Christos Kyriacou and Kevin Wallbridge (eds.), *Skeptical Invariantism Reconsidered*. New York and London: Routledge, 2021. Pp. x + 324. ISBN 978-0-367-37018-3.

Many contemporary epistemologists are Mooreans. Perhaps they do not find Moore's (1939) famous proof cogent. Nevertheless, they are certain that they have lots of knowledge. I am one of them. I know that my name is Santiago, that I was born in Colombia, that I have two hands, and many other things. If a theory of knowledge entailed that I do not have these and many other pieces of knowledge, I would have an excellent reason to reject it. Of course, it is hard to come up with an adequate theory of knowledge. However, if your theory of knowledge leads to skepticism about these and other pieces of knowledge, you have lost in the epistemology game.

'Skeptical invariantists' reject this line of reasoning. They think that one can embrace skepticism and claim victory. Skeptical invariantists are a heterogeneous crowd. They all agree, however, that the standards for knowledge are constant across contexts. Hence, they oppose various forms of epistemic contextualism. Their view is skeptical because they think that the standards for knowledge are more stringent than their Moorean interlocutors think. Radical skeptical invariantists hold that the standards for knowledge are rarely satisfied. Moderate skeptical invariantists submit that the standards for knowledge are less often satisfied than one might think. Both radical and moderate skeptical invariantists highlight the explanatory virtues of their views. They also argue that skeptical invariantism is consistent with the role of knowledge in everyday discourse. If they are right, Mooreans like me have been too harsh in excluding skeptical invariantists from the epistemology game.

Skeptical Invariantism Reconsidered is a well-curated collection of fourteen articles by some of the main contributors to the field. Part I includes two essays by Duncan Pritchard and

Krista Lawlor that explore the sources of skepticism. Parts II and III present arguments in favor of infallibilist and fallibilist skeptical invariantism respectively. The authors of those essays are Nevin Climenhaga, Gregory Stoutenburg, Christos Kyriacou, Davide Fassio, Robin McKenna, Michael Hannon, and Kevin Wallbridge. Part IV explores the connections between skeptical invariantism and hinge epistemology, with contributions by Annalisa Coliva and Genia Schönbaumsfeld. Part V examines the strategies deployed by skeptical invariantists to elucidate the role of knowledge in everyday discourse. It includes articles by Mona Simion, Alexander Dinges, and Wayne A. Davis. As can be seen, this is a comprehensive collection that provides the newcomer with an excellent entry point to the debate and the initiated with new ideas and arguments.

For reasons of space, I cannot discuss the contents of the fourteen essays. Therefore, I will focus on three issues that I find particularly interesting:

1) Does skeptical invariantism have higher explanatory power than its rivals?
2) Are empirically based skeptical arguments more significant than traditional skeptical arguments?
3) Does a Wittgensteinian hinge epistemology have advantages over contemporary forms of contextualism and invariantism?

It is my hope that a discussion of these topics will motivate the readers to explore the other essays from this collection. Christos Kyriacou and Kevin Wallbridge's Introduction (1-9) offers a comprehensive summary of the fourteen essays.

1. The explanatory power of skeptical invariantism

The essays by Nevin Climenhaga, Gregory Stoutenburg, Christos Kyriacou, Davide Fassio, Robin McKenna, Michael Hannon, and Kevin Wallbridge emphasize the explanatory power of skeptical invariantism. On their view, one or another form of skeptical invariantism is in a better position than its rivals to shed light on many epistemological issues. Their list of explananda includes Gettier cases, the dogmatism paradox, the lottery paradox, concessive knowledge attributions, the roles of knowledge in inquiry and practical reasoning, epistemic value, the attribution of vice and virtue, and the threshold problem for fallibilism. I would like to evaluate (some of) these explanatory claims from a Moorean perspective.

In "A Cumulative Case Argument for Infallibilism", Nevin Climenhaga argues that invariantist infallibilism has eight advantages over invariantist fallibilism and at least four advantages over contextualist and interest-relativist fallibilism. Climenhaga is fully aware that infallibilism has been taken to entail radical skepticism (Cohen 1988). Nevertheless, he is willing to embrace the skeptical conclusion, granting that our knowledge is restricted to *a priori* truths and facts about our mental lives (58, 73). As a result, he defends a skeptical infallibilism according to which I do not really know that my name is Santiago, that I was born in Colombia, that I have two hands, and many other things. For Climenhaga, this does not constitute a *reductio* of his view. He sees radical skepticism as a single cost that he is willing to trade for the many explanatory advantages afforded by invariantist infallibilism.

