Public Abstract
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In this dissertation, I aim at resolving the skeptical puzzle. An instance of this puzzle is as follows:

(1) I know that I have hands.

(2) I don't know that I am not a brain in a vat (being stimulated to experience having hands).

(3) If I know that I have hands, I know that I am not a brain in a vat.

(1)-(3) are puzzling since, while each is individually plausible, they are jointly inconsistent.

Siding with epistemic contextualism, I argue that the truth values of (1)-(3) vary with contexts. More precisely, (1), not-(2), and (3) are true in the ordinary context, while not-(1), (2), and (3) are true in the skeptical context.

However, contextualists claim that the variability of the truth values consists in the variability of the standards for knowledge, while I claim that the variability is due to the variability of one's epistemic position with respect to p. I argue against the contextualist solution.

I propose that one's epistemic position with respect to p should be characterized by the sensitivity of one's reason, where S's reason for p is sensitive just in case S would not have the same reason if p had not been the case.

I argue that the assessment of the sensitivity of one's reason for p is relative to the epistemic inquiry the assessor is engaging in. There are two basic kinds of epistemic inquiry, defining by two distinct epistemic goals: the liberal goal and the conservative goal. I argue that (1) and not-(2) are true relative to the liberal inquiry, while not-(1) and (2) are true relative to the conservative inquiry. This explains why (1) and not-(2) are true in the ordinary context, while not-(1) and (2), the skeptical one.