

11 : 09h00-09h45

Yes, Belief Does Have an Aim

Jonathan Payton (Dalhousie University)

jonathan.d.payton@gmail.com

This paper is a defense of the idea that belief aims at truth. On this view, rational belief-formation is governed and motivated solely by evidential considerations, and not by pragmatic or practical concerns. David Owens has recently presented two arguments against this view, and in this paper I try to show that they fail. First, Owens argues that it is unable to explain the authority of epistemic norms, since other attitudes which aim at truth in the relevant sense – such as guessing – are governed by non-epistemic norms as well as epistemic ones. In response, I develop Owens' distinction between inquiry (the process of gathering evidence) and belief-formation. I argue that non-evidential considerations, such as the amount of time one can afford to spend on answering a certain question, only govern the rationality of inquiry. The right form for an inquiry to take depends on non-evidential facts about a subject and her context, but the process of belief-formation (which takes place after the inquiry is finished) is governed solely by evidential concerns. Second, Owens argues that the truth-aim hypothesis leads to implausible conclusions about how people are motivated to form beliefs by evidential and non-evidential considerations, such as that believers will always form a belief that *p* when *p* seems sufficiently likely to be true. I claim that this argument depends on false assumptions about the ways in which such considerations enter our deliberations, and about self-attributions of justification or knowledge. I conclude that Owens hasn't refuted the truth-aim hypothesis.

11 : 09h45-10h30

Action and the Norms of Belief

David Hunter (Ryerson University)

dhunter@philosophy.ryerson.ca

In her book *Normativity*, (Open Court 2008), Judith Jarvis Thomson recommends that we look at what a person ought to do to find out (some of) what a person ought to believe. This paper explores two norms connecting belief and action that follow from this idea. Thomson starts with the thought that a person ought to know both what he should do and why he should do it. (p. 226) If Alfred should take his sick child to Modern Hospital, then he ought to know and so believe that he should do this. And if he should do this because only Modern has the medicine the child needs, then Alfred ought to know this fact about Modern. What is more, Alfred ought to know that this is why he should take her there. On Thomson's view, some facts about what a person ought to believe follow from facts about what he ought to do. I develop two further norms from Thomson's view. One norm concerns acting on a belief. A person ought not to act on some belief if in acting on it he would be doing something that he ought not to do. Suppose that Alfred in fact believes (incorrectly) that he should take his child to Traditional Hospital and that he believes this because he believes (incorrectly) that only Traditional offers the treatments his child needs. Given that he should in fact take her to Modern, it follows that he should not take her to Traditional. This means that Alfred ought not to act on his belief that he should take his child to Traditional. Nor should he act on his (incorrect) belief that only Traditional offers the needed treatment. As Thomson emphasizes, it might be a mistake for Alfred not to act on these beliefs, and we might fault him for this. Still, he ought not to act on these beliefs, because in doing so Alfred would be doing something that he ought not to do. A second norm connects this first one with what a person ought not to believe. A person ought not to believe something if he ought not to act on it. Alfred ought not to act on his belief that only Traditional offers the treatments his child needs. In acting on this belief, Alfred would be led astray. So he ought not to guide his actions by it. But one fundamental aim of belief is to guide action. This, I argue, means that Alfred ought not to have that belief. (Once again, it may nonetheless be true that it would be a mistake for Alfred not to act on this belief.) Thomson's recommendation that at least some of what a person ought to believe follows from facts about what he ought to do suggests that belief may be governed by norms that are practical. The aim of my paper is to flesh out this suggestion.

11 : 10h45-11h30

Belief Norms and Normative Variance

Thomas Raleigh (Institute of Philosophy, UNAM (Mexico))

traleigh@gmail.com

Bykvist and Hattiangadi (2007) provide an argument against the claim that belief is constitutively governed by norms obliging belief in truths, based upon the existence of Moorean “blindspot propositions” – e.g. “It is raining & nobody believes it is raining”. I provide a negative norm, forbidding belief in falsehoods, which evades their argument. However, such a norm does exhibit “normative variance” with respect to blindspot propositions: whether or not an act is forbidden depends upon whether the act is actually committed. I consider whether this sort of variance must be a defect and argue, that it need not be (as Bykvist 2007 concedes) and is not for my proposed norm. I then consider a different possible approach to avoiding difficulties with blindspots based upon a subjunctive form of norm, forbidding belief in propositions that would be false if believed. Such a norm would not display normative variance with respect to blindspots, which might motivate one to prefer this approach. But I finish by arguing that this subjunctive form of norm leads to unwanted consequences when we consider how a subject is to update their beliefs when faced with what I call a “turn-true” proposition – e.g. “ $2+2 = 4$ & somebody believes that $2+2 = 4$ ”. I show how such a norm can permit raising one’s confidence in a false proposition for which there is not good evidence. I conclude then that normative variance is actually a desirable phenomenon with respect to certain kinds of propositions.

