# CONTEXTUALISM AND CONTEXT VOLUNTARISM

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ABSTRACT: Contextualism is the view that the word 'knows' is context sensitive. While contextualism developed as a response to skepticism, there's concern that it's too easy for skeptics to undermine ordinary knowledge attributions. Once skeptical hypotheses are made salient, the skeptic seems to win. I first outline contextualism and its response to skepticism. I then explicate the resources contextualists have for protecting ordinary knowledge claims from skeptical worries. I argue that the dominate strains of contextualism naturally lend themselves to a restricted form of context voluntarism, according to which attributors (or subjects) can exercise a degree of voluntary control over the epistemically significant aspects of a conversational context, and consequently, ordinary knowledge attributions are true in a wide range of cases where skeptical hypotheses are entertained.

KEYWORDS: contextualism, Bank Cases, pragmatic encroachment

#### 1. Contextualism<sup>1</sup>

Contextualists argue that the truth of knowledge attributions shift with the relevant contextual standards in play. For example, contextualists maintain that when one entertains skeptical hypotheses, or even alternate possibilities, the epistemic threshold for knowledge shifts upward, making it more difficult for knowledge attributions to be true. However, in ordinary contexts—those that obtain outside of philosophical study, discussion and reflection—the standards of knowledge are usually lower. In this way, contextualists deny knowledge invariantism, the view that there's only one standard of knowledge. Contextualists typically adhere to the following thesis about knowledge.

#### The Contextualist Thesis

Whether a knowledge attribution, 'S knows that p,' made by an attributor A, is true or false, depends upon whether A's evidence (or, strength of epistemic position) is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Portions of this section are borrowed from David Coss, "Contextualism and Context Internalism," *Logos and Episteme* 8, 4 (2017): 417-425.

strong enough for knowledge relative to standards of knowledge in A's context.

As indicated above, a motivation for contextualism is the desire to articulate an effective and satisfying response to external world skepticism. The skeptical worry is that it's impossible to have external world knowledge given classical fallibilism.<sup>2</sup> This is puzzling, however, since ordinary people, as well as philosophers, take themselves to know many things about the external world.

The skeptical problem can be formulated as an argument which runs as follows. Let 'K' stand for the knowledge operator and 'BIV' any common brain-in-a-vat hypothesis, according to which all my external world experiences are generated by an evil scientist manipulating my perceptual experiences, and finally let 'hands' be a generic placeholder for any external world object.

- $P_1$ .  $K(hands) \rightarrow K^{\sim}BIV$
- P2. ~K~BIV
- C: ~K(hands)

While Dretske famously denied P<sub>1</sub> (the closure principle), maintaining that one can know that one has hands, even if one doesn't know the falsity of BIV hypotheses,<sup>3</sup> contextualists are reluctant to abandon this principle. Rather, their answer to skepticism is a rejection of P<sub>2</sub>, but only for ordinary conversational contexts.

The skeptic defends P<sub>2</sub> by claiming we are never in a strong enough epistemic position to deny this premise. If the BIV scenario is true, the skeptic argues that any envated subject S, and any non-envated subject S\*, possess qualitatively indistinguishable evidence when considering propositions related to the external world. Since the quality of evidence is the same for both S and S\*, and consequently indistinguishable by perceptual evidence alone, external world knowledge is impossible.

Contextualists draw attention to a conflict within our belief structure. On the one hand, skepticism seems convincing. The argument for skepticism is valid and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Classical fallibilism is the view that knowledge doesn't require truth entailing evidence. In other words, subjects can know propositions even if they are not epistemically certain of its truth. Hence, S could know that p even if logical space affords her the possibility of being mistaken.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Epistemic closure is a principle whereby knowledge is closed under known entailment. The principle is as follows:  $(sKp \& sK(p \rightarrow q)) \rightarrow sKq$ . For more on the denial of closure, see Fred Dretske, "Epistemic Operators," *Journal of Philosophy* 67, 24 (1970): 1007-1023, as well as Fred Dretske, "Conclusive Reasons," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 49, 1 (1971): 1-22.

appealing to one's epistemic intuitions, seems sound. However, the conclusion strikes many philosophers as unacceptable.