Climenhaga starts from the following characterization of infallibilism: *S* knows that P only if P is epistemically certain for *S* (i.e., only if P has epistemic probability 1 for *S*). Given this characterization, his opponent is fallibilism: *It is not the case that S* knows that P only if P is epistemically certain for *S*. For the fallibilist, *S* can know that P even if P is not epistemically

certain for *S*. Thus, Climenhaga's view is that invariantist infallibism has an easier time than its negation when it comes to accommodating many explananda. And the gain in explanatory power outweighs the skeptical cost. Hereafter, I refer to this view as 'skeptical infallibilism'.

Let us focus on Climenhaga's second claim: the gain in explanatory power outweighs the skeptical cost. This argumentative strategy raises two worries.

The first worry concerns the *choice* of explananda. We would ideally choose the theory that best explains all the evidence. Unfortunately, some of the claims that Climenhaga wants to explain are not obviously part of the evidence in need of explanation. He includes a knowledge action principle: (1) If *S* knows that P, *S* can rationally act as if P. He also includes multi-premise closure: (2) If *S* knows each of $\{P_1, P_2,\ldots P_n\}$, and competently deduces Q from these propositions, *S* knows that Q (58). To my mind, both claims are too controversial to figure as unquestioned pieces of evidence in need of explanation.

That being said, some of Climenhaga's explananda strike me as genuine pieces of evidence in need of explanation. They include the value intuition: (3) Knowledge is valuable in a way that non-knowledge is not. Also, the Gettier intuition: (4) Subjects in Gettier cases do not have knowledge. Still, reflection on how skeptical infallibilism can explain these intuitions motivates a second worry: by accepting radical skepticism, the skeptical infallibilist loses their alleged explanatory advantages over the fallibilist.

If radical skepticism is true, knowledge is confined to a restricted class of truths (hereafter: 'the restricted class'). For Climenhaga, the restricted class includes only "*a priori* truths and facts about our mental lives". Thus, whatever explanatory benefits the skeptical infallibilist claims must be confined to the restricted class. Given this restriction, one may not flat-out assert that skeptical infallibilism has a number of advantages and a single disadvantage

over fallibilism (as defined above). Recall that fallibilism is the *negation* of infallibilism. So, fallibilism only entails that *S can* know that P when P is not epistemically certain for *S*. Therefore, fallibilism is not committed to offering a fallibilist account of our knowledge of *all* truths. Indeed, fallibilism is consistent with providing an infallibilist account of our knowledge of *a priori* truths and facts about our mental lives. This point is important because many fallibilists reason as follows. When it comes to truths that belong to the restricted class, infallibilism is a promising theory. When it comes to truths that do not belong to the restricted class, infallibilism leads to skepticism. So, we must weaken the requirements on knowledge and go fallibilist. When it comes to truths that do not belong to the restricted class, *S* can know that P when P is not epistemically certain for *S*. In sum, fallibilists avoid radical skepticism by denying that epistemic certainty is *necessary* for knowledge. Yet, their approach is consistent with admitting the existence of infallibilist knowledge of truths from the restricted class. Therefore, the cumulative case argument only works against a view one might call 'radical fallibilism': *S* knows that P only if P is not epistemically certain for *S*. As far as I know, there are not many radical fallibilists out there.[1]

By focusing on the restricted class, skeptical infallibilists also place themselves in an uncomfortable position. Good explanations must be extensionally adequate; they must encompass *all* the entities of the target domain. From a Moorean perspective, the skeptical infallibilist heavily underestimates the number of knowable truths. However, a theory whose explanatory power is confined to the restricted class is not an extensionally adequate theory.

[1] Defenders of relevant alternatives, reliabilist, and sensitivity accounts of knowledge developed their views to explain our knowledge of truths *outside the restricted class*. That is why they focused on contingent truths involving canaries, barns, zebras, and other external entities. Therefore, it is in the spirit of fallibilism, and fully consistent with it, to endorse an infallibilist account of our knowledge of truths from the restricted class.

Indeed, the skeptical infallibilist lacks a *good* explanation of our intuitions about the value of knowledge and Gettier cases because it deliberately leaves out many instances of knowledge. The skeptical infallibilist gains explanatory power by arbitrarily excluding the most challenging cases of knowledge from the explanandum. If scientists were allowed to exclude any anomalous case from the explanandum, they would have an easy time formulating general principles and laws of nature. This would trivialize science as an explanatory enterprise.[2]

In "Moderate Pragmatic Skepticism, Moorean Invariantism and Attributions of Intellectual Virtue/Vice", Christos Kyriacou develops an infallibilist skeptical invariantism that is consistent with our possession of introspective and modal knowledge (104). His argument goes as follows:

(1) Infallibilist skeptical invariantism can, while non-skeptical fallibilist invariantism cannot, explain everyday attributions of intellectual virtues and vices.
(2) If a theory of knowledge can explain everyday attributions of intellectual virtues and vices, that theory has an advantage over theories that cannot explain those attributions.
(3) Therefore, infallibilist skeptical invariantism has an advantage over non-skeptical fallibilist invariantism.