11 : 11h30-12h15

Norms of Judgement, Naturalism, and Inferentialism

Esa Diaz-Leon (University of Manitoba)

diazleon@cc.umanitoba.ca

David Papineau (1999) argues that norms of judgement pose no problems for naturalism, because all such norms of judgement are derived from moral or personal values. Norms of judgement, according to Papineau, do not involve any form of sui generis normativity: they are just derived from personal and moral values, so there is no fundamental sort of normativity here (in addition to moral and prudential normativity) to worry the naturalist. Papineau argues that this account of the normativity of judgement presupposes a naturalist account of content, and he conceives of naturalist accounts as those accounts of content which place normativity outside the analysis of content. In his view, those accounts which take content to be determined in part by facts about when it is reasonable to form a belief are “non-naturalist” accounts. He argues (i) that non-naturalist accounts of content in that sense will not be able to explain the normativity of judgement in the derived way that he proposes, and (ii) that non-naturalist accounts of content are independently problematic. In this essay I want to respond to both objections, by arguing (a) that inferentialist accounts of content (e.g. Boghossian 2003) can be seen as naturalist accounts, even if they place normativity inside the analysis of content; (b) that such accounts are not really committed to the claim that it is always wrong to follow norms that do not guide you to the truth; (c) that explanations of the normativity of judgement in terms of (content-fixing) inferential dispositions are not really committed to the existence of primitive norms of judgement; and finally (d) that the “doubling” of norms that would arise from inferentialist accounts, according to Papineau (i.e., the norms of judgement that determine content, on one hand, plus the extra derived norms that arise from personal and moral values, on the other) is not really problematic, because we need to posit norms of both sorts anyway. References: Boghossian, P. (2003) “Blind Reasoning”, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 77: 225-48. Papineau, D. (1999) “Normativity and Judgement”, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 73: 16-43.

11 : 13h30-14h15

Rational Belief Against the Evidence

Berislav Marusic (Brandeis University)

marusic@brandeis.edu

There are two different ways we can go about answering the question what we will do. We can predict what we will do. Yet we can also decide what we will do. When we approach the question in the former way, we take a theoretical point of view on ourselves, and we approach it as a question of theoretical rationality. When we approach the question in the latter way, we address it as agents, and we approach it as a

question of practical rationality. My aim in this paper is to show that when we address the question what we will do as agents, we can form beliefs that are not subject to theoretical rationality, and thus are not subject to epistemic norms alone. In particular, when something is up to us to do, then the canons of practical rationality, and not those of theoretical rationality, determine what it is rational to believe about what we will do. Yet the canons of practical rationality are not exhausted by epistemic norms. My argument is independent of the controversy between cognitivists and non-cognitivists about practical reason, that is, independent of whether when we intend to do something we necessarily believe that we will do it. My main conclusion is that some beliefs about what it is up to us to do are the best counterexamples to evidentialism: since we can rationally form beliefs through practical reasoning, we can rationally believe against the evidence!

11 : 14h15-15h00

(Re)evaluating the Linguistic Evidence Base

Christina Behme (Dalhousie)

Christina.Behme@dal.ca

I discuss the evidence base for linguistic research and its implication on epistemic norms. First, I identify key aspects of the empirical evidence in linguistics and show that there is little consensus about which type of evidence is most relevant. Incommensurable differences in linguistic research programs bear directly on the epistemic norms relevant for the respective research strategies. Second, I discuss the types of available evidence. In linguistics, as in any science, there are two kinds of evidence: direct and indirect. Both kinds reveal facts about the grammatical structure of language. Generally speaking, direct evidence is superior because it reveals grammatical structure directly and can validate indirect evidence. However, in actual research indirect evidence plays a crucial role because it is often the only evidence available. Third, theoretical commitments directly determine which kind of evidence is taken into account or set aside. Some linguists will accept introspective evidence elicited from competent native speakers while others focus on data gathered from random samples of naturally occurring utterances. This widespread disagreement about the value of different kinds of empirical evidence makes it difficult to compare the epistemic status of their results. One way to avoid at least some of the challenges of empirical evidence is to consider hypothetical evidence provided by thought experiments. I will discuss some recently proposed thought experiments that combine findings from actual psychological or physiological research. This approach potentially grounds thought experiments in the real world but also has the potential to generate a host of new epistemic problems. I will propose a solution that can overcome these problems.