A virtue of the contextualist response to skepticism is twofold. First, viewing the word 'knows' as context-sensitive allows one to respond to skeptical worries without abandoning fallibilism.<sup>4</sup> Second, while contextualists accept the conclusion of skeptical arguments in contexts when skeptical possibilities are entertained, they deny that skeptical arguments are infectious across all conversational contexts.<sup>5</sup> In ordinary situations, when skeptical worries and alternative possibilities are not entertained, many 'S knows that p' statements come out true, assuming such true beliefs meet the less demanding epistemic standards for knowledge. In other words, contextualism responds to skepticism, while also appreciating the philosophical thrust of the problem.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. What Determines Contextual Shifts?

An epistemic context is a set of factors that determine the standards an attributor employs when making knowledge attributions. The attributor, not the subject of the attribution, is what matters for the context of an attribution. If the attributor is in a high stakes context, the epistemic standards required for her statement to be true are higher even if the subject of the attribution is in a low standard's context.

As stated previously, several factors raise and lower the contextual standards. The standard contextualist view is that attributors and subjects naturally find

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> One would like to adhere to falibilism so as to avoid widespread Cartesian skepticism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> While this is the common characterization of the dialectic between contextualism and skepticism, a strong case will be made that contextualists are unwilling to capitulate this much to skepticism

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> One might be inclined to wonder how contextualism differs from an alternative approach called the "ambiguity theory of knowledge." According to this theory, there are multiple senses of the word 'knows.' While contextualism is similar to this view, there are marked differences which delineate the two. Perhaps the most important difference is the way in which each view the role context plays in determining the truth of knowledge attributions. For the ambiguity theory, one can simply stipulate which sense of the word 'knows' one is employing (much the same way as I can stipulate that I am talking about a financial institution when I use the term 'bank'). Context, therefore, plays either no role, or a marginal one, in determining true knowledge attributions. Contextualists, on the other hand, make the knowledge attributors slaves to context. Contextual features determine the evidential threshold, and therefore determine whether a knowledge attribution is true. In other words, the main difference is that for the ambiguity theorist, agents control which sense of 'knows' they employ, while contextualists depend upon context to determine whether a knowledge attribution is true.

themselves positioned within a low standards context (after all, this is how ordinary knowledge attributions escape the conclusions of skeptical arguments). Hence, unless something raises the contextual standards, attributors—and presumably subjects as well—remain in a less demanding epistemic context. Consequently, assuming skepticism is false, many "S knows that p" are able to meet or surpass the lower evidential threshold, and therefore come out true.

Although epistemic standards can be raised in several ways, contextualists emphasize salience of error possibilities. Suppose an attributor entertains external world skepticism. By entertaining a BIV hypothesis, the standards of knowledge rise, requiring epistemic certainty. Another way to raise contextual standards is if an attributor finds himself in a high stakes situation. Consider the classic bank cases presented by Keith DeRose.

**Bank Case A.** My wife and I are driving home on a Friday afternoon. We plan to stop at the bank on the way home to deposit out paychecks. But as we drive past the bank, we notice that the lines inside are very long, as they often are on Friday afternoon. Although we generally like to deposit our paychecks as soon as possible it is not especially important in this case that they be deposited right away, so I suggest we drive straight home and deposit our paychecks on Saturday morning. My wife says 'Maybe the bank won't be open tomorrow. Lots of banks are closed on Saturdays.' I reply, 'No, I know it will be open. I was just there two weeks ago on Saturday. It's open until noon.'

**Bank Case B.** My wife and I are driving home on a Friday afternoon, as in Case A, and notice the long lines. I again suggest we deposit our paychecks on Saturday morning, explaining that I was at the bank on Saturday morning only two weeks ago and discovered that it was open until noon. But in this case, we have just written a very large and very important check. If our paychecks are not deposited into our checking account before Monday morning, the important check we wrote will bounce, leaving us in a *very* bad situation. And, of course, the bank will not be open on Sunday. My wife reminds me of these facts. Then she says, 'Banks do change their hours. Do you know the bank will be open tomorrow?' Remaining as confident as I was before that the bank will be open then, still, I reply, 'well, no, I don't know. I'd better go in and make sure.'8

In the first version, since little, or nothing, is at stake if Keith is mistaken, he knows the bank will be open on Sunday. However, in the second iteration, if his

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Epistemic certainty is understood as the claim that one can only know a proposition given truth entailing evidence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Keith DeRose, The Case for Contextualism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1-2

check isn't deposited by Monday morning, serious financial loss is incurred. While Keith remains in a less demanding epistemic context in Bank Case A, in the latter case, the standards of knowledge rise given his awareness of high stakes.

