UDK: 165.7
DOI: 10.2298/FID1604869N
Original scientific article
Received: 31.5.2016 — Accepted: 2.11.2016

Ivan Nišavić

Disappearing knowledge

Abstract Following the exposition of the basic standpoints of contextualism in relation to invariantistic position, which takes the concept of knowledge in its rigorous and fixed meaning, the text continues to deal with the analysis of the concept of knowledge offered by David Lewis, with a goal to solve common epistemological problems, one of those being the lottery paradox. Accepting fallibilism as the only plausible option regarding the possibility of acquiring knowledge, Lewis claims that, with the postulated rules that allow us to properly eliminate alternative possibilities, it is possible to resolve the previously mentioned paradox. If we want to base knowledge on probability, and not on certainty, and to directly stipulate it with the context in which it is being imposed or expressed, than it is obvious that knowledge will depend on whether the requirements for knowledge are high or low. Thus, in one case it might occur that we have knowledge, and in the other that we do not, even though nothing is changed except the conversational conditions that are already "in the game". Such, elusive knowledge, that gets lost, De Rose labels "now you know it, now you don't" and considers it to be a direct consequence of Lewis's analysis. As such, the analysis should not be accepted.

Keywords: contextualism, eliminations of possibilities, probability, non-existence of knowledge, lottery paradox

Contextualism and invariantism

Contextualism, as a contemporary approach to solving traditional epistemological problems, such as the problem of scepticism, lottery paradox and Gettier problem, allows the change of meaning of the concept of knowledge, as well as semantics of the sentence, depending on context in which we want to ascribe (not) knowing the particular statement, that is: "S (does not) knows that P". Invariantistic solutions, which consider the concept of knowledge in rigid and unchangeable form, completely independent from the context, put us in a paradoxical position. If we use the term "knowledge" in absolute sense, i.e.: if it has a fixed meaning, as Anger suggest[1], than that term in completely unusable. On the other hand, if the standards for determining truth conditions of particular statement are observed throughout the prism of possible alternatives that affects the truth-value of the proposition, we have a problem, too. Namely, if we ascribe knowledge

1 Cf. Unger (1978): 321-325.

Ivan Nišavić: Doktorand, Odeljenje za filozofiju, Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu; nisavic.ivan@gmail.com

to someone according to the relevance of the possible alternatives, which was Drecke's solution,[2] it leaves us with a vast ambiguity and arbitrariness in formulating the criteria or the relevance degree of the alternatives that may be accomplished. Accordingly, if we are on the side of Angers analysis, when we claim that 'X knows that the classroom is empty', we know that that the proposition is not true, even though there isn't anyone in the classroom, nor even the tables and chairs, but after all, there are remains of the dust or just the air; so in that sense, the classroom can never be *absolutely* empty. Anyway, if we are accepting Drecke's point of view, this kind of standpoint is completely clear. The confusion could arise in two ways, namely (1) if someone to whom we are ascribing the knowledge has different interests, in comparison to us, regarding the classroom. In fact, if the statement 'the classroom is empty' for us means that there are not students or professor in it, but only the janitor, then the statement can mean something else – he has to bring in tables and chairs and to enable proper teaching to happen.

On the other hand, (2) confusion will be obvious if we would prefigure possible alternatives to someone who claims that he knows that the classroom is empty, in such a way that: (a) someone was inside the classroom few minutes ago, so you must be sure if he has left the room, or (b) the door which looks like the real door are just a well-painted picture on the wall, or (c) as all of us are brains in a vat (BIV), students or the furniture inside the classroom (thus, the classroom itself) are just projections in our minds, triggered by neuroscientist with super-computers. Alternatives[3] ranging from those fully probable and verifiable (a and b) to those entirely unbelievable, unverifiable and far-fetched (c) can be qualified as relevant or irrelevant, without a clear and unambiguous confirmation why it is so, other than the common sense attitude that alternative (c) is completely incredible and practically impossible, especially since the elimination of this alternative cannot be done. In that sense, alternative (c) is irrelevant to ascribe to X any kind of knowledge about the classroom. From traditional, invariantistic perspective, the meaning of the concept of knowledge is unchanged, it remains fixed, and if X had eliminated the possibilities of error (alternatives a and b), than we can ascribe knowledge of that proposition to X. In that case, alternative (c) is considered as irrelevant. This is an issue for the invariantistic position. Namely, if by insisting on the constancy of the concept of knowledge we arbitrary declare alternative (c) as irrelevant, then we are not handling the problem of scepticism properly,