11 : 15h15-16h00

On the Relationship between Doxastic Justification and Knowledge

Michael Blome-Tillmann (McGill University)

michael.blome@mcgill.ca

The paper considers a rather radical view of epistemic justification--namely, what I call the Simple View. According to the Simple View, doxastic epistemic justification just is knowledge (DJ=K)--that is, a subject's belief that p is epistemically justified or held reasonably just in case the subject knows that p. At the face of it, the view is puzzling and surprising. For decades epistemologists have assumed that there are cases of justified beliefs that are not knowledge--either because the beliefs in question are false (as, for instance, in brain-in-a-vat cases) or because a further condition on knowledge that is to be added to the conditions of justified true belief is not satisfied (Gettier cases). This paper will address these apparent counterexamples to the Simple View by considering the distinctions between propositional epistemic justification, doxastic epistemic justification, and epistemic blamelessness. More specifically, I shall critically examine the view that doxastic epistemic justification and epistemic blamelessness can come apart in ways that allow us to explain away the apparently troublesome cases.

11 : 16h00-16h45

Rationality and the Construction of Preference

Brian Kim (Columbia University)

bhk2104@columbia.edu

Since the principles of rational coherence, like those explicated by Bayesian decision theory, arise from reflections about rational deliberation, they are primarily concerned with our deliberative attitudes and judgments. Nevertheless, these coherence constraints are typically thought to govern a stable background state of belief, desire, and preference which is used to deliberate from one context to the next. A natural empirical assumption connects these two claims, underwriting the use of the coherence constraints emerging from rational deliberation as the coherence constraints governing one's background state of beliefs, desire, and preference. The assumption is that the judgments that decision makers use to deliberative exist independently of a decision making context. So one's deliberative beliefs and desires just are one's background beliefs and desires.

In contrast, empirical research about human decision making has overwhelmingly suggested that many of the judgments that we use in decision making are created on the fly, "constructed" on a case to case basis. After presenting some of the relevant empirical research, I ask, how should we change our view of rationality if abandon the empirical assumption that background judgments are deliberative judgments? I propose two changes. First, we should reassess the scope of the principles of rational belief, desire, and preference. In particular, those principles that arise from rational decision making. Second, we should recognize that rational belief is not only sensitive to practical factors but also to the ways in which we "construct" our beliefs in a deliberative context.

11 : 17h00-18h00

In Defense of Intuition Elitism

Murray Clarke (Concordia University)

murc@alcor.concordia.ca

In recent years, the epistemic role of intuition has received a great deal of attention in the philosophical literature. Intuition solipsism, intuition elitism, and intuition populism have all received bad press. In this paper, I address the status of epistemic intuition as seen through the lense of dual process theory. I want to suggest that intuition elitism is the proper method to be used to explicate the concept of knowledge by means of Carnapian explication. Such a technical, scientific concept of knowledge then becomes the once-removed, twisted cousin of knowledge itself.

12 : 09h00-09h45

Contextualism and the 'Knowledge' Norm of Assertion

Jonathan Ichikawa (University of British Columbia)

ichikawa@gmail.com

My project is to clarify the relationship between two attractive epistemological positions: contextualism about 'knows' and the knowledge norm of assertion. DeRose argued for the former from the latter: (1) knowledge is the norm of assertion; (2) what one is epistemically permitted to assert depends on context, therefore (3) 'knows' is context-sensitive. This argument is problematic; among other things, it conflates conversational contexts with practical situations: the plausible version of (2) says merely that what one may assert depends in part on one's situation; but no invariantist does or need deny this obvious truth. So the route from knowledge norms to contextualism appears dubious. Indeed, John Hawthorne and Timothy Williamson have each argued that contextualism is in significant tension with knowledge norms. However, I will argue that there is a plausible version of the knowledge norm that fits harmoniously with contextualism. According to my version of contextualism, 'knows' is a modal over a context-sensitive domain of relevant worlds. This domain enjoys an analogue in the realm of assertion: a Stalnakerian context set. Norms of assertion are relative to context sets: whether an assertion that p is apt depends in part on what possibilities are consistent with the context. A natural, contextualist-friendly, version of the knowledge norm of assertion suggests itself: S's assertion that p, relative to context set x, is epistemically appropriate just in case S know that p relative to the set of possibilities x.

