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Christoph Jäger | Winfried Löffler (Eds.)

Epistemology: Contexts, Values, Disagreement

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Preface

The present volume collects papers that were presented at the 34th International Wittgenstein Symposium "Epistemology: Contexts, Values, Disagreement" 2011 in Kirchberg. Only a few years ago, influential philosophers proclaimed the death of epistemology. Their verdict proved to be false. Today, the theory of knowledge flourishes as perhaps never before. The Kirchberg Symposium 2011 focused on some of the most recent debates and developments in current epistemology: (epistemic) contextualism and invariantism; epistemic virtues; the value of knowledge; testimony; and the structure and importance of rational disagreement. Finally, a large section whose topics were not required to focus on general epistemology was devoted to the work of the great intellectual patron of the annual symposia, Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Epistemology not only enjoys great prominence among professional philosophers. The discipline has become so popular in recent years that even influential politicians have been seduced by the attractions of epistemological reasoning. Recall a by now famous statement from a public figure who – wittingly or not – introduced the intricacies of epistemological reasoning to a world wide audience. "There are known knowns", the person in question reasoned, "there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns. That is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know. – And ... it is the latter ... that tend to be the difficult ones." (Donald Rumsfeld, quoted from "The Economist", December 4, 2003; for live footage see www.youtube.com.) Throughout the world, this statement quickly became a most useful means in introductory classes for piquing the epistemology student's interest. What does it mean to know something? What are the conditions for knowing that one knows, and for knowing that one fails to know? What makes an ordinary knowledge attribution true? And, we may ask, is it really true that only "unknown unknowns" are "the difficult ones"? Epistemology aims at answering such questions, and it helps us disentangle arguments and statements presented outside the philosophy classroom as well.

Though not all statements about knowledge in non-philosophical contexts are as accessible as might be desirable, knowledge itself may be eas-

ier to achieve in everyday contexts than in the seminar. This, at least, is what epistemic contextualists maintain. Ordinary knowledge attributions, they claim, are typically true in quotidian contexts, yet the same knowledge attributions are false in demanding, and especially in sceptical, contexts. The pros and cons of this view are the topic of the section "Contextualism and Invariantism". – It was a comforting experience that many speakers and guests seemed to have no trouble in switching from demanding philosophy classroom contexts to quotidian contexts, and that knowledge attributions to the effect that people knew that the local pubs exist proved to be true in the evenings.

Discussions such as these take us into the normative realm of questions about good epistemic (and linguistic) behaviour. In recent years, epistemologists have broadened the perspective on such questions by investigating what they call "epistemic" or, more broadly, "intellectual virtues". What is the nature of such virtues, and how are they connected to our cardinal epistemic goal to "reach the truth" (or, more precisely, to acquire and maintain true beliefs while avoiding false ones in matters of significance)? When should we credit people for what they believe, and how are epistemic virtues conceptually connected with other, especially moral or other practical virtues? Such are the questions of our section on virtue epistemology.

Many epistemologists will not agree with the claim from the above quotation that only "unknown unknowns" are "the difficult ones". Many would agree however that it is good to have knowledge, at least concerning non-trivial matters of practical significance. Often it seems better to have knowledge than mere true belief. (In other words: it would often seem better to possess knowns than to possess unknowns, even if the latter are constituted by true beliefs.) But why exactly would that be so? In particular, why does knowledge seem to be more valuable than mere true belief? This question, too, has recently gained centre stage in analytical epistemology. It is extensively discussed in the contributions represented in the section "The Nature and Value of Knowledge".

Proceeding from within a broadly Cartesian perspective, epistemology traditionally focused on issues such as the nature and content of subjective epistemic obligations, the structure of internal justification, and the methods of individual knowledge acquisition. Only fairly recently philosophers have begun to take seriously the fact that in many, if not most epistemic settings knowledge acquisition is essentially a social enterprise. Most of our (true) beliefs rely upon the testimony of others. Social epistemology

has begun to systematize such observations, and in recent years epistemologists have developed detailed theories of testimonial knowledge. This is the topic of our section on testimony.

Philosophers, too, must for the greater part of their belief-forming lives rely on others. Yet they very much like to quarrel, and often only agree that they disagree. What epistemologists don't agree upon is when it is *rational* to disagree. Even more interesting and intricate is the question whether there can be rational disagreement among (mutually acknowledged) epistemic peers – people whom one takes to be more or less as well informed, competent, etc., regarding a given topic as one takes oneself to be. How should we react if, as it often happens, we find ourselves in persisting disagreement with acknowledged epistemic peers? Should we let this weaken or maybe even defeat our justification (or epistemic entitlement, warrant, etc.) for what we believe, or are we entitled in such situations to stick to our guns? This is one of the hottest topics in current epistemology, thus our section on "disagreement".

