Are Right - Self-
              refuting Implications of Contextualism"
5.00-6.00   Friderik Klampfer, "Contextualism/Particularism and Moral Justification"

Friday, June 4ᵗʰ

Symposium: Epistemic Contextualism II

9:00-10:00   Danilo Šuster, "Practical and Epistemic Skepticism Contextualized"
10:15-11:15   Snježana Prijić-Samaržija, "Trust Contextualism"
11:30-12:30   Bruce Russell, "How To Be an Anti-skeptic and Noncontextualist"

12:30-2:30 Lunch

Symposium: Epistemic Contextualism III

2:30-3:30   Matthias Steup, "Contextualism and the Multiple Concepts Theory"
3:45-4:45   Mylan Engel, Jr., "Variable Standards Invariantism and the Distortion
              Hypothesis: An Alternative Explanation of Contextualist Data"

4:45   Closing Remarks

Abstracts

Miroslava Andjelković
University of Belgrade //

Enthymemes and Contextualism

Epistemological contextualism, as a reply to skepticism, is focused on the problems arising from its basic claim that our standards of justification vary from context to context. It is important to note that if we want to claim this, then we have to have a clear criterion for the context switch. This presupposes that contexts are clearly distinguished one from another. It appears then that contextualists are answering to skeptical arguments by introducing a more serious problem. The problem is how to differentiate among the contexts. In this paper I propose a solution of the problem by appealing to the concept of enthymeme.

Elvio Baccarini
University of Rijeka //

Moral Contextualism

The contextualist thesis appears in the philosophical debate in various shapes. In this paper, contextualism is discussed as an epistemological position: the standard of epistemological justification and of attribution of knowledge vary in dependence of the context (here I refer to the context of the subject who has beliefs, not to that of the subjects who attributes justification to another subject).

I rely primarily on the contextualist proposal of Mark Timmons. As exemplified in his proposal, the relevant contexts are the internal perspective of a moral outlook, and that of a perspective that is external in relation to a moral outlook. Contrary to what says, for example, an intuitionist foundationalist like W.D. Ross, Timmons says that the beliefs endorsed in moral reasoning are only contextually fundamental, relatively to an internal perspective of a moral outlook. There is no point in asking fundamental questions from the internal perspective of an outlook. A subject is justified from the internal standpoint of a moral outlook, but she is not justified from the external viewpoint.

I rely on Timmons' proposal, by offering some additions to it. Instead of two contexts, I speak about four of them. The first is that of a subject who assesses a moral outlook for herself and by herself, the second is that of a moral community, the third is that of different cultural communities meeting each other, the fourth is that of the debate with the skeptic.

In the first context, I indicate epistemological criteria that are strongly internalistic. A subject is justifies when she has obtained a condition that may be approximated to that of reflective equilibrium.

At higher levels, there is an appeal also to concepts of social epistemology. A subject cannot appeal only to her own beliefs, but must look also for consensus with other participants in the discussion, by taking care of what makes the cultural context. The third context is assimilated to the public domain of John Rawls' proposal, and something like his idea of public reason has to be followed as the method for justifying beliefs.

This proposal, however, has a relevant limitation. It regards only subjects that are interested in developing social cooperation.

Boran Berčić
University of Rijeka //

On The Nature of Philosophy

In this article author, among other views, critically examines Nozick's view on the nature and method of philosophy. Although Nozick believes that philosophy is continuous with science, he nevertheless claims that philosophy differs from science. Author tries to show that this difference should not be understood as difference in kind, but only as difference in degree. Consequently, author tries to show that philosophical theories and explanations share the same nature with scientific ones. This claim is illustrated with several examples from philosophy of mind, meta-ethics, philosophy of mathematics and metaphysics.