2 Cf. Dretske (1981).

3 For the coherent and more precise insight of those problems, we shall assume that those three alternatives are the only possible as an opposition to the proposition 'X knows that the classroom is empty'.

i.e. we are leaving it aside. Ignoring the particular problem does not imply that it is solved.

Furthermore, and especially important for us: if we take the approach for finding the solution to this problem in a way previously described (by relying on the (im)probability of such scenario), whose potential actualization is much closer to improbability rather than probability, under which circumstances we declare an alternative (c) as irrelevant, we completely ignore the so-called lottery paradox, which will be explained additionally.

In contrast to insisting on the constancy of meaning of the term "knowledge", contextualistic understanding of this term is similar to the understanding of the concepts such as "tall" or "empty". The relativity of those concepts is related to the context in which they are applied, so that it can be said for the same person that he or she is tall if she or he is on a parade of combat aircraft pilots, and that he or she is short if they are in a company of basketball players. In one of the contexts, the standards for ascribing tallness are lower, while in another the standards are higher. These standards may vary from situation to situation and, what is especially clear with regard to tallness, they can be comparable, so it is easy to acknowledge when we apply higher and when lower standards. Furthermore, we have high and low standards for ascribing knowledge to someone, relative to the context. Thus, the proposition 'X knows that the classroom is empty' interpreted and understood from contextualistic position will be entirely dependent on conversational factors that are in 'the game'. As DeRose says: According to contextualistic theories of knowledge attributions, how strong an epistemic position X must be in with respect to certain proposition for A's assertion to be true can vary according to features of A's conversational context.[4]

Conversational factors suggest psychological states of all participants taking part in conversation, such as their preferences, requirements or intentions. According to those factors, we may formulate the criterion under which it is possible to assert knowledge of a particular proposition. If we suppose that someone says that X knows the proposition mentioned above and, at the same time, another person says that X does not know the same proposition, according to contextualism, both speakers might be speaking the truth.[5] So, if we are presented with two alternatives, (a) and (c), a contextualist (taken in a broad sense) would argue that X in the first case knows that the classroom is empty, but in the second case he does not know the same proposition. That is because she is taking into account different

4 DeRose and Warfield (1999): 185.
5 Cf. Kohen (1999): 57.

conversational standards. In the first case ones that are lower in the sense that they can be reached and verified, and the other ones that are higher and hardly possible to satisfy. If this is the case, than the same proposition can express two different statements and have different meaning in diverse contexts. This is to say, standards that we demand for person X to satisfy in order to ascribe knowledge in the case (a) are low, while in the case (c) are unattainably high. Changing standards for ascribing knowledge depends on the set of alternatives or possibilities of error, which in that way become relevant in a given situation and which have to be removed of eliminated. As more remote and far-fetched alternatives are included in the set of alternatives that we consider relevant, the standards upon which we ascribe knowledge become higher. The sceptic is exactly the one who uses such a mechanism of presenting the possibilities that are not in accordance with our initial cognitive propositions, and as it is impossible for us to dispose of them, we cannot ascribe knowledge. Semantic sensibility of context, namely the possibility of the concept of knowledge to change the meaning relative to the context, which is reflected in change of the conversational factors concerning persons involved in a conversation, is a way of attempting to solve the sceptical and other epistemological problems.

A favourable position for the majority of epistemic contextualists is reflected in the so-called fallibilistic thesis, i.e. in accepting the probability of knowing the statement, if it was not entirely certain. That means that knowledge could be mistaken, i.e. that X can know proposition *p* even though *p* is not certain. Cardinal positions, complete certainty and absolute uncertainty are replaced with the degree of probability, so (un)certainty can be more or less approached, but never fully reached.