[2] The value problem was first formulated by thinking of the difference between *knowing* and *having a true belief* concerning the way to get to Larissa, and the Gettier problem by thinking of Smith's and Jones' job prospects. Contemporary work on the relations between knowledge and action was motivated by reflection on cases in which it is important to know whether the bank will be open on Saturday. By focusing on the restricted class, the skeptical infallibilist cannot shed light on the original cases.

Kyriacou defends (1) in two steps. First, he presents a series of cases in which we attribute intellectual virtues and vices and shows that infallibilist skeptical invariantism can easily explain those attributions. Second, he contends that non-skeptical fallibilist invariantism runs into difficulties with safety and that those difficulties undermine the explanatory prospects of non-skeptical fallibilist invariantism.

Consider the epistemic situation of physicists in the 19th century when Newtonian mechanics had become the orthodox explanation of physical phenomena. Plausibly enough, many scientists believed that they knew Newtonian mechanics to be true. After all, given the evidence available at the time, Newtonian mechanics enjoyed high epistemic probability. However, they were aware of several anomalies that they treated as minor measurement problems. From our current perspective, those physicists did not *really* know Newtonian mechanics to be true. So, we could blame them for being presumptuous, overconfident, complacent, and incautious. Kyriacou thinks that infallibilist skeptical invariantism can easily explain our attributions of these vices because it tells us that we *do not really* have infallibilist knowledge of such matters (114).

It might be objected that non-skeptical fallibilist invariantism yields the same prediction. This leads us to the second step of Kyriacou's defense of (1). He submits that non-skeptical fallibilist invariantism faces serious problems with the concept of safety and that those problems undermine the explanatory power of non-skeptical fallibilist invariantism. A key problem concerns underdetermination: "we have no obvious way to tell which beliefs are *really* safe and true and which merely *appear* to be safe and true, given evidence at a time, and if this is the case, then the Moorean would be at a loss about how to understand the intuitive attribution of the intellectual vices to Newtonian physicists" (114). Kyriacou makes a parallel argument in relation

to the attribution of the virtues of intellectual courage, open-mindedness, autonomy, intellectual imagination and patience, and intellectual conscientiousness.

Kyriacou's defense of (2) is rather thin. He rightly observes that the attribution of intellectual virtues and vices is an integral part of epistemic discourse and that many theorists have incorporated intellectual virtues into their elucidations of knowledge (109). Unfortunately, these remarks are insufficient to support the conditional: If a theory of knowledge can explain everyday attributions of intellectual virtues and vices, that theory has an advantage over theories of knowledge that cannot explain those attributions. Why couldn't a theory of *epistemic justification* elucidate the attribution of intellectual virtues and vices? Why couldn't one seek to explain those attributions via an account of *second-order knowledge*?

Recall my Moorean starting point. I know that my name is Santiago, that I was born in Colombia, that I have two hands, and many other things. Why should a theory of knowledge that preserves my knowledge of these trivialities explain the attribution of high-level vices and virtues like complacency, incautiousness, intellectual courage, open-mindedness, autonomy, intellectual imagination and patience, and intellectual conscientiousness? Those vices and virtues strike me as too sophisticated to bear any interesting relation to my knowledge of the above-mentioned trivialities. Yet, it is these pieces of knowledge that are most cherished by Mooreans and rejected by infallibilist skeptical invariantism.[3] Perhaps the key point is that ordinary subjects are tacitly guided by specific theories of knowledge when they attribute intellectual vices and virtues. That strikes me as an unwarranted psychological assumption.

[3] A similar point holds the other way around. If one wants to explain knowledge of Moorean trivialities in virtue-theoretic terms, one should invoke virtues that are more evenly distributed in the population, not the less common virtues Kyriacou focuses on.

As Kyriacou seems to realize (119-20), infallibilist skeptical invariantism issues the wrong recommendations in many cases. As a Moorean, I think that I know that my name is Santiago, that I was born in Colombia, that I have two hands, and so on. If skeptical infallibilist invariantism is true, I do not really know those trivialities because there is a low epistemic probability that the target propositions are false. So, I should refrain from believing that I really know those trivialities. Given Kyriacou's theory of vice attribution, I should be blamed for not inquiring further into my name, my country of origin, and my having two hands. That is an extremely implausible consequence of Kyriacou's view. *Pace* Kyriacou, by sticking to my Moorean self-attributions of knowledge, I do not display the vices of complacency and incautiousness (110).