12 : 09h45-10h30

Testimony, Assertion and the Knowledge Norm

Eric Dayton (University of Saskatchewan)

eric.dayton@usask.ca

I offer a defence of the Knowledge Norm of assertion (KN) "Assert p only if you know that p" against its competitors, especially the Reasonable to Believe Norm (RtBN) "Assert p only if it is reasonable to believe that p", by focussing on the role played by assertion in the transmission of knowledge by testimony. I argue that the debate in the literature about whether the KN or the RtBN is the constitutive rule of assertion cannot be decided by a simple appeal to intuitions and linguistic data (which simply reduces to an unproductive battle of intuitions about counter examples). By looking more broadly at the social role of testimony in knowledge transmission we can thematically interpret assertion as a speech act which matters to us because it makes sense of the transmission of knowledge by testimony. A.J. Ayer's contextual definition of knowledge as S know that P iff p is true, S is sure that p, and S has (in the relevant context) 'the right to be sure' about the truth of p, emphasizes the side of knowledge most relevant to understanding assertion, namely the centrality of epistemic authority in enabling the transmission of knowledge by testimony. I offer arguments to show that assertion as the vehicle of testimony cannot be explained by RtBN, but has a natural account if KN is its constitutive norm.

12 : 10h45-11h30

Virtue Epistemology and Environmental Luck

Masashi Kasaki (University of British Columbia)

kasa2005@gmail.com

Duncan Pritchard, in a series of recent writings, attacks what he calls "robust virtue epistemology." Robust virtue epistemology is a theory of knowledge that fully explains the value of knowledge in general terms as consisting in success because of abilities. More precisely, according to robust virtue epistemology, S knows p iff S believes p truly (i.e., S's belief succeeds at achieving the goal of being true) because of S's cognitive ability. Pritchard puts forth two kinds of counterexamples to robust virtue epistemology. The focus of this paper is one kind of example – one involving what Pritchard refers to as "environmental epistemic luck. Pritchard makes two points regarding this kind of example: (i) robust virtue epistemology cannot exclude this kind of example because (ii) success because of abilities in general is compatible with environmental luck. John Greco, in his response to Pritchard, argues that virtue epistemology has resources to deal with cases of environmental epistemic luck: abilities are always relative to a type of environment, and that once relativized, S has no relevant ability in cases of environmental epistemic luck. In this paper, I further develop this line of response, by answering Pritchard's objections to Greco. In particular, I argue, in defence of (i), that relativization to an environment gives a more fundamental explanation of why S fails to have knowledge in the cases in question than appeal to environmental luck. Indeed, in order for environmental luck to undermine attributions of success to ability, the success condition must be defined relative to a type of environment. If it is not thus defined, there are cases in which success is attributed to abilities despite the presence of environmental luck. That is, Pritchard's claim for (ii) is based on his failure to specify the relevant success condition.

12 : 11h30-12h15

Natural Norms and Virtue Epistemology

Josef Thomas Simpson (Johns Hopkins University)

jsimps25@jhu.edu

My purpose in this essay is to add a conceptual resource to the family of views known as virtue epistemology. In particular, I shall suggest that the conceptual capacities characterized as intellectual, cognitive, or epistemic virtues are naturally normative. The success conditions associated with such capacities are standardly held within virtue epistemology to explain the sense in which 'knowledge' is a normative notion. However, the difficulties attendant in accounting for the force of such normativity might be avoided by adopting a rich notion of natural normativity. As such, recognizing natural norms allows virtue epistemologists a way to explain central features of their approach.

12 : 13h30-14h15

La responsabilité doxastique comme responsabilité pour des faits : vers une solution au problème de l'involontarisme

Charles Côté-Bouchard (Université de Montréal)

charles.cote79@gmail.com

Selon les partisans du déontologisme doxastique, le concept de justification épistémique doit être compris de manière déontique, c'est-à-dire en termes de « blâme », de « louange », de « devoir », d'« obligation », de « responsabilité », etc. Une croyance injustifiée est ainsi une croyance répréhensible que nous avons l'obligation de ne pas posséder. Le déontologisme implique donc que nous puissions parfois être tenus responsables de nos croyances. Toutefois, cette dernière suggestion fait face à ce qu'on appelle communément l'objection de l'involontarisme doxastique. Comme plusieurs l'ont fait remarquer, cela semble être un fait indéniable de notre constitution psychologique qu'il nous est impossible de « croire à volonté ». Contrairement à nos actions, nos croyances ne sont jamais sous notre contrôle volontaire. Or, nous avons la forte intuition que nous pouvons uniquement être tenus responsables de ce qui est sous notre contrôle. Par conséquent, nous ne pouvons jamais être tenus responsables de nos croyances et le déontologisme est donc faux. En réponse à cet argument, je soutiens que la responsabilité doxastique est compatible avec l'involontarisme. Je propose d'interpréter la responsabilité doxastique comme la responsabilité pour le fait de posséder une certaine croyance et non pour l'acte mental d'avoir formé cette croyance. À cet effet, je montre que nous tenons fréquemment les gens responsables d'états de choses qui ne sont pas des actes sans que cela ne soit controversé. Puisqu'un fait n'est pas le genre de chose pouvant être volontaire ou involontaire, cette interprétation permet de contourner l'objection.