In the first part of this paper, we shall, excluding all other issues,[6] present a detailed analysis of contextualistic position that was best represented by David Lewis, with specific insight in the solution of lottery paradox. We shall see what are the consequences of that position and what objections has Keith DeRose raised. So, let us start from the beginning.

Lewis's contextualism

In his contextualistic manifesto, the article titled "Elusive knowledge", Lewis proposes the following definition of knowledge: *S knows that P, if and only if S's evidence eliminates every possibility in which not-P –Psst! – except for those possibilities that we are properly ignoring.*[7]

6 The problem of skepticism and Gettier type problems will be considered just as much as it is necessary for this paper.

7 Lewis 1996: 560.

To get a clearer understanding of what Lewis wanted to say, definition previously suggested needs further analysis. Firstly, there is always one possibility that is actualized, i.e. the one that evolves at a given moment for the subject. Uneliminated possibility is every possibility in which subject's experience is equivalent to the one in the actualized possibility (situation). Clearly, there can be many uneliminated possibilities, so the term 'every' should be understood not as every *imaginable* possibility, but as every possibility contextually *relevant* to us. When we say that every glass is empty and that it is time for a new round, which is Lewis's example, we are not referring to every glass in a restaurant or on all the glasses in the world, but rather on the glasses on our table. Quantifiers, such as 'every' are restricted to a certain domain, and everything that is not inside or doesn't belong to this domain, can be neglected and rendered as irrelevant for the uttered proposition. In that way, when Lewis says 'all uneliminated possibilities', he ignores some of the possibilities that are not in a domain that is relevant in terms of authenticity of what he had previously said. If the statement 'X knows that the classroom is empty' is offered with the usual skeptics' argumentation – that X is BIV, Lewis would ignore that possibility, but only in ordinary and every-day context, when standards for ascribing the knowledge are low; whereas in epistemological context, when standards for ascribing the knowledge are very high and rigorous, that possibility has to be eliminated. However, since it is impossible to do so, he would appreciate skeptic's position and admit that we cannot ascribe knowledge to X.

In order to avoid the arbitrary elimination and ignoring of possibilities, Lewis has formulated *rules* for proper elimination of possibilities. Such mechanism, which would help us distinguish relevant from irrelevant possibilities of error, Hawthorne[8] identifies as kind of a 'recipe book'. This 'book' should specify what characteristics of particular context are sufficient to make any possibility relevant for the particular case of ascribing knowledge. Hawthorne also claims that such a 'recipe book' still does not exist and it hardly ever will, yet those Lewis's rules are something closest to it. There are eight rules, four of which are permissive and tell us what possibilities we can eliminate properly (rule of reliability, rules of method and rule of conservatism), while the remaining four are restrictive and tell us which possibilities must not be ignored (rule of actuality, rule of belief, rule of resemblance and rule of attention). Proper ignoring of a certain possibility is valid only if it is conducted in accordance with these rules, so if a certain possibility is not properly eliminated, ascribing knowledge to a person X is not possible. The combination of rules is allowed and desired, as it creates a more rigorous and precise criterion for the classification of possibilities.

8 Hawthorne 2004: 61.

Only some rules are important to us at this stage, so we will focus on them. In addition to the rules of actuality and rule of resemblance, which are, in Lewis's opinion, relevant to the solution of the lottery problem, it is important to consider the rule of belief, which demands that a possibility, when a subject *believes* it can happen, is not properly ignored. *"A possibility that the subject believes to obtain is not properly ignored, whether or not he is right to so believe."*[9] This kind of formulation of the rule of belief might be too broad, but given that beliefs can be graded, we should rephrase this rule: the possibility cannot be properly ignored if the subject believes in it with a high degree of probability. How high should the degree of probability be, is a question whose answer, among other things, depends on the stake that is in the game. If the stake is high, only a small number of possibilities can be properly ignored, while, on the other hand, if the price for ignoring the possibility is not too high, then most of them can be ignored. Rapid blinking of a fuel indicator in a plane can be properly ignored when the pilot only wants to move his plane from the terminal to a hangar, whereas, if he intends a long-hour flight over the ocean, ignoring the possibility that indicator is malfunctioning is wrong, faulty and above all, risky. In the first case, when the risk is lower, ignoring the possibility that the fuel lamp malfunctions can be correct, but in the other case, in the context of transoceanic flight, when the stakes are much higher, ignoring given possibility would be wrong. Namely, if the mistake is fatal, only few possibilities can be properly ignored.