Consider the proposition expressed by a non-trivial sentence like 'Climate change is real'. Given skeptical infallibilist invariantism, no one really knows this proposition to be true. Suppose further that one's attributions of intellectual virtue and vice are solely guided by one's tacit reliance on Kyriacou's skeptical theory. It is unclear how one could possibly attribute any intellectual vice to climate change deniers. They would be in their right minds when they assert: 'No one *really knows* that climate change is real'. Kyriacou might reply that vice attributions are tacitly guided by further considerations, like how people adjust their credences to available evidence. Unfortunately, this response would lead him to reject (2). As a result, his original argument would be unsound.

Kyriacou's focus on safety also raises several questions. It is unclear why he takes it that problems that afflict *one* modal condition for knowledge undermine a *generic* view like non-skeptical fallibilist invariantism. Be that as it may, Kyriacou relies on an idiosyncratic view of safety as a condition that should *guide* attributions of vice and virtue, even in cases where

subjects lack knowledge. However, safety is restricted to knowledge-apt beliefs. Moreover, it is an externalist condition that need not be reflectively accessible to the knower.

I have raised several problems for two views that emphasize the explanatory advantages of infallibilist invariantism over its rivals. These views assume that infallibilism necessarily leads to radical skepticism. A way forward might be to critically examine this assumption. Another option would be to develop a less radical form of skeptical invariantism. In this volume and elsewhere, Davide Fassio has developed a moderate skeptical invariantism. The challenge is to show that his view does not collapse into radical skeptical invariantism. If it does not, it will preserve much of the knowledge that Mooreans are so certain of having.[4]

2. Empirically based skepticism *vs.* traditional skepticism

The essays by Michael Hannon and Kevin Wallbridge argue that cognitive psychology offers the materials for moderate skeptical arguments. They also claim that those arguments are more significant than traditional skeptical arguments. This intriguing statement deserves closer examination.

In "Skepticism, Fallibilism, and Rational Evaluation", Michael Hannon submits that recent findings on cognitive biases cast doubt on our employment of our rational capacities to acquire knowledge (177). Following Ancell (2019), Hannon characterizes cognitive biases as 'sources of unreason' (179) that corrupt our moral, political, philosophical, and religious beliefs, as well as our beliefs regarding our family members, favorite sports teams, and professional employment (184). He advertises his skeptical argument as having three advantages over more traditional skeptical arguments. First, it does not presuppose a demanding theory of knowledge

[4] McKenna's contribution to this volume offers a qualified defense of Fassio's theory.

but relies on ordinary standards for knowledge. Second, it does not rely on far-fetched error possibilities but is supported by empirical evidence according to which human reasoning is often affected by cognitive biases. Third, it can generate 'real doubt', a kind of doubt that cannot be dispelled by engaging in ordinary activities.

Regrettably, Hannon's argument ends up making the very same moves that have been thought to undermine traditional skeptical arguments. Therefore, it is at best unclear whether Hannon's empirically based skeptical argument is more significant than traditional skeptical arguments. To see why, let us look at a formulation of Hannon's argument that results from incorporating his replies to various objections. Let 'P' stand for many propositions putatively known by the employment of rational capacities. The argument goes as follows:

(1) One has undefeated defeaters for P.

(2) If one has rational knowledge of P, one does not have undefeated defeaters for P.

(3) So, it is not the case that one has rational knowledge of P.

Hannon's defense of (1) relies on empirical studies on cognitive biases. On his view, the empirical literature shows that human reasoning is systematically affected by truth-irrelevant factors and that those factors are indiscriminable from the first-person perspective. To illustrate, we are all prone to rationalize. We all construct *ex post facto* arguments to defend views that we would have held even if we did not have any argument whatsoever and, unbeknownst to us, we present those arguments as if they conveyed the reasons for which we hold our beliefs. In confirmation bias, we display a tendency to uncritically accept evidence that speaks in favor of our own views and are far more critical of counterevidence. The presence of these and other

cognitive biases constitutes a defeater of many propositions putatively known by the employment of rational capacities. Given that we cannot introspectively discriminate whether our reasoning has been affected by these and other cognitive biases, we have an undefeated defeater of many propositions we take ourselves to know by reasoning.

This defense of (1) invites two objections.

First, as Hannon is acutely aware, there are less pessimistic interpretations of the empirical evidence. He cites work on bounded rationality (Gigerenzer *et al.* 2001). A view I find promising emphasizes the social character of human rationality. Some bodies of empirical evidence suggest that many flaws of reasoning, including performance in the so-called 'Wason selection task' (or four-card problem), are less pervasive when participants are allowed to argue with their peers. This evidence has led some researchers to conclude that human reasoning evolved for social interaction, so it works best in social settings. If this hypothesis is on the right track, the bleak picture of human rationality that emerges from many studies is nothing but an artifact of experiments that abstract from social interaction (Mercier and Sperber 2017). Intuitively, rationalization is epistemically bad because a subject who engages in rationalization will hold their views *even* in the absence of any argument whatsoever. When others hold one accountable for one's views, however, it becomes harder to retain one's views in the absence of any argument whatsoever. Confirmation bias is not so obviously problematic when we assess it from an interactionist perspective. If we are allowed to socially interact with one another, your bias to favor the evidence that speaks to *your* view will be systematically controlled by my bias to favor the evidence that speaks to *my* view. From a social perspective, Hannon's emphasis on subjective indiscriminability is exaggerated. Even if a subject cannot detect the operation of cognitive biases by reflection alone, social interaction can reveal that a given piece of reasoning