Elke Brendel
Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz

What Contextualists Don't Know

Conversational contextualism in epistemology is characterized by four main theses: 1. the indexicality of knowledge claims thesis, 2. the attributor contextualism thesis, 3. the conversational contextualism thesis, and 4. the main thesis of contextualism according to which a knowledge claim can be true in one context and false in another context in which more stringent standards for knowledge are operant. It is argued that these theses taken together generate problems for contextualism. In particular, it is shown that the contextualist cannot know some of the central claims of contextualism: Let's assume that "S knows that p" (SKp) is true in an ordinary context, but false in a high standards context. It is shown that the claim that S knows in high standards context that SKp in lower standards context is true, cannot be true. So, if S finds herself in a high standards context, she cannot know that SKp is true in ordinary standards contexts. Her knowledge she has in ordinary standards contexts seems, contrary to the contextualist answer to skepticism, "to be lost" for S. Another unpleasant result for the contextualist is that she cannot know in high standards contexts that SKp is true in an ordinary context but false in a higher standards context. In lower standards contexts, the assumption of her knowing this main claim of contextualism does not lead to a contradiction, but this truth is not cognitively accessible to her, since reflecting on this main thesis of contextualism inevitably raises her standards. Therefore, she cannot truthfully claim that she knows the main claim of contextualism in lower standards. So, there is no context in which the contextualist can truthfully claim to know her theory is true. Since these results were obtained only with principles the contextualist cannot give up – like the principle of epistemic closure and the principle that knowledge implies truth – it seems that contextualism is in need of a thoroughgoing revision if it is to become a successful epistemic theory.

John W. Carroll
North Carolina State University //

What Are the Pragmatics of Explanation?

Stemming from Bas van Fraassen's Chapter 6 of The Scientific Image, there has been much agreement in the philosophy of science about how explanation sentences are context

dependent. It is held that whether an utterance of an explanation sentence is true depends on its contextually determined contrastive focus. One source of support for this contrastivity thesis is the cleft/emphasis argument. It considers explanation sentences that include cleft ('It was the apple Adam ate') and emphasis ('Adam ate the apple'), contending that these sentences reveal how unadorned explanation sentences are context dependent. A careful look at this argument will suggest a new approach to the pragmatics of explanation. Developed using Robert Stalnaker's manner of representing contexts, and giving a central role to an element of the conversational score identified by David Lewis, my alternative promises to unite diverse discussions of context dependence and to shed light on some sticky problems in the philosophy of science and elsewhere in philosophy.

Wayne A. Davis
Georgetown University //

Contextualist Theories of Knowledge

Contextualist theories of knowledge offer a semantic hypothesis to explain the observed contextual variation in what people say they know, and the difficulty people have resolving skeptical paradoxes. Subject or speaker relative versions make the truth conditions of "S knows that p" depend on the standards of either the knower's context (Hawthorne and Stanley) or those of the speaker's context (Cohen and DeRose). Speaker contextualism avoids objections to subject contextualism, but is implausible in light of evidence that "know" does not behave like an indexical. I deepen and extend these criticisms in light of recent defenses by contextualists (including Ludlow). Another difficulty is that whether certain standards are salient or intended does not entail that they are the proper standards. A normative form of contextualism on which the truth of a knowledge claim depends on the proper standards for the context is more promising, but still unsatisfactory whether the view is speaker or subject relative. I defend alternative explanations for the observed linguistic and psychological data: a pragmatic account for some cases and a cognitive account for others.

Mylan Engel, Jr.
Northern Illinois University

Variable Standards Invariantism and the Distortion Hypothesis: An Alternative Explanation of Contextualist Data

According to epistemic contextualism, the semantic standards of 'knows' vary in accordance with certain features of the speaker's conversational context. As a result, a knowledge ascription of the form 'S knows that p' can be true in one context and false in another, for the same subject S, the same proposition p, at the same time t. For example, the knowledge ascription 'John knows that that is a barn' can be true in a conversational context where the relevant alternatives are limited to silos and corn cribs, but false in a context where the relevant alternatives include barn façades. Contextualists support this thesis by appeal to examples in which people make a knowledge claim in one context, and then retract it after certain previously ignored p-falsifying contingencies are mentioned. The contextualist explanation for this phenomenon is as follows: In order for S to know that p, S must be able to rule out all relevant alternatives to p. In quotidian contexts where few alternatives are relevant, it is relatively easy for S to rule out those alternatives. In such contexts, the standards

for 'knowledge' are relatively low and rather easily met. However, when one mentions some previously ignored error possibility f, that possibility becomes salient. Once f becomes salient, S must be able to rule out f in order to know that p. In short, mentioning previously ignored error possibilities raises the semantic standards for 'knows' to such a high degree that these newly operant standards often fail to be satisfied, and this, according to contextualists is what accounts for the retraction of the earlier knowledge claim.