Consider another case employed by contextualists that strongly suggests contexts shift according to awareness.

## The Airport Case

Mary and John are at the L.A. airport contemplating taking a certain flight to New York. They want to know whether the flight has a layover in Chicago. They overhear someone ask a passenger Smith if he knows whether the flight stops in Chicago. Smith looks at the flight itinerary he got from the travel agent and respond, 'Yes I know—it does stop in Chicago.' It turns out that Mary and John have a very important business contact they have to make at the Chicago airport. Mary says, 'How reliable is that itinerary? It could contain a misprint. They could have changed the schedule at the last minute.' Mary and John agree that Smith doesn't really *know* that the plane will stop in Chicago. They decide to check with the airline agent.9

In Stewart Cohen's Airport Case, contextual shifts happen in virtue of Mary making John aware of error possibilities. Arguably both John and Mary start off in a low standards epistemic context. However, once Mary makes error possibilities salient, the epistemic threshold rises, thus making the evidence they possess insufficient to meet or surpass the elevated epistemic threshold for knowledge.

One might object that in both Bank Case B as well as the Airport Case, contextual shifts could occur independently of awareness. For example, even if Keith's wife hadn't made him aware that banks sometimes change their hours, his epistemic threshold for knowledge would shift upward given the elevated cost of error. However, given the contextualist framework, there are plausible reasons for thinking that absent awareness, he would remain in a less demanding epistemic context. To counter this objection, it's worth exploring how contextualists and Interest-Relative Invariantists (IRI) provide divergent explanations of bank-style contrast cases.

In making the case that IRI provides a superior explanation of the cases contextualists employ, Stanley argues that IRI is able to explain the intuition behind traditional contrast cases, while also accounting for others he argues contextualists

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Stewart Cohen, "Contextualism, Skepticism and the Structure of Reasons," *Philosophical Perspectives* 13, 13 (1999): 58

struggle with. In the following case, Sarah and Hannah arguably occupy a high stakes context, even though both are unaware of the consequences of being mistaken.

## Ignorant High Stakes

Hannah and her wife Sarah are driving home on a Friday afternoon. They plan to stop at the bank on the way home to deposit their paychecks. Since they have an impending bill coming due, and very little in their account, it is very important that they deposit their paychecks by Saturday. But neither Hannah nor Sarah is aware of the impending bill, nor the paucity of available funds. Looking at the lines, Hannah says to Sarah, 'I know the bank will be open tomorrow, since I was there just two weeks ago on Saturday morning. So we can deposit out checks tomorrow morning. <sup>10</sup>

Stanley claims that while IRI can explain the upward shift in the standards of knowledge for Hannah and Sarah, contextualists struggle providing a satisfactory explanation since salience of error is absent.

According to Stanley, contextualists struggle with ignorant high stakes cases since contextualism seems to rely on an intention-based account of contextual shifts. Stanley writes, "On this standard account of context-sensitive expressions, their semantic contents, relative to a context, are determined by facts about the intentions of the speaker using that expression." Since intentions play no role in Ignorant High Stakes, contextualists struggle accounting for cases where subjects lack awareness of high stakes. 12

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Jason Stanley, Knowledge and Practical Interests (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), 5

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Stanley, Knowledge and Practical Interests, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> One might object that I have unfairly characterized contextualism as being too committed to salience of error raising the epistemic threshold for knowledge. For example, one might point out that what partially fixes a context, even for contextualists, are mind-independent factors. Consider the following attribution made by subject S, "Jack knows carrots are orange." Part of what fixes the context for S is the fact that carrots are orange (and this fact is, plausibly, independent of Jack's awareness). I concede that many factors, both mental and non-mental, determine what context a subject or attributor is in. However, given what I have said about contextualism, such external facts fail to raise or lower the epistemic threshold for knowledge independent of awareness. Perhaps one is comfortable developing an externalist account of contextualism, but this faces at least two problems. First, it robs the cases contextualists use to support their arguments for contextualism. For example, in DeRose's bank cases, external factors remain fixed across both situations, but the contextual content is different in B than in A. What shifts is Keith's wife making Keith aware that banks sometimes change their hours. A more serious concern is externalist views of contextualism would fail to provide a solution to skepticism. Contextualism is largely motivated by its ability to account for how ordinary people have knowledge. Contextualists maintain that