Finally, there is Wittgenstein. For decades, Wittgenstein scholars have been coming to Kirchberg in order to discuss the work and life of this outstanding figure of analytical philosophy. In this tradition, the biggest section of this year's symposium was once more the Wittgenstein section, with many contributions devoted to epistemological issues in Wittgenstein's Œuvre.

May the present volume contribute to creating demanding epistemological contexts in which we value knowledge and understanding, explore intellectual virtues, learn from the testimony of our colleagues and engage in constructive peer disagreement.

We thank all the speakers and contributors to this volume and congratulate Matthew Lee and Wolfgang Freitag for having won the Leinfellner award, sponsored by the Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society and Dr. Rafael Hüntelmann from Ontos publishers. Thanks to all our co-organizers and supporters in Kirchberg for their great engagement. Special thanks go to Mag. Monika Datterl's super-efficient and competent lay-outing and typesetting; to Dr. Rafael Hüntelmann for his patience; to Mag. Margret Kronaus and her crew for their excellent organisation of all the small and big practical issues in Kirchberg; and to the board of the Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society for committing to us the society's 2011 symposium.

Innsbruck, June 2012 Christoph Jäger & Winfried Löffler

I. Contextualism and Invariantism

Knowledge, Contextualism, and Moorean Paradox

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Abstract

The paper gives a comparative overview of contextualist, relativist and subject-sensitive invariantist accounts of knowledge. It is argued that none of these theories can provide a satisfying semantics for knowledge ascriptions. It is shown that there are crucial dissimilarities between "know" and indexical or context-sensitive terms. In particular, contextualists, relativists, and subject-sensitive invariantists are committed to some kind of Moorean paradoxes.

1. Introduction

In contemporary epistemology, there is an ongoing debate about the proper semantic analysis of the term "know". Many recent epistemologists defend the view that the truth conditions of knowledge ascriptions of the form "S knows that p (at t)" (where "S" refers to an epistemic subject, "p" to a proposition, and "t" to a point in time) depend *inter alia* on certain *epistemic standards for "know"*, i.e., besides the truth of p and S's belief that p, it is also required that S meets certain epistemic standards in order to know that p. Epistemologists, however, strongly disagree about the exact features that determine epistemic standards and about *whose* epistemic standards are decisive for the truth conditions of knowledge ascriptions.

There are three different epistemic contexts with respect to knowledge ascriptions: First of all, there is the *context of the epistemic subject* S herself which is determined by, for example, S's interests, expectations, S's practical costs of being wrong about p, etc. Second, there is the *context of the knowledge ascriber*, i.e., the *context of the speaker* or the context of the person who utters the knowledge-ascription. In the following, I will call this context the *context of utterance,* abbreviated with c_u. Apart from cases of knowledge self-ascription where the epistemic subject is identical with

The basic idea of logical expressivism in the Brandomian tradition is that logic makes inferential relations explicit and thereby accessible to critical discussion. But expressivists have not given a convincing explanation of what the point of logical theories is. Peregrin provides a starting point by observing a distinction between making explicit and explication in Carnapâ€™s sense of replacing something unclear and vague by something clear and exact. Preferred source. Rival logics, disagreement and reflective equilibrium. 2012 | other. DOI: 10.5167/UZH-76713.Â Rival Logics, Disagreement and Reflective Equilibrium Epistemology: Contexts, Values, Disagreement. other. DOI: 10.1515/9783110329018.355. Semantic Scholar extracted view of "Rival logics, disagreement and reflective equilibrium" by Georg Brun.Â @inproceedings{Brun2012RivalLD, title={Rival logics, disagreement and reflective equilibrium}, author={Georg Brun}, year={2012} }. Georg Brun. Published 2012. Computer Science. View via Publisher. Save to Library. Create Alert. 2012. Rival logics, disagreement and reflective equilibrium. In Epistemology: Contexts, values, disagreement. Papers of the 34th International Wittgenstein Symposium, ed. JÃ¤ger, Christoph and LÃ¶ffler, Winfried. Kirchberg: Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society. Brun, Georg. 2013. Reflective equilibrium without intuitions? Ethical Theory and Moral Practice (May): 1â€“16. Budden, Amber E., Tregenza, Tom, Aarssen, Lonnie W., Koricheva, Julia, Leimu, Roosa, and Lortie, Christopher J. 2008. obvious that the method of reflective equilibrium will not deliver moral knowledge, for moral knowledge requires moral truth. Interestingly, others, including some prominent moral realists, have similarly suggested that it is a necessary condition for the truth of moral realism that rational inquirers would converge on a common moral view (See, e.g., Smith 1994, 2000). If this is correct, and if the method of reflective equilibrium is in fact the correct methodology for investigating the moral domain, then the non-existence of a unique wide reflective equilibrium would entail the falsity of mo