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SKEPTICISM AND RELEVANT ALTERNATIVES

*Abstract*

One attempt to solve Gettier's problem uses theories of relevant alternatives, according to which the sentence "S knows that p" is true only in the light of relevant alternatives incompatible with p. I first analyze the treatments of relevant alternatives offered by Dretske and Goldman; then I consider the skeptical alternatives (the dreaming hypothesis, the demon and the brain in a vat) and show why in some cases they are relevant, and in others not. In the end I propose a form of contextualism (popular now due to work by Cohen and DeRose) that is able to save our ordinary intuition that we know that a lot of propositions are true and at the same time preserves the persistent appeal of skepticism.