Combination of two rules, the rule of actuality and the rule of resemblance, as mentioned previously, provides Lewis with the solution to lottery paradox. The rule of actuality forbids us to ignore any possibility that is actualized, i.e. the possibility that actually evolves. On the other hand, the rule of resemblance states that if we have two or more possibilities that are *saliently* similar to each other, either all of them may be properly ignored, or neither of them. Exactly how is all of this important for the lottery paradox remains to be seen, but before we do that, we need to present the lottery paradox in its original form.

Lottery paradox

One of the starting assumptions of conversational contextualism is the fallibilistic position, which is best represented by the possibility of ascribing the knowledge of proposition *p* to person X, even though there is a probability, no matter how small, that proposition *p* is not true, or to put it simply, that there is the possibility of error. It is exactly the high degree of probability which is condition that allows us to ascribe knowledge of proposition *p* to

9 Lewis 1996: 556.

subject X. In addition, the more we are likely to be right, the possibility of error is smaller and we can say that X knows *p* in the case when the probability that proposition *p* is true is high enough (but still can be less than 1).

Problem that arises from this position we can figuratively present if we make an analogy with the lottery. Namely, assume that the lottery drawing is held with total amount of 100,000 lottery tickets, one of which *must* be drawn as a winning ticket. Person X (one previously described, who we claimed knows that the classroom was empty) bought one ticket. X's ticket has a 0,00001 % probability of being drawn as a winning ticket and 0,99999 % probability of not being drawn, that is – probability of losing. It also has to be taken into account that we cannot know the results of lottery drawing before it really happens. Very high probability that X's ticket is a losing one does not allow us to be certain that his ticket will be a losing one, although the probability is so high that it almost reached certainty (especially if we have in mind X's great expectations of this ticket). The only thing we can say is that it is *highly likely* that X's ticket is the losing one, and not that we know it.

Furthermore, let us assume that the results of the lottery came out in tomorrow's newspapers and that, while looking at them, we realize that the winning ticket is not the one that X was holding. At that moment it seems to us that we are inclined to claim that we *know* X's ticket is the losing one, rather than to say that it is *highly likely* that X's ticket is a losing ticket. Let's say, for the sake of the argument, that the daily circulation of those newspapers is 100.000, probability that there will be typographical error can be greater than the probability that the X's ticket is a winning one (newspapers can be wrong more than 1 time in 100,000 copies). In former case the possibility of error of 0,00001 % does not allow us to ascribe knowledge, while in the second case, where the possibility of error may be much higher, we are willing to ascribe knowledge.

Clearly more precisely formulated problem looks like this:

(L1) X does not know that the ticket P is the losing one just on the basis of lottery ticket numbers.

(L2) Probability V_1 that the ticket P is losing is very high.

(L3) X knows that ticket P is a losing one because he read it in newspapers.

(L4) Probability V_2 that newspapers are wrong is higher than V_1.

(C) There is a problem in the fallibilistic idea.[10]

10 Filipovic 2014: 95.

John Hawthorne[11] offered us a wider version of an argument:

(i) S knows that S will not have enough money to go on a safari this year.

(ii) If S knows that S will not have enough money to go on a safari this year, than S is in a position to know that S will not win a major prize in a lottery this year.

(c) Hence, S is in a position to know that S will not win a major prize in a lottery this year.

Formulated like this, this argument is broader, i.e. it may concern every knowledge for which we have statistical reasons. However, the basic version of lottery paradox is sufficient version that applies only to cognitive propositions regarding the positive or negative result of lottery drawing.