I take as my starting point the observation that people can be led to retract knowledge claims when presented with previously ignored error possibilities, but I offer an alternative noncontextualist explanation of the data. Fallibilist epistemologies are committed to the existence of two kinds of Kp-falsifying contingencies: (i) internally relevant alternatives and (ii) externally relevant alternatives. In order for S to know that p, S's evidence must rule out all internally relevant alternatives, but S need not be in a position to rule out the externally relevant alternatives.   What is required in order for S to know that p is that all the externally relevant alternatives be false.   Of course, one's mentioning such alternatives can mistakenly lead S to think that these alternatives are internally relevant, when in fact they are not. Since S cannot rule out these newly mentioned alternatives and since S mistakenly thinks that these alternatives are internally relevant, it is quite natural that S retract her earlier knowledge claim. In short, mentioning externally relevant alternatives creates a distortion effect. It makes S think that the standards for knowledge are higher than they actually are. Simply put, the primary data offered in support of contextualism can be explained without resorting to contextualism.

Friderik Klampfer
University of Maribor //

Contextualism and Moral Justification

In his insightful and stimulating book Morality Without Foundations. A Defense of Ethical Contextualism, Mark Timmons presents a strong case for contextualism in moral epistemology (CME). His particular version of moral epistemological contextualism is a conjunction of several claims: (i) One may be epistemically responsible in holding certain moral beliefs at some time t, even though one has no justifying evidence or justifying reasons for holding those beliefs at t (epistemic responsibility without justification); (ii) Such moral beliefs may serve as an epistemic basis for being justified in holding other moral beliefs (provision of justification without justification); (iii) Which moral beliefs need justification depends crucially on certain facts about one's context, including certain social dimensions of one's context. (contextualism regarding the need for moral justification); (iv) S may be justified in believing some moral proposition, M, on the basis of evidence E in one context, C1, but not in another, C2, or S may be justified in forming or holding a moral belief that M for reasons R in one context, C1, but not in another, C2 (contextualism regarding the source of moral justification).

I raise several objections against Timmon's contextualist proposal, particularly against his view on the need for, and the source of, moral justification (propositions (iii) and (iv)). My main concern is this. Contextualism hopes to find firm ground in our diverse and rather unsystematic epistemic intuitions (i.e. intuitions about whether an agent in a given situation knows or justifiedly believes some moral proposition or not). These intuitions, however, may, as far as we can tell, be incoherent or simply mistaken. This is not a mere possibility. There

are good reasons for dismissing them - they fail to systematically track epistemically relevant differences between the contexts. For a shift (either upwards or downwards) in the standards of epistemic (moral) justification from one context, C1, to the other, C2, to be legitimate (i.e. in order to assess claims to the effect that a person S is justified in believing some moral proposition P on the basis of the evidence E in the context C1, even though we wouldn't judge her (equally) justified to hold the same belief on the same evidential basis in a somewhat different context, C2), these two contexts must be shown to differ epistemically, that is in their respective epistemically relevant features. Not just any difference between C1 and C2 will do. In the paper I argue, by way of examples, that differences, between the two contexts of evaluation, in agent's goals, perspectives and/or resources (Timmons' favourites for the role of epistemically relevant features), seldom, if ever, amount to a notable epistemic difference. So, my conclusion goes, the alleged plurality of moral epistemic standards and norms still lacks firm, solid ground; the moral contextualist's triumphant celebration of victory over its foundationalist and coherentist rivals is premature.

Nikola Kompa
Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität

The Semantics of Knowledge Attributions

The basic idea of conversational contextualism is that knowledge attributions are context sensitive in that a given knowledge attribution may be true if made in one context but false if made in another, owing to differences in the attributors' conversational contexts. Moreover, the context sensitivity of knowledge ascriptions is due to a context sensitivity of the word "know", which is commonly assimilated to the context sensitivity either of genuine indexicals such as "I" or "here" or of relative adjectives such as "tall" or "rich".