While much of the contextualist literature emphasizes upward epistemic shifts, explaining how and why this happens, another question is worth entertaining: can contextual shifts work in the opposite direction? That is to say, can an attributor be in an epistemically demanding context, and shift to a less demanding one? While there is some controversy among contextualists over the correct answer to this question, my contention is that such shifts can happen. Consider the following case which provides a prima facie reason to think contextual shifts move in both directions: Frank thinks he needs to deposit his check by Monday otherwise he risks foreclosure. Frank looks at the payment schedule again and sees he has another week grace period before the payment is due. Excited, he tells his wife the good news. Though upon telling his wife, she informs him he's looking at the wrong month; there is no grace period. In this case, Frank moved from high, to low, back up to high again.

### 3. Contextualism and Context Voluntarism

Consider an uncontroversial claim: some things are under our control while others are not. While this section doesn't provide criteria for what constitutes voluntary control, it's worth pointing out several features and illustrating the difference. I have direct voluntary control over my choice of coffee over tea, though I cannot control who my parents are or whether I inherit male pattern baldness. I have indirect voluntary control over turning on a light switch or choosing which restaurant I go to, although such acts are executed in virtue of things I have direct control over—moving my hand or choosing to get in my car. On the contentious side of the spectrum is belief acquisition/selection.

While there is room for controversy over what is and isn't under a subject's control, I will not engage with those areas under controversy. Rather, the point of this section is to highlight what voluntary control is so we are better positioned to discuss the context voluntarism/involuntarism distinction.

As we've seen, responding to skepticism is a primary concern for contextualists, and they argue that under certain conditions, given that skepticism is false, attributors can know they are not BIV victims. The falsity of skepticism depends upon two things: a metaphysical condition and a contextual one. On the

since ordinary people are unaware of skeptical scenarios, they are naturally positioned in a lower epistemic position than those who are aware. If one externalizes contextual shifts, then it seems one is committed to skeptical worries undermining ordinary knowledge attributions, whether or not subjects or attributors were aware of them.

metaphysical side, it must be the case that the subject of an attribution isn't a BIV victim, whereas on the contextual side, an attributor claiming such scenarios are false must be in an appropriately low standards context where "S knows that skepticism is false" statements come out true. If the metaphysical condition is met, it's only in virtue of being placed in a high standards context that attributors fail to know the falsity of skepticism. Hence, while an epistemically low-standards garbage collector may know he has hands, a high standards epistemologist may not, even if the strength of their epistemic positions is identical.

Given that contextualists want to retain the truth of ordinary knowledge attributions, but respect the skeptic's challenge, it's worth asking: once the standards of knowledge become elevated to the point of entailing skeptical conclusions, can they ever be lowered? Logical space affords at least three responses.

- (i) **No**. One's epistemic context may become more demanding, but descent down the contextual standards of knowledge ladder is impossible.
- (ii) Limited Approach. Subjects can do certain things to prevent the standards from rising to skeptical levels, or if they become elevated, can perform things (i.e., conversational maneuvers) to reduce the standards of knowledge to their previous low standards state.
- (iii) **Unlimited Approach**. Attributors or subjects have full control over the context they're in.

The first view is involuntarism, the second restricted voluntarism, and the third unrestricted voluntarism. According to unrestricted voluntarism, subjects have full control over contexts and can therefore raise and lower the standards at will, as well as control all other contextual features associated with their situation. Contextualists would be unwise to defend (iii) for two reasons: it's implausible and inconsistent with ordinary empirical observations.

Although a case will be made that one can control certain aspects of a context, it's implausible that attributors—or subjects for that matter—have full control over all their contextual features. Often attributors and subjects have little or no control over the information presented to them. If S is in an epistemology classroom and the professor outlines skeptical possibilities, S cannot control *that* the skeptical argument was presented; at most, S can control her attitudes and judgments regarding skepticism. Given the implausibility of (iii), unrestricted voluntarism will not be entertained as a serious position.