It is important to mention several methodological or formal remarks that can be useful for the complete understanding of the basics of the problem. Besides that, it helps us avoid widening the paradox by introducing new facts that could affect the formulation of the problem, thus neglecting its structurally essential goal – shaking up fallibilistic position. Firstly, each ticket participating in the draw has equal value and equal opportunity to be the winning one. Furthermore, the key to the problem is not the value of the main prize, if there is a prize at all. Of course, if there is no prize, in the form of some value, usually monetary, it can be said that the winning ticket is not 'the winner', since the owner of the ticket did not get the award in any tangible merit or benefit. Regardless of that, such addition does not represent an obstacle, since the winning ticket is actually the winner – because it is drawn, no matter whether or not it carries a material or palpable reward. In addition, it is not necessary for an actual winner to exist, since it is conceivable that some form of lottery draw takes place long enough so that a winner is not drawn every time (example: lotto). Even in that case, we can claim that there would be the winner if he had played an appropriate combination, i.e. if the combination drawn is a winning combination. In addition, it is possible for a lottery (bingo, for example) to require the presence of the winning ticket owner, so the ticket is valid. Nevertheless, these circumstances do not apply to the lottery paradox, since it was assumed that the winning ticket was drawn, although it may happen that the owner for some reasons was unable to attend the draw. Such and similar cases, like, eventually, if the ticket was lost etc., fall as well under the corpus of factors and circumstances that may affect the outcome of the lottery, but not in the sense relevant for us.

Crucial question that emerges is – why is it that, in the lottery context, we cannot claim we know the proposition (that the ticket is a losing one), while in other, non-lottery context, we are inclined to claim that we do

11 Hawthorne 2004: 2-3.

know the same proposition, even though its probability in the second case does not have to be higher?

Overview of Lewis's way of solving the lottery paradox

The main reason for Lewis taking the contextualistic position lies in the fact that his proponents were convinced that it was the most effective way for solving the crucial epistemological problems where invariantistic approach did not offered adequate response. In a similar fashion, Lewis thought, that he had provided a valid solution of lottery paradox, thanks to the epistemic position of (semantic) contextualism. As previously said, Lewis' solution is a combination of two rules, the rule of actuality and the rule of resemblance. The first rule does not allow us to ignore or eliminate the option that is *de facto* happening, i.e. a possibility that actually obtains, while the other rule suggests us that, if there were more possibilities that were saliently similar to one another, either every one of them may be properly ignored, or none may.[12] Put it in other words: if we cannot eliminate one possibility, than we cannot eliminate others, if they are saliently similar. Salient similarity is something we should pay attention to, since it is something that allows Lewis to claim that X cannot know that his ticket is a losing one. Namely, in lottery drawing, one ticket must be drawn as a winning ticket, and, on the other hand, chances for drawing any other ticket are the same as for the winning ticket. According to that, possibility for any other ticket to be the winning one is saliently similar to each other, so either all possibilities may be ignored or none of them. However, if we know, according to the rule of actuality, that one of the possibilities is actualized, while keeping in mind that actuality cannot be properly ignored, then neither of the possibilities cannot be properly ignored.

It appears that this solution is not getting straight to the point, i.e. it just explains or analyzes the problem to the extent that at the moment, we know why we are not, in the context of lottery, inclined to ascribe knowledge that the ticket is a losing one. What we are missing out and what remains an issue is why do we, in the other, non-lottery contexts, tend to ascribe knowledge, even though the probability for mistake is if not greater, then at least the same as the probability of error in the context of lottery? It is evident that standards for ascribing the knowledge are different. In the first case they are very high, while in the other case, they are lower. That differentiation between the standards is explained by saliently similar possibilities, which are obvious in the lottery context, unlike the contexts in which they are not, similar to the context of obtaining information about the lottery results through daily newspapers.