In a first step, I want to discuss some objections to contextualism. There is, e.g., the class of "Now you know it, now you don't" objections - as Keith DeRose calls them. And Timothy Williamson raises a related worry when he points out that the contextualist seems to be committed to an assertion like 'Everyday propositions are true and I don't know it'. Keith DeRose suggests to go metalinguistic in these cases. He thereby relies on an alleged analogy between the word "know" and genuine indexicals. But as various philosophers have convincingly argued, the analogy is defective. One of the main problems is that while competent speakers are well aware of the context sensitivity of genuine indexicals, they are more or less ignorant of any alleged context sensitivity of the word "know". So another account of the of the context sensitivity of knowledge ascriptions seems to be needed.
In a second step, I would like to explore some other options. Of course, the contextualist might continue to hold that the context sensitivity of knowledge attributions is due to a semantic context sensitivity of the word "know" but concede that the context sensitivity involved is such that competent speakers might and need not be aware of it. Alternatively, he might give up the idea of a purely semantic explanation and try to give a pragmatic explanation instead. So while the first approach makes semantics rich but the semantic facts partly inaccessible, the second approach keeps semantics from playing any explanatory role at all. Both approaches get it partly right and partly wrong, I think. So in a last step, I will try to combine what I take to be the correct insights of the two approaches. The idea, very roughly, is that the context sensitivity involved in knowledge attributions is very subtle but also very pervasive. But whether it is a semantic or a pragmatic phenomenon depends on the further question of what we take the conditions of adequacy for a theory of meaning to be.

Nenad Miscevic
University of Maribor //
Is apriority context-sensitive?

There are several dimensions of context sensitivity of epistemic terms. Besides the best known dimension of quality of evidence (lower quality for less demanding context, and higher one for more demanding), there is a dimension of depth (shallow justification for superficial evaluation, and deeper justification for deeper probing evaluation contexts). This claim is illustrated by context-dependent ascription of apriority and aposteriority. The argument proposed here focuses upon the status of propositions that are analytic in empirical concepts (e-analytic, for short). It is a commonplace in epistemology that any analytic proposition (including e-analytic ones) is a priori.

The paper claims that e-analytic propositions are an interesting counterexample. It develops the following argument: Many e-analytic propositions have empirical counterparts that are expressed by the same form-of-words. (E.g. the form of words „Whales are mammals" can express both an e-analytic proposition and an empirical statement.) Many e-analytic propositions derive from their empirical counterparts.

Beliefs in such propositions (e-analytic beliefs) can be explicitly justified either a priori, by pointing out their conceptual, analytic status, or by reverting to their empirical counterparts. In contexts of very superficial evaluation, one may justify an e-analytic belief in the first, conceptual way. In most contexts e-analytic belief is being justified by appeal to their empirical counterparts. The empirical justification is normally taken as being ultimate. Empirical counterparts are derivationally deeper than e-analytic propositions, and empirical justification justificationally deeper than a priori one as well. Therefore, e-analytic propositions are deeply a posteriori and superficially a priori.

Alastair Norcross
Rice University //
Two Approaches to Ethical Contextualism

If, as I have argued elsewhere, consequentialism is not fundamentally concerned with such staples of moral theory as rightness, duty, obligation, moral requirements, goodness (as applied to actions), and harm, what, if anything, does it have to say about such notions? While such notions have no part to play at the deepest level of the theory, they may nonetheless be of practical significance. By way of explanation I provide a contextualist account of these notions, drawing on contextualist approaches to the epistemic concepts of knowledge and justification. Roughly, to say that an action is right, obligatory, morally required, etc. is to say that it is close enough to the best. What counts as close enough is determined by the context in which the judgment is made. Similarly, to say that an action is good is to say that it resulted in a better world than would have resulted had the appropriate alternative been performed. To say that an action harmed someone is to say that the action resulted in that person being worse off than they would have been had the appropriate alternative been performed. In each case, the context in which the judgment is made determines the appropriate alternative. A contextualist approach to all these notions makes room for them in ordinary moral discourse, but it also illustrates why there is no room for them at the level of fundamental moral theory. If the truth value of a judgment that an action is right or good varies according to the context in which it is made, then rightness or goodness

can no more be properties of actions themselves than thisness or hereness can be properties of things or locations themselves. I also compare my approach with the moral contextualism of Peter Unger in Living High and Letting Die, and "Contextualist Analysis in Ethics".

Matjaž Potrč, Vojko Strahovnik
University of Ljubljana //
Justification and Context

The general drive in epistemology is to deliver necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge with the use of exceptionless general epistemic principles. There is another way however to approach the phenomenon of knowledge by particularistic beautiful patterns. David Lewis in his "Elusive Knowledge" paper provides a nice contextual epistemology. We also think that contextualism is the right way to go and that the epistemic context plays an important role in our endeavors to gain knowledge. But we disagree with Lewis on two points of his account, namely that we can talk of knowledge without justification and that a set of exceptionless rules determines relevant alternatives. We retain the overall notion of knowledge as justified true belief and try to work out a contextualist account of knowledge within this notion, at the same time pointing to an alternative, particularistic view on relevance and relevant alternatives. We briefly sketch our proposal building upon the distinction between the local and global justification and we put forward some suggestions how this approach tackles skeptical scenarios, the lottery problem and Gettier cases.