Among contextualists, we find a diversity of opinion on (i) and (ii). One could read David Lewis, for example, as endorsing (i). Consider his rule of attention which

states that possibilities salient to a subject cannot properly be ignored. Once someone enters the epistemology classroom and learns about skepticism, this possibility which was previously properly ignored—can no longer be neglected. With the elevated high standards, someone who entertains skepticism is immediately placed in a high standard's context. As we will see later, it's clear that for contextualists like Cohen or DeRose, one can switch between high and low standards contexts depending upon the situation; it's less clear whether Lewis' view affords such flexibility. Suppose S leaves the epistemology classroom and asserts "I know that P." Is this statement true or false according to Lewis? Is skepticism properly ignored outside the conversational context of the epistemology classroom, or does it forever remain something not properly ignored? I suspect a strong case could be made for different responses, both dependent upon how one understands his rule of attention. While a detailed treatment of Lewis' position regarding contextual control is warranted, presenting it here would take the paper too far astray. Moreover, while Lewis' version of contextualism deserves discussion in its own right, I will not extensively engage with it here.13

While it's controversial where Lewis stands on contextual control, contextualists like DeRose and Cohen, are friendly to context voluntarism, burrowing Lewis' Scoreboard Semantics view (among others) in defense of non-skeptics' ability to lower, or remain in, a low standards context. To understand DeRose's voluntarism, we need to first familiarize ourselves with the semantic framework he employs.<sup>14</sup>

Imagine a skeptic engaged in an epistemological discussion with a non-skeptic. The non-skeptic starts out in a low standards epistemic context, whereas the skeptic's epistemic standards are high. Through the course of the discussion, the skeptic presents several scenarios including Descartes' Evil Demon, BIV and The Matrix. When the skeptic is finished presenting her case for skepticism, the non-skeptic responds "that's absurd. There's no way this is *really* possible," to which the skeptic might respond, "listen, it's logically possible. I've spelled out the structure of the argument. My inferences are valid and the premises are true, thus making it sound. You don't know you have hands!" Suppose the discussion includes further

involuntarist regarding contextual control, I leave it up to reader to decide.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> For those interested in his view, see David Lewis, "Elusive Knowledge," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 74 (1996): 549-567. Since it's unclear to me whether he would be a voluntarist or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Consult David Lewis "Scorekeeping in a Language Game," *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 8, 3 (1979): 339-359.

iterations along these lines, with the skeptic insisting the non-skeptic doesn't know she has hands, while the non-skeptic forcefully asserting the opposite. How could a contexualist interpret such an exchange?

If we return to the original question of this section, according to contextualism, can attributors or subjects exercise *some* control over contexts? In one sense, the answer is a trivial *yes*. After all, skeptics can chose to raise the contextual standards simply by making skeptical hypothesizes salient.<sup>15</sup> While this is right, a more nuanced question arises: suppose the skeptic successfully raises the epistemic standards, are there ways for non-skeptics to lower them?

In trying to respond to these questions, DeRose outlines several answers, one of which is 'single scoreboard semantics.'16 Consider the skeptic and non-skeptic engaged in a conversation where the standards of knowledge can be raised or lowered. Through the course of their discussion certain conversational maneuvers are available to manipulate epistemic thresholds. The skeptic might say, "c'mon, it's impossible for you to know you have hands!" While the non-skeptic could reply, "give me a break, brains-in-vats? Evil demons? This is utter nonsense!" if the nonskeptic is more sophisticated, she might say "I employ a courtroom standard of knowledge. I have knowledge when I can eliminate reasonable doubt, but skeptical hypotheses do not count as such. I would be utterly dismissed if I presented such scenarios in a courtroom." Utterances like these go on a single conversational scoreboard which raises or lowers the epistemic standards accordingly. At the start of the conversation, the standards might be fairly low, but throughout the conversation they will fluctuate proportionate to the various kinds of conversational maneuvers employed.<sup>17</sup> At the end of the conversation, one presumably evaluates the scoreboard to determine first the state of the context, and then based on which side has the higher score, this determines the truth of each interlocular's knowledge statement. The skeptic may win sometimes, while the non-skeptic others.