has been so affected. When it comes to issues related to social identity, disagreement is pervasive. When it comes to issues that are unrelated to social identity, one can always rely on one's peers' critical capacities to filter out reasoning mistakes. If you still have doubts, try to see what happens when you submit a paper with a flawed argument to a scientific journal. Good luck with reviewer #2.[5]

Second, Hannon's argument faces the problem of self-defeat. Any invocation of evidence in favor of (1) requires the employment of reasoning. "If so, then shouldn't we doubt whether we know this conclusion?" (187)—asks Hannon. His reply is concessive. He grants that he *does not know* the conclusion. Yet, "to say that we do not know my conclusion is not to say that we *do* know that it is false. Rather, we are simply left uncertain (or at least lacking knowledge) as to whether the beliefs that are the product of rational evaluation are known or adequately justified. This is still a skeptical conclusion" (187).

The main problem with this concessive reply is that it ends up removing the putative advantages of Hannon's empirically based skeptical argument over traditional skeptical arguments. Take the brain-in-a-vat (BIV) hypothesis. It is unclear how one could justify the BIV hypothesis by *a priori* means. Moreover, any attempt at empirically justifying the BIV hypothesis would be self-defeating. Similarly, any attempt at rationally motivating skepticism about human rationality would be self-defeating. Thus, despite their superficial differences, both skeptical hypotheses are unjustified and unjustifiable. Thus, their proponents have nothing better to say than "we are simply left uncertain".[6]

[5] To be sure, social interaction does not guarantee that the disputants will always reach an agreement. Still, empirical evidence on cognitive biases does not lend support to the skeptical conclusion that disputants *won't often* reach an agreement.

[6] It might be objected that all it takes for a skeptical hypothesis to have bite is to induce suspension of judgment. And one can induce suspension of judgment by showing that the reasons in favor of and against a pessimistic account of cognitive biases are equally strong.

Perhaps what drives Hannon's empirically based skeptical argument is a specific conception of defeat. If one thinks of defeaters as reasons for doubt, then the sole presence of evidence that points in a knowledge-undermining direction will suffice to introduce a defeater of rational knowledge. And, although there are optimistic interpretations of empirical evidence in the literature, the availability of those interpretations is insufficient to neutralize that defeater. Unfortunately, this move jeopardizes another alleged advantage of Hannon's empirically based skeptical argument: it introduces a very demanding conception of rational knowledge. While Descartes' methodological skepticism was driven by certainty, Hannon's skepticism about rational knowledge is driven by an overly permissive conception of defeat and a very demanding view of what it takes to neutralize a defeater. The high standards have entered through the back door.

This last remark connects with Hannon's defense of (2). Why think that the possession of rational knowledge is inconsistent with the possession of undefeated defeaters? Hannon is willing to restrict the scope of (2) to epistemic internalism (183). For an internalist, if I cannot introspectively tell whether my reasoning has been corrupted by cognitive biases, then I cannot have rational knowledge of the target proposition. Unfortunately, this concession reveals another commonality between Hannon's empirically based skeptical argument and more traditional skeptical arguments. Traditional skeptical arguments hold that one lacks knowledge of external world propositions because one cannot discriminate one's own case from the BIV scenario. Similarly, Hannon's argument holds that one lacks rational knowledge of P because one cannot

To my mind, Hannon has not shown that the reasons in favor of and against a pessimistic account of cognitive biases are equally strong. He simply takes a pessimistic account for granted. Moreover, any attempt at determining the strength of the reasons in favor of and against a given account of cognitive biases would require reliance on reason.

discriminate the cases in which one's reasoning has been corrupted by cognitive biases from cases in which it has not been so corrupted.

Interestingly, Hannon has yielded to the temptation to use his own rational capacities to formulate an empirically based skeptical argument. In my view, this sole fact strongly suggests that Hannon's empirically based skeptical argument cannot generate 'real doubt'. The pieces of evidence he interprets as 'sources of unreason' are impotent to dislodge our tendency to rely on our own rational capacities. Psychologists keep using their rational capacities to design experiments, Hannon keeps using his rational capacities to formulate his skeptical argument, and I am happy to keep using my rational capacities to reject Hannon's skeptical argument. Empirically based skeptical arguments cannot evict our inveterate habit of relying on reason.