12 Lewis 1996: 559.

"Now you know it, now you don't" knowledge

Although we have only scratched the surface of the problem of the lottery paradox, this road puts us on a different path – following the consequences of Lewis' standpoint, which, as it seems, were not acceptable to Keith DeRose. The format of the probabilistic analysis of justification, as one of the necessary conditions for knowledge, is acceptable for Lewis because it enables us not to insist on the complete and absolute conclusiveness of justification for the assertion of some factual propositions. Demand for absolute conclusive justifications leads us directly to scepticism. As sceptical arguments demonstrate, no matter how detailed the available evidence (*e*) regarding any factual (contingent) proposition *p*, possibility of error is always conceivable, that is, there is always an alternative q that is conceivable and coherent with *e*, but incoherent with *p*. The most we can expect is that *e* makes *p* true to a sufficient extent.[13] Put it in Lewis's words, possibility W is uneliminated if and only if subject's perceptual experience and memory of W matches exactly his perceptual experience and memory in actuality.[14] As we have several options that are not compatible to each other, while our experience, perception and memory are exactly the same for each incompatible option, then it seems to us that the ascribing of knowledge directly depends on conversational standards (which we apply at any given moment). In ordinary contexts, when we are facing low standards for knowledge, we tend to ascribe the knowledge of proposition p to subject X. On the other hand, when the standards for knowledge are higher, like in epistemological context, we are not in a position to ascribe knowledge. *Maybe epistemology is the culprit. Maybe this extraordinary pastime robs us of our knowledge. Maybe we do know a lot in daily life; but when we look hard at our knowledge, it goes away*.[15] Volatility or elusiveness of knowledge occurs as a result of changes of standards upon which we claim that someone knows something. It could easily be seen that at some point we know something and that in the very next moment, faced with the large number of possibilities that have to be eliminated, we get in a position to withdraw the claim that one knows or does not know certain proposition, i.e. we are in a situation when we 'subtract' or take away the knowledge. From this point of view, Lewis' knowledge that disappears into the fog lifted by demanding standards of knowledge looks like a serious objection, even though many[16] insisted that such complaint, although common, is wrong. Namely, if S has lower standards for knowledge than T does, then S ends up knowing more than T simply due to the difference in their standards, and not to a discrepancy in their epistemic skills. To think that contextualism has this consequence

13 Lazovic 2014: 19.
14 Lewis 2006: 553.
15 Ibid, 550.
16 Cf. Hawthorne 2004: 53-61; DeRose 2000: 96-101.

is to forget the ascriber-dependence of relevance: what I should take you as knowing depends upon my standards, not yours.[17] This is one of the ways to avoid an unacceptable implication of contextualism – the existence of two or more different corpuses of standards can make the ascriber claim that subject X does not have the knowledge; while on the other hand, the same subject X may consider to have the knowledge according to own standards.

Keith DeRose (2000) thinks in a similar way when he tries to confront the opponents of contextualism (and its proponents, too) who accept an unusual consequence of this position, which is that knowledge is lost, disappeared, stolen or deprived from us. It is Lewis himself who draws these conclusions, which, at least, are not pleasant for the contextualist understanding of the concept of knowledge. If, during the conversation, standards for knowledge change from low, that X manages to reach, to high, so X cannot even approach them, it seems that we can say that X 'lost' knowledge. When we say 'lost', it means that at some point previously X has possessed something that is lost now. Strangeness of the sentence that X would have to say: 'I knew before but now I do not know now' is something that DeRose does not like at all. The absurdity of this position depicts now famous Dretske's case with the zoo and zebras. Suppose a person A and person B observe person C from the distance. Person C is watching an indifferent and calm zebra in the zoo. A's and B's conversation goes like this (C is not part of their conversation nor he can hear them):

A: Does C know that it is a zebra?

B: Yes, he does.

A: But can he rule out it being a merely cleverly painted mule?

B: No, he cannot.

A: So, you admit he doesn't know it is a zebra?

B: No, he did know then it was a zebra. But after your question, he no longer knows.[18]

The space between them and amazement over zebra's dull look into the distance does not enable the person C to hear the conversation between A and B, so at this point, C is convinced that the zebra is in front of him. Although the last response of the person B appears absurd, doesn't it seem to us that, if we accept contextualism, this is the very way that the previous conversation would look like?

According to DeRose, such standpoint would be wrong for several reasons. The question whether the mere mention of some incompatible possibilities makes that possibility relevant in a given context is completely plausible

17 Hawthorne 2004: 59.

18 DeRose 2000: 93.

and in place. Therefore, to be relevant, the alternate possibility has to be adequately supported by additional assumptions that would confirm its possibility of actualization. Hence, if we were in the zoo where it has never happened before that the manager or his employees swap one animal with another of similar characteristics, it is less likely that such possibility is actualized. Even though the very existence of such distant and extremely unusual possibility does not allow us to be certain that it is not and/or will not be actualized in the near future, we will still not consider it as the relevant possibility. So, the person B can avoid taking into account possibilities like that, with an appropriate comment: 'Come on, what kind of painted mule comes to your mind? Where did you get such ideas? That's crazy.' Standards for knowledge would increase only if person A presented adequate reasons for his suspicious assumptions (e.g. he has heard from a former employee that they used to swap the animals if there was the need for that, or similar), and then we would need to eliminate those possibilities if we wanted to have knowledge. That way the context in which the conversation was kept would be more demanding for achieving knowledge.