DeRose's presentation of this approach seems to imply that quantitative factors matter most for determining the standards of knowledge. If the skeptic employs three conversational maneuvers, while the non-skeptic only utters one,

 $<sup>^{15}</sup>$  Some contextualists might find even this concession controversial. However, I will not pursue that here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> DeRose also considers a "Multiple Scoreboard Semantics" where there are contextual scoreboards for each of the conversational participants. DeRose neither endorses, not fleshes this view out in great detail, so I won't spend time on it here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> DeRose, The Case for Contextualism.

then the standards become elevated. Conversely, if the non-skeptic utters three statements lowering the standards, and the skeptic one, the standards are low. However, this understanding of Single Scoreboard Semantics gives a misleading picture of what is going on in these conversations. A purely quantitative approach fails to take into consideration the qualitative aspects of each utterance. Consider the following dialogue.

**Skeptic:** You don't know you have hands because you don't know you're not a BIV. Having hands entails you're not BIV. If you know you have hands, you know you're not a BIV. But you don't know you're not a BIV. So you don't know you have hands. This is a sound argument. Which premise is false?

**Non-Skeptic:** Look, I don't care about your scenarios or your arguments. I know I have hands. Look, I have hands. Everyone can see I have hands. No scenario can sway me from this position. After all, this is science fiction nonsense. Only a fool could reasonably take these statements seriously.

If we stop the iteration here, are the epistemic standards governing this conversation high or low? If we take a purely quantitative approach, then it looks like the standards are low since the skeptic uttered six propositions and the non-skeptic seven. The skeptic tried to elevate the standards for knowledge, but the non-skeptic rebuked his statements, lowering them (or, if they never were raised, kept them low). But this seems mistaken given the qualitative nature of conversations more generally. The skeptic—whatever the merits of her argument may be—has offered more sophisticated conversational maneuvers than the non-skeptic. 18

The single scoreboard semantics view works well for closing the gap between two speakers' individual contextual usages of epistemic terms when the gulf between them is wide (as it is between a skeptic and non-skeptic). When the gap is small, DeRose ends up tentatively supporting what he calls a 'Gap View.' DeRose maintains that while single scoreboard semantics cannot explain small divergences within speaker contexts, the gap view can. The truth conditions for statements involving context sensitive words are as follows.

1. 'Frank is here' is true (and 'Frank is not here' is false) iff Frank is in the region that counts as 'here' according to both speakers personally

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> While DeRose doesn't spend much time on the qualitative aspect of utterances, instead focusing on the quantitative aspects, I suspect he would agree that the quality and sophistication of assertions ought to be factored into a scoreboard semantic account of raising and lowing standards for knowledge.

indicated context.

- 2. 'Frank is not here' is true (and 'Frank is here' is false) iff Frank is in the region that does not count as 'here' given each speakers' personally indicated content.
- 'Frank is here' and 'Frank is not here' is neither true nor false if Frank is 3. in the region that counts as 'here' according to at least one speaker's personally indicated content, but doesn't count as 'here' according to others. 19

DeRose implicitly delineates between two senses of context: personal and shared. The single scoreboard semantics view take as a central assumption that public contexts take as their primary input the content from each speaker's private context. Consider the skeptic and non-skeptic before they met to discuss epistemology. The non-skeptic's context is one in which the standards of knowledge are low, whereas the skeptics standards of knowledge are high. When they meet to discuss epistemology, a public context is formed between them, and the standards of knowledge fluctuate according to certain conversational maneuvers.

What bearing does all of this have on voluntarism? By employing conversational maneuvers, both the skeptic and non-skeptic can exercise some control over the content of a context according to the single scoreboard view.<sup>20</sup>

The above considerations suggest that there is sufficient fluidity and flexibility with contexts which allows for voluntary control within contextualism. According to DeRose's view, a non-skeptic can employ conversational maneuvers to manipulate contextual content, thereby lowering the standards of knowledge; such an individual is clearly exercising a degree of voluntary control over various contextual features of her situation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> DeRose, The Case for Contextualism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> DeRose prefers what he calls a "Gap View," though for the sake of brevity I will not entertain it here. However, even on the Gap View, there's room for voluntary control over contexts. For a more in depth discussion of this approach, see DeRose, *The Case for Contextualism*, 144-151.