In "Situationism, Implicit Bias, and Skepticism", Kevin Wallbridge pursues a line analogous to Michael Hannon's. Building on work on implicit bias, Wallbridge builds a skeptical argument concerning our knowledge of people's qualities and competences. While this skeptical argument does not reach a radical skeptical conclusion, he tries to generalize it to various cases of perceptual knowledge, some *a priori* and philosophical knowledge, and testimonial knowledge:

(1) Knowledge is true belief formed via the exercise of intellectual virtues, or formed for the right kinds of reasons, or that is non-luckily true.

(2) Empirical fact: frequently when we form beliefs about people's qualities and competences, our beliefs are *not* formed via the exercise of epistemic virtues, are *not* formed for the right kinds of reasons, and are *not* non-luckily true.

(3) Therefore, many of our beliefs about other people's qualities and competences fail to be knowledge (201).

This argument has the advantage of not incurring any internalist commitments. However, it still faces the self-defeat problem. Moreover, Wallbridge overestimates its epistemological significance.

There is some lack of clarity on how exactly the argument reaches its generality. Like Hannon, Wallbridge makes a frequency claim. Wallbridge tells us that implicit bias is *very frequent* in everyday life, so we should be very worried about it. But how frequent is implicit bias in everyday life? Empirical research *does* establish the existence of implicit bias in a variety of tasks in experimental settings. However, for this research to induce general skeptical conclusions, it should satisfy two conditions. First, it should be accompanied by empirical estimations of the frequency of implicit bias in everyday life. Second, it should demonstrate that implicit bias frequently occurs when we take ourselves to have knowledge of people's qualities and competences. Perhaps there is empirical evidence that satisfies these two conditions. Alas, Wallbridge has not shown that evidence satisfying these two conditions exists.

This problem arises once again when Wallbridge tries to extend his skeptical conclusion to perceptual knowledge. Commenting on the 'shooter bias', Wallbridge observes that "an ambiguous object is more often perceived as a gun when in the hands of young black men, and more often as something innocuous in the hands of young white men" (203). Ambiguous stimuli do not strike me as good input conditions for perceptual knowledge. If ambiguous stimuli are not good input conditions for perceptual knowledge, one does not need to invoke studies on the 'shooter bias' to disqualify those cases as cases of perceptual knowledge. As Stroud (1984)

observed many years ago, the best skeptical arguments against perceptual knowledge are those arguments that target our reliance on the senses when we find ourselves in the most favorable circumstances. If implicit bias does not affect unambiguous stimuli, there is no good reason to think that it can induce general skeptical conclusions about perceptual knowledge.

Wallbridge thinks that his argument is more significant than traditional skeptical arguments. He seems to reason as follows. One cannot offer a Moorean anti-skeptical rebuttal of Wallbridge's skeptical argument. If one cannot offer a Moorean anti-skeptical rebuttal of Wallbridge's skeptical argument, then Wallbridge's skeptical argument is more significant than traditional skeptical arguments. Therefore, Wallbridge's skeptical argument is more significant than traditional skeptical arguments.

As I said, I do not find Moore's proof cogent. So, I will grant the first premise: One cannot offer a Moorean anti-skeptical rebuttal of Wallbridge's skeptical argument. Still, the second premise seems to underestimate the significance of traditional skeptical arguments. It is quite common to construe skepticism as a putative paradox, i.e., as a contradiction that originates from our most fundamental epistemological commitments. One cannot successfully diagnose and eliminate a contradiction just by offering a Moorean anti-skeptical rebuttal. If skepticism is a putative paradox, its significance does not depend on its ability to produce certainty. A putative skeptical paradox is important because it helps us understand what our most fundamental epistemological commitments are. In some cases, it can lead us to revise those commitments. This is something that Wallbridge's argument does not achieve. All his argument could show is that we have overestimated the scope of our knowledge. To my mind, this result would not be as significant as realizing that our most fundamental epistemological commitments lead to a contradiction.

Hannon's and Wallbridge's contributions exemplify a popular trend in current epistemology: the use of science to construct allegedly better skeptical arguments. Some participants in this trend have been too hasty. Although these empirically based skeptical arguments are worrisome, reflecting on traditional skeptical arguments might still help us block empirically based skeptical arguments. Or learn to live with their conclusions.

3. Wittgenstein's hinge epistemology

Wittgenstein's epistemological views have played little or no role in the contemporary debate between skeptical invariantists and their rivals. This is unfortunate, however, given the rise of so-called 'hinge epistemology' in recent times. The contributions by Annalisa Coliva and Genia Schönbaumsfeld try to rectify this situation.