In addition, Lewis's contextualistic position, especially the lottery paradox and its solution caused this kind of DeRose's reaction and a desire to defend the concept of knowledge from this kind of elusiveness. Specifically, allowing for the interpretation of the concept of knowledge from probabilistic perspective is something that permits us to enforce the standards.[19] It results in the process of losing knowledge. In one moment, we have knowledge, but at some point, we are devoid of it.

The argument that leads DeRose to reject Lewis's contextualism would look like this:

A1 DeRose claims that "now you know it, now you don't" knowledge is a bad implication of Lewis's contextualism.

A2 Probabilistic approach to the analysis of the concept of knowledge enables "now you know it, now you don't" knowledge.

A3 Lewis uses probabilistic approach to resolve the lottery paradox.

C Lewis's solution of the lottery paradox enables "now you know it, now you don't" knowledge.

This argument, even though it seems a bit forced, has at least partially approved plausibility by initial assumptions. A1 appears to be clear, given that such DeRose's attitude is mentioned and explained several times so far. A2 and A3, although being attractive statements, are less acceptable, and should be additionally elaborated.

19 Of course vice versa is possible, from higher standards to lower, so the knowledge that we 'don't have' becomes knowledge that we have.

Even though Lewis does not accept probabilism directly, he still considers it as an adequate starting point for resolving the lottery paradox, through fallibilistic position. It seems that this hardly noticeable, implicit relation between Lewis and probabilism is the main reason which led DeRose to conclusions that are not coherent with contextualism. Furthermore, Lewis explicitly refers to probability while interpreting the concept of knowledge, and claims that it depends on a certain degree of probability (the rule of belief). Thus, the combination of the lack of an appropriate criterion that would suggest what degree of probability is high enough for us to have knowledge with saliently similar possibilities which cannot be properly eliminated, results in a completely relativized concept of knowledge – in the sense that any possibility, if saliently similar to the actualized one, cannot be ignored, regardless of the degree of probability of its actualization. Considering that it is possible to interpret the probability in the lottery context as well as in non-lottery contexts, we arrive to the moment when it is very easy for our knowledge to disappear or get taken away from us. No matter how high, the probability that we know the proposition *p* cannot be the confirmation of it. Lewis's position is, in this manner, summarized through DeRose's conclusion that Lewis allows "now you know it, now you don't" knowledge.

However, as DeRose claims,[20] cognitive terms are comparable with contextually dependant terms, such as 'here', for example. It is clear that we cannot say that we have been 'here' for a moment from the past when we were 'somewhere else', although at the moment when we were somewhere else our statement 'I was here' was correct. A similar thing can be said for the conclusion of the person B from the previous dialogue, "he knew at first, and now he doesn't"; since contextually dependent factors, such as time and place of the statement utterance, are neglected. More specifically, in the case of the zoo and observing the zebra, the time of utterance is more important. Moreover, in the moment when the statement that the person C knows that it is a zebra is uttered, she certainly does know it. If it turns out that the zebra is just cleverly disguised mule, then the person C has not lost the knowledge. He never had it, in the first place. Therefore, person C does not have anything to lose. It seems that if we interpret the justification for knowledge via probability, then even a very high degree of probability does not allow us to be prone to claim that we know something (because of the lottery paradox). Due to these reasons, Lewis tends to view knowledge as unattainable, volatile or *elusive*.