Snježana Prijić-Samaržija
University of Rijeka //

Trust-Contextualism

The main purpose of this paper is to apply the general idea of contextualism as a theory of knowledge attribution to the very specific case of testimony and trust characterized as being the procedure of the attribution of knowledge (and sincerity) to the informator.

In the first part, I have argued in favor of evidentialism – a viewpoint that takes epistemically responsible trust as a matter of evidence. In the second part, I have considered the question of how strong an evidential basis has to be for epistemically responsible trust. I have briefly registered two main tendencies in contemporary debates about trust and testimony: (i) the non-unitary character of our trust; (ii) and the requirement for disaggregation of evidential standards. In short, I have argued in favor of the stance that any "undiscriminatory generalization" (both Redian or anti-reductivist and Humean or reductivist) concerning epistemically responsible trust is a kind of inappropriate theoretical idealization, and that a certain theoretical reconciliation has to be offered. Finally, in the third part, I will propose trust-contextualism as the viewpoint that optimally harmonizes both our intuitive and theoretical requirements about epistemically responsible trust.

I will argue that trust-contextualism provides an optimal normative framework for the following desiderata: (i) evidentialism - trust-contextualism assumes an evidentialist position; (ii) non-purism - trust-contextualism allows us to be epistemically responsible in trusting on a very slender evidential basis as well as on very demanding one (admitting that the purist highest evidential standard can never be ever reached); (iii) non-unitary character of trust – trust-contextualism is based on the assumption about the non-unitary character of trust, that is the assumption that the evidential standards for attributing knowledge and sincerity to the truster are context-sensitive, as is the subject to contextual variability; (iv) disaggregation requirement - trust-contextualism provides a disaggregation of epistemic standards for everyday situations, as well as those for non-everyday situations. Moreover, it enables a further refinement of the disaggregation requirement.

Duncan Pritchard
University of Stirling //

Neo-Mooreanism, Contextualism, and Evidence

 "Moore's mistake lies in this countering the assertion that one cannot know […] by saying "I do know it"." (Wittgenstein 1969, §521)

This paper begins by arguing that in order to deal with the sceptical challenge it is necessary that we confront the evidential version of it, rather than simply focus on the standard formulation which focuses solely on knowledge. The way to deal with this version of the sceptical argument, I maintain, is to offer a conception of evidence which allows for factive perceptual reasons. With such an account of evidence in hand, it is then possible to motivate the claim that we know the denials of sceptical hypotheses on evidential grounds. Since it is only contextualists and neo-Mooreans who respond to the sceptical problem by contending that we can have knowledge of anti-sceptical propositions of this sort, it follows that the

choice of an anti-sceptical theory in this regard is between these two options. After evaluating the various versions of contextualism available□especially those accounts that explicitly incorporate a suitable evidential thesis, such as the views advanced by Michael Williams and Ram Neta□I contend that neo-Mooreanism is the more attractive prospect in this respect. Indeed, I argue that the very devices used by 'evidential' contextualists to make their position palatable are, suitably modified, better understood as explaining how the propriety conditions for claims to know can fluctuate in response to conversational factors. If this is so, then we can account for the dialectical oddity of arguing with the sceptic by claiming that we can know the denials of sceptical hypotheses without in the process conceding to the sceptic (as the contextualist does) that in arguing in such a way we thereby create a conversational context in which what we assert is now false.

Bruce Russell
Wayne State University //
How To Be an Anti-skeptic and Noncontextualist

Contextualists often argue from examples where it seems true to say in one context that a person knows something but not true to say that in another context where skeptical hypotheses have been introduced. The skeptical hypotheses can be moderate, simply mentioning what might be the case or raising questions about what a person is certain of, or radical, where scenarios about demon worlds, brains in vats, The Matrix, etc., are introduced. I argue that the introduction of these skeptical hypotheses leads people to fallaciously infer that it is no longer true to say that the relevant person knows. I believe that that is a better explanation of the so-called intuition that the person does not know than the contextualist's who claim that raising these skeptical hypotheses changes the standards that determine when it is true to say "S knows that P." At the end I raise the possibility that contextualists might defend their view on pragmatic rather than skeptical grounds by arguing that the standards of evidence rise when more is at stake in a practical sense.