Many of Wittgenstein's remarks target Moore's (1939) use of 'I know' in relation to truisms like 'My name is Santiago', 'I was born in Colombia', and 'I have two hands'. In "I Know", "I *k*now", "I k̲now": Hinge Epistemology, Invariantism, and Skepticism", Annalisa Coliva argues that Wittgenstein identified three different uses of 'I know' and, based on that analysis, she suggests that Wittgenstein defended a *sui generis* form of contextualism that is consistent with invariantism. The ordinary or empirical use ('I Know') has meaning because it conforms to criteria such as (1) being based on reasons and (2) leaving open the possibility that the target proposition is false. The grammatical use ('I *k*now') does not express knowledge but objective certainty. In this case, there is no room for error because the target proposition (a 'hinge') is a rule of meaning and a norm of our epistemic practices. The philosophical use ('I k̲now') originates from a subtle conflation of the ordinary use with the grammatical use; it is to

be found both in Moorean and skeptical uses of 'I know'. It arises when a philosopher assumes that 'knows' has epistemic albeit indubitable uses. For Wittgenstein, those uses are unavailable.

With the three-fold distinction in hand, one might think of Wittgenstein as a *sui generis* contextualist, for he contends that 'I know' can have two meanings and, in the third use, no meaning at all. However, Wittgenstein is not a proponent of contemporary contextualism, for he rejects the idea that 'I know' only has an ordinary, constant meaning and that the propositions expressed by various utterances of 'I know' have variable truth-conditions. Regarding the ordinary use of 'I know', Wittgenstein turns out to be an invariantist because he does not think that 'I know' has context-sensitive standards. As Coliva nicely puts it: "Reasons for knowledge claims may be good or bad, but when they are bad, knowledge does not obtain and one's claim to knowledge is simply false" (226).

Genia Schönbaumsfeld pursues a similar line in her contribution "'Logical' and 'Epistemic' Uses of 'to Know' or 'Hinges' as Logical Enabling Conditions". In an epistemic sense of 'to know', the knower can be wrong and uncertain of the target proposition. Moreover, the knower can offer reasons in favor of that proposition. This epistemic sense corresponds to Coliva's ordinary or empirical use. In a logical sense of 'to know', it is impossible to be wrong or uncertain of the target proposition because this verb helps one introduce hinges as enabling conditions of meaning and our epistemic practices. This logical sense corresponds to Coliva's grammatical use. So, Schönbaumsfeld agrees with Coliva on the differences between Wittgenstein's approach and contemporary contextualism (243-5). However, her approach differs from Coliva's in at least one respect: she thinks that a Wittgensteinian epistemology can block 'closure'-based skeptical arguments while retaining the knowledge closure principle. Let us focus on the similarities.

How does the Wittgensteinian view compare with contemporary views? As far as 'skeptical contexts' are concerned, Wittgensteinians seem to be better off than contemporary contextualists. While the latter grant that there are *bona fide* skeptical contexts, Wittgenstein takes those contexts to be illegitimate, for they overlook the role of some propositions ('hinges') as rules, norms, or enabling conditions. The idea of a skeptical context is an illusion because we cannot doubt all our commitments at once. While this seems like a good anti-skeptical result, many readers have complained that Wittgenstein's list of hinges is somewhat arbitrary. Indeed, Wittgenstein does not seem to offer independent considerations to think that his favored hinges actually play the role of rules, norms, or enabling conditions. Consider an utterance of the sentence 'Here is a hand'. Admittedly, one could utter this sentence to provide an ostensive definition of 'hand'. However, it is unclear whether the meaning of 'hand' must be fixed via an ostensive definition and whether one should analyze 'Here is a hand' as a rule, norm, or enabling condition of our epistemic practices.

In response, one might claim that a subject who doubts that here is a hand may not rely on any empirical sources to determine the presence of physical objects (217, 236). Why not? Consider a scenario in which 'Here is a hand' expresses a false proposition while many other external world propositions are true. In this scenario, the falsity of 'Here is a hand' is consistent with the falsity of many radical skeptical hypotheses. Now, if the falsity of 'Here is a hand' is compatible with the falsity of many radical skeptical hypotheses, couldn't a subject doubt *only* the existence of a hand here while leaving intact the epistemic standing of many other external world propositions? If so, couldn't a subject rely on some empirical sources to determine the presence of physical objects? As Schönbaumsfeld seems to concede (237), after a car accident, a

subject could selectively doubt that here is a hand while retaining her right to rely on some empirical sources to determine the presence of physical objects.