12 : 14h15-15h00

Epistemic Norms and Exclusion

Susan Dieleman (Ryerson University)

susan.dieleman@ryerson.ca

In this paper, I identify and define the problem of epistemic exclusion, maintaining that it is an issue that should be of central concern to the contemporary feminist theorist. I define epistemic exclusion as being denied the ability to challenge or create the epistemic norms of a community as a result of who a person is, how she speaks, or what she says. I borrow from Miranda Fricker's description of epistemic injustice and Iris Marion Young's account of internal exclusion to identify the unique problem of epistemic exclusion, which entails three things. The first is that epistemic norms are not fixed or universal, but rather constructed. The second is that these norms can be – and have been – constructed so as to exclude people because of the group with which they identify, or because of how they speak or what they say. I make the further suggestion that, if those who are epistemically excluded wish to challenge their exclusion, they must employ a method that works from outside established epistemic norms. This method can be constructed, I argue, out of the tools pragmatism has to offer. More specifically, I show how a pragmatic theory of discourse, specifically that offered by Richard Rorty, can offer feminist theorists and activists the resources needed to develop a discursive theory of social change that will enable them to successfully challenge their own epistemic exclusion.

12 : 15h15-16h00

Epistemic Norms, Relativism and the Sociology of "Knowledge"

William Knorpp (James Madison University)

knorppwm@jmu.edu

Relativism about epistemic norms is a position of enduring fascination, but one that is seldom explicitly endorsed. Among the few areas in which one can find it explicitly defended is in the "strong program" in the sociology of belief (SPSB) (aka the "sociology of knowledge," the "sociology of scientific knowledge" (SSK)). I focus primarily on the work of Martin Kusch and Barnes and Bloor, and on the advocacy of the following theses: (LSC) Every belief has a local, social cause (DfK) 'Knowledge' is synonymous with 'socially accepted belief' (NC) Beliefs are justified in virtue of being widely accepted I argue that the SPSB is a tangle of errors and confusions—and that it is the same tangle of errors and confusions typical of putatively relativistic positions. It is characteristic of such views to confuse causal, sociological claims about belief acquisition (e.g. LSC) with philosophical claims about rationality/justification (e.g. (NC)), and to confuse

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both types of views with skepticism and nihilism. We find all of these confusions in the works in question, facilitated by ambiguous claims like (DfK). Obviously in such a short presentation no comprehensive evaluation of SPSB is possible. Instead, I: (a) articulate the relevant distinctions; (b) explain why only (NC) is a genuinely relativistic claim; (c) briefly explain why (NC) is false; (d) discuss Kusch's attempt to argue for a version of (NC) by deploying quasi-Kripkensteinian communalism, and (e) briefly explain how such communalism has already been shown to fail.

12 : 16h00-16h45

Causal Origins and Epistemic Scepticism

Christopher Cowie (University of Cambridge)

cdc33@cam.ac.uk

What degree of confidence should we have in the epistemic norms that we accept? It has recently been argued that the causal origins (particularly the evolutionary origins) of moral judgment provide reason for moral scepticism. This line of argument has been tentatively extended into an analogous argument from the causal (particularly evolutionary) origins of epistemic judgment to epistemic scepticism. In this paper I present, and reject, this argument for epistemic scepticism. According to the sceptical line of argument, epistemic norms perpetuate insofar as they are reliable at producing true non-epistemic beliefs. But this provides no reason to think that the epistemic norms themselves are true. So, the causal origins of epistemic judgment provide no reason to think that the epistemic norms that we affirm are true. I present two arguments against this sceptical conclusion. The first argument is that an epistemic norm which reliably produces true beliefs is itself a norm that we have reason to think is true. This argument turns on the principle that the probability that an epistemic norm increases as the proportion of true beliefs that it generates increases. The second argument undermines the sceptic's claim that an epistemic norm perpetuates insofar as it reliably produces true beliefs. I argue that this principle is in tension with the sceptic's affirmation of moral scepticism. I conclude with a challenge: the sceptic must find an alternative explanation of why epistemic norms perpetuate other than their producing true non-epistemic beliefs. But it is not clear that any alternative is available.