Marina Sbisà
University of Trieste //
Two Brands of Contextualism

At least two brands of contextualism are conceivable. One brand sticks to the received definition of sentence meaning as truth conditions and relativizes truth conditions, or propositions, to context while keeping truth value assignments context-free. Let us call it propositional contextualism. Another brand relativizes truth/falsity assessments to context: let us call it evaluational contextualism.

I argue that propositional contextualism is no real contextualism. Context is invoked in order to build up context free entities, or, in certain versions (e.g. Relevance Theory), to bridge the gap between mental language sentences and their natural language translations. Natural language utterances need contextualisation in order to express what is actually meant by their speakers, but what is actually meant is context-free and so is its truth value. So context only serves as a technical device, hardly playing any role in background philosophical conceptions.

Evaluational contextualism embodies awareness of our situated condition. Sentences are evaluated with respect to their context, as used in that context and there is no need to

postulate intermediate entities such as propositions between the sentence (as used in a context) and its evaluation.

There are various fields in which these two brands of contextualism can be compared to each other as to explanatory power. For example, they yield different treatments of parametrical incompleteness (that is, of those sentences which appear not to be evaluable unless completed, such as "Jane is ready").

Matthias Steup
St. Cloud State University //

Contextualism and the Multiple Concepts Theory

It is commonly assumed that the view contextualism competes with is invariantism. I argue (i) that there is another alternative to contextualism, namely the multiple concepts theory, and (ii) that this alternative enjoys all of contextualism's advantages, and is burdened with none of its liabilities.

Danilo Šuster
University of Maribor //

Practical and Epistemic Skepticism compared and the latter Contextualized

According to epistemological scepticism nobody has any justification for his or hers claims about the external world. Ability to act otherwise as a necessary condition for free action, and according to practical scepticism, if determinism is true, no one ever has alternative possibilities. Familiar arguments show that if indeterminism is true, no one ever acts freely either. This is an ancient philosophical problem and the appeal of contextualism lies in resolution of philosophical problems. On the contextualist diagnosis, the inconsistency is only between the sentences that express those claims: each sentence expresses a true proposition as uttered in the context in which we accept it (I know that p // I do not know that p, I am able to act otherwise / I am not able to act otherwise), but in no single context do they all express true propositions.

Both epistemic and practical scepticism are presented as inconsistent triads. Knowledge: (i) I know that *p*, (ii) I do not know that the skeptical hypothesis is false and (iii) if I know that *p*, then I know that the skeptical hypothesis is false. Ability: I am able to act otherwise, (ii) I am not able to falsify laws of nature and history and (iii) if I am able to act otherwise, then I am able to falsify laws of nature and history. The usual epistemological moves (scepticism, Moorean, Nozick-Dretske externalism, contextualism) are compared with the analogous moves in the case of practical scepticism. Contextualism in epistemology has been criticised - it has been argued that invariantism or, alternatively, ambiguity are better explanation of epistemological concepts. I argue that contextualism in the case of "ability" (proposed by Lewis in his "Scorekeeping in a language game") is an option worth investigating. The most promising seems to be a Kantian distinction between theoretical and practical reasoning.

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Marina Bakalova, CEU Budapest

Ernest Sosa on the Epistemic Status of A Priori Appearances

I discuss Sosa's paper "Modal And Other A Piori Epistemology: How Can We Know What Is Possible And What Is Impossible?"[1]. I argue that Sosa's account of the epistemic role of our intellectual appearances is incoherent. The problem concerns the first-level justification of the a priori beliefs (within Sosa's two-level general epistemology). On the one hand, Sosa expresses commitment to reliabilism about the first level justification in general, including the first-level a priori justification. On the other hand, four passages in his article reveal his commitment to evidentialism about the first level a priori justification. Sosa's version of reliabilism is incompatible with evidentialism, because it is based on a mechanical and purely causal principle.