Coliva's (2015) way out is to restrict hinges to very general propositions like 'There is an external world'. However, this approach is not available to the orthodox Wittgensteinian. So, the orthodox Wittgensteinian is compelled to reply that it is only when 'Here is a hand' is working as a hinge that a subject who doubts that here is a hand may not rely on any empirical sources to determine the presence of physical objects. That is why 'Here is a hand' is (or spells out) a hinge. Unfortunately, this formulation leads to an extremely radical form of contextualism. Recall Coliva's and Schönbaumsfeld's original claim that 'I know' or 'to know' have two legitimate uses or senses. We are now led to a more radical form of contextualism: the sentences we use to express the putative propositional contents of knowledge attributions also have different meanings or uses (*cf.* Moyal-Sharrock 2004). Two reasons speak against this approach. First, this radical contextualism turns out to be unfalsifiable. For any case in which a subject can selectively doubt a putative hinge, the orthodox Wittgensteinian can reply that, *in that context*, the target proposition is *not* (nor does it spell out) a hinge. This view seems to be designed to avoid *any* counterexample. Second, the resulting view is threatened by meta-epistemological skepticism. Given that 'I know' *and* many other words have different uses or meanings in different contexts, it is unclear how a contextually situated subject can come to know that 'I know' has various uses or meanings. The hinge epistemologist starts to look like someone who prides herself of having a supra-contextual, privileged point of view or, as Coliva puts it, an absolute 'philosophical ear' (220). How could mortal humans develop an absolute philosophical ear?

Contemporary contextualism has been thought to be undermined by the problem of semantic blindness (Schiffer 1996). If 'to know' is a context-sensitive verb, it is unclear why it is not transparently so. Wittgenstein's approach faces what looks like a more serious problem. We are told that there are different uses or meanings of 'to know'. However, upon close examination, we must embrace a more radical form of contextualism concerning many sentences that can be used to specify putative propositional contents. And we are given no indication whatsoever of how context-bound subjects like us can identify these various uses or meanings. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that 'to know' and many other linguistic expressions *do not seem* to lack meaning when used in skeptical contexts (Stroud 1984; Williams 1991).

Wittgenstein's less concessive attitude with skeptical contexts is accompanied by (what looks like) a very concessive attitude towards non-skeptical contexts. While contemporary contextualists hold that one can know putative hinges and the negation of radical skeptical hypotheses in non-skeptical contexts, Wittgenstein denies that we can have these pieces of knowledge in *any* context. The standard reply is that, in its ordinary, empirical, or epistemic use, 'to know' must be based on reasons and leave open the possibility that the target proposition is false (228). If hinges neither are based on reasons, nor leave open the possibility of being false, then hinges are not knowledge-apt. However, given the role of hinges as rules, norms, or enabling conditions, Wittgenstein cannot be accused of downgrading hinges in a skeptical fashion. Instead, he has done a service to humanity: he has disclosed the constitutive role of hinges for meaning and epistemic practices.

Unfortunately, the standard reply is based on theoretical assumptions that Wittgenstein and his followers have not adequately defended. These assumptions are not only inconsistent with Wittgenstein's anti-theoretical orientation; they are also in need of defense given

Wittgenstein's theoretical claim that 'knowledge' expresses a family resemblance concept (Wittgenstein 1953: §78, §§246-247). Wittgenstein assumes, without argument, that all knowledge is based on fallible reasons. Why couldn't the knowledge family include cases of a-rational or infallible knowledge? What reasons do we have to prefer Wittgenstein's restrictive picture of the knowledge family over a more inclusive family with a-rational or infallible members? Wittgenstein's overall account of hinges relies on a dogmatic conception of knowledge as essentially based on fallible reasons.

Recall that many contemporary philosophers think that (skeptical) invariantism has higher explanatory power than its rivals. It is unclear, however, whether Wittgensteinian invariantists can make this claim. As far as I can see, Wittgenstein's scattered remarks on knowledge as based on fallible reasons have little to contribute to many of the issues that animate the contemporary debate, like Gettier cases, the dogmatism paradox, the lottery paradox, concessive knowledge attributions, the role of knowledge in practical reasoning, epistemic value, the attribution of vice and virtue, the threshold problem for fallibilism, and more. Perhaps I will be proven wrong by a sufficiently resourceful Wittgenstein scholar. Or perhaps a lack of explanatory power is not a problem for someone like Wittgenstein, who is well known for his anti-theoretical orientation. As far as I can see, one cannot read Wittgenstein's assertions that hinges are not knowledge-apt without attributing any theoretical commitments to him. And taking Wittgenstein's anti-theoretical orientation to heart would significantly reduce his relevance to contemporary philosophy.

4. Conclusion

I discussed three topics from six essays: the explanatory scope of (radical) skeptical invariantism, the role of cognitive psychology in motivating new forms of skepticism, and the attempt at locating Wittgenstein's hinge epistemology in the debate between contextualists and invariantists. As a Moorean, I could not help but receive these contributions with disbelief. However, this intellectual exercise has proved very rewarding to me as I hope it will be to many other readers. So, I invite anyone who is interested in contemporary skepticism to reflect on these and other contributions to this volume.[7]

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