What has person C lost in the meantime, while the standards for knowledge are increased? Knowledge is not one of those things, since the person C either knew all the time (and still knows) the particular statement or he did

20 DeRose 2000: 97.

not know it at all. Either way, he has not lost his knowledge of p and no knowledge has gone away, been destroyed, or been robbed from him.[21] His epistemic position remains unchanged, and the conditions for his knowledge are increased so he needs to obtain them. Simply put, he never had knowledge dependent of high and rigorous standards, while on the other hand, the knowledge that he has due to lower and more lenient standards is still in his 'possession'. DeRose criticism of Lewis may be understood in two ways. Firstly, the justification as the condition for knowledge allows the existence of two propositions whose content is the same but the truth-conditions are different, and these two propositions are, in fact, different. The variety of truth-conditions is dictated by the change of the standards for knowledge. Another way, which is less evident, but seems plausible, relies on the truth condition that is required to be fulfilled, regardless of any justification that might be there at the given moment. The truth condition as a necessary condition for knowledge is not dependent on the conversational context, and if we look from that perspective it is clear why DeRose claims that we cannot lose the knowledge, but it rather is or it is not there.

Bibliography

DeRose, Keith (2000), "Now you know it, now you don't", *Epistemology – Proceedings of the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy* (5): 91–106.
DeRose, Keith (2009), *The Case for Contextualism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
DeRose, Keith & Ted A. Warfield (eds.) (1999), *Skepticism: A Contemporary Reader*. Oxford University Press, New York.
Dretske, Fred (1981), "The Pragmatic Dimension of Knowledge", *Philosophical Studies* 40: 363–378.
Filipović, Nenad (2014), „Kako (ne) biti falibilista: Problem lutrije i dva tipa kontekstualizma", *Theoria* 57 (3): 93–120.
Hawthorne, John (2004), *Knowledge and Lotteries*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Kohen, Stewart (1999) "Contextualism, skepticistm, and the structure of reason", *Philosophical Perspectives* 13: 57–89.
Lazović, Živan (2014), "Epistemički kontekstualizam", *Theoria* 57 (3): 5–22.
Lewis, David (1979), "Scorekeeping in a Language Game", *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 8 (1): 339–359.
Lewis, David (1999), "Elusive Knowledge", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 74 (4): 549–567.
Rysiew, Patrick (2011), "Epistemic Contextualism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (internet) available at http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/contextualism-epistemology/ (viewed 21. February 2016).
Unger, Peter (1978), "A defense of scepticism", in: G. S. Pappas and M. Swain (eds.), *Essay on Knowledge and Justification*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, pp. 317–336.
Weatherson, Brian (2014), "David Lewis", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (internet) available at: http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/david-lewis/ (viewed 21. February 2016).

21 DeRose 2000: 101.

Ivan Nišavić

Znanje koje nestaje

Apstrakt

Nakon izlaganja osnovnih stavova kontekstualističke pozicije u odnosu na invarijantističku, koja pojam znanja uzima u strogom i nepromjenljivom značenju, tekst se dalje bavi analizom pojma znanja koju nam je ponudio Luis (David Lewis) sa ambicijom da riješi uobičajene epistemološke probleme, pa među njima i lutrijski paradoks. Prihvatajući folibilizam kao jedinu plauzibilnu opciju za mogućnost sticanja znanja, Luis, zajedno sa postuliranjem pravila koja nam omogućavaju ispravno eliminisanje alternativnih mogućnosti, smatra da je moguće prenebregnuti pomenuti paradoks. Ako znanje želimo da utemeljimo na vjerovatnoći, a ne na apsolutnosti, i direktno ga uslovimo sa kontekstom u kom ono biva zasnovano ili izrečeno, onda je očigledno da će ono zavisiti od toga da li su uslovi za znanjem visoki i niski. Stoga, u jednom slučaju se može desiti da imamo znanje, a u drugom da nemamo, iako se ništa nije promijenilo sem konverzacionih faktora koji su u 'igri'. Takvo znanje, znanje koje je nepostojano, koje se gubi, Diroz (DeRose) naziva 'sad ga ima, sad ga nema' znanje i smatra da je direktna posledica Luisove analize, te kao takvo ne bi trebalo da bude prihvaćeno.

Ključne riječi: kontekstualizam, eliminisanje mogućnosti, vjerovatnoća, nepostojanost znanja, lutrijski paradoks