Martina Fürst, University of Graz
Qualia and phenomenal concepts as basis of the Knowledge Argument

The central attempt of this paper is to explain the underlying intuitions of Frank Jackson´s „Knowledge Argument" that the epistemic gap between phenomenal knowledge and physical knowledge points towards a corresponding ontological gap. The first step of my analysis will be the claim that qualia are epistemically special because the acquisition of the phenomenal concept of a quale x requires the experience of x, whereas knowing a physical concept does not require any sort of direct acquaintance with the denoted property. Arguing what is so special about phenomenal concepts and pointing at the inherence-relation with the qualia they pick out, I will give compelling reasons for the existence of ontologically distinct entities. Once this will be done, I will conclude that phenomenal knowledge is caused by phenomenal properties and the instantiation of these properties is a specific phenomenal fact, which can not be mediated by any form of descriptive information. So in this paper it will be shown that phenomenal knowledge must count as the possession of very special information necessarily couched in subjective, phenomenal conceptions.

Maja Malec, Central European University, Budapest
A Contextualist Approach to A Priori Knowledge

I focus on the only contextualist theory of *a priori* knowledge that I know of. It was proposed by John Hawthorne in two articles – "The Epistemology of Possible Worlds: A Guided Tour" from 1996 and "Implicit Belief and A Priori Knowledge" from 2000. In the first article, Hawthorne offers a contextualist solution to the Benacerraf's dilemma concerning mathematical and modal discourse. In the case of mathematics, the proposal goes as follows. In normal contexts, the proper deployment of standard mathematical techniques is sufficient evidence for knowledge ascriptions. However, when we do philosophy of mathematics this evidence is not enough to ascertain knowledge. Then we are attending to the ontological commitments of mathematics and there is a conceptual possibility that there are no mathematical entities at all. In this context, where the ontological commitments of mathematics are salient and open to question the standard for applying the word 'know' goes up and it is false to utter "I know that $2 + 2 = 4$."
My aim is to show that Hawthorne's contextualist proposal does not solve the Benacerraf's dilemma. First, I claim that contextualism cannot be simply extended to a priori knowledge

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[1] *The Southern Journal of Philosophy Vol. XXXVIII, Supplement* (2000).

since there are important differences between the empirical knowledge of the world around us and the a priori knowledge of modal and mathematical reality. We acquire the knowledge of the external world by employing well-understood means of human cognition, while in the case of *a priori* knowledge it is a fundamental question how we get to know mathematical and modal entities in the first place (if there are any). It seems that in the latter case, skepticism is much more general and threatening. In the further consideration of the difference, I conclude that the difference is only apparent. A contextualist theory of *a priori* knowledge reveals what is wrong with contextualism in general. By treating skepticism as a problem about knowledge ascriptions, namely about language, it fails to see that skepticism is primarily a metaphysical thesis.

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The Apriority of the Material Properties of Inference

Robert Brandom's "Making It Explicit" (1994) develops an inferential account of semantics which is based on certain pragmatic rules of inferring. According to Brandom, there are certain assertions people are (treated to be) committed and/or entitled to when uttering a contentful expression or reliably responding to environmental features. Conceptual content therefore is completely understood in terms of material proprieties of inference which are implicit in the practical, rule-based use of expressions.

By examining the way empirical features enter into these practices of inferring, I want to show that Brandom is committed to an aprioric account of these proprieties or rules. Taking Brandom's inferentialist conception seriously, my argument leads to the conclusion that the content-governing rules will have to be regarded as a priori in a weak sense.

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Determinism and Possibility

Are determinism and possibility two things that fit together? The main issue I am considering is Dennett's claims that even though we live in a deterministic world we still have different possibilities, opportunities we can avail ourselves of, genuine agency, we can change our natures and be responsible for it.

Firstly he tries to show that on Austin's example of golf and to make it clearer uses chess playing computers as another example of a deterministic world. I argue that he shows only the existence of possibilities and not the way we could avail ourselves (or computers) of them.

To expand his view he calls us to compare two distinct levels looking at computer programs and the word of Life: The micro-level and the macro-level on which complex structures and patterns emerge and we can observe novel patterns, agency, possibilities, changing natures, etc. But in reality, I argue, that only seems from observers' perspective. In fact, changing the conditions on the micro-level slightly can bring to huge changes on the macro level, only shows computers/we do not have any influence on their/our paths in Dennett's schema. Let alone moral responsibility.

▪ 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. ***Contextualsim*** is the ***twelfth*** Bled Philosophical Conference. All events take place in Hotel *Kompas*, 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*.

▪ FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Slovenian Society for Analytic Philosophy

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