



University of Maribor

Faculty of Arts

**Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor**

**Programme**

**Online Conference on Guido Melchior's  
*Knowing and Checking: An Epistemological Investigation***

If you would like to join the conference, please contact Tadej Todorović at  
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**Microsoft Teams, 27 October 2021**



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## Programme

**Wednesday, 27 October**  
**MS Teams (classroom link)**

12:00 – 12:10	Welcome speech: Friderik Klampfer, Head of the Department of Philosophy
12:10 – 12:55	Nenad Miščević, University of Maribor: Rationality, Checking and Knowing: A Virtue-Theoretical Perspective
13:00 – 13:45	Marian David, University of Graz: Analytic Epistemology and Armchair Psychology
13:45 – 14:30	Break
14:30 – 15:15	Kelly Michael Becker, University of New Mexico: Balancing the Checking Account
15:20 – 16:05	Peter Baumann, Swarthmore College: Just Checking! Comments on Guido Melchior's Knowing and Checking
16:05 – 16:20	Break
16:20 – 17:05	Robert Wes Siscoe, Florida State University: Checking and the Argument from Inquiry
17:10 – 17:55	Danilo Šuster, University of Maribor: "Which alters when it alteration finds": A Note on Knowing and Checking
17:55 –	Closing remarks



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## Abstracts

**Peter Baumann, Swarthmore College**

*Just Checking! Comments on Guido Melchior's Knowing and Checking*

Guido Melchior's book opens a new debate in epistemology or, at least, draws our attention to the much neglected topic of checking. There are many new leads to follow. Here I will pick a few that seem to me to allow most room for discussion and disagreement: the alleged modal profile of checking (sec.1), its contrastive aspects of checking (sec.2), and the relation of checking to closure (sec.3). I will end with two smaller points worth bringing up here (sec.4).

**Kelly Michael Becker, University of New Mexico**

*Balancing the Checking Account*

Guido Melchior's checking account looks healthy enough to pay for an African safari even if he never wins the lottery. As a former accountant, I thought I'd look to make sure it is properly balanced. Melchior seems to have entered just the large items in his checking account register. He may have missed a couple deposits, perhaps a refund for giving Nozick too much credit on inductive knowledge, and maybe some credits due to his account that he deemed out of context. I may have caught a few withdrawals that weren't put in the ledger, too. One is small. Maybe Melchior checked and didn't believe what he found. And there's a payment to Kripke for an old red barn. Oh, and I checked with some disjunctivist neo-Moorean friends when they were checking out the checking account, and they asked me to check in with Melchior and then check back with them.

**Marian David, University of Graz**

*Analytic Epistemology and Armchair Psychology*

In his book, Melchior frequently employs his account of checking, and the difference between checking and knowing, to explain intuitions that "we" (people? students? epistemologists?) are supposed to have that give rise to various puzzle-cases familiar from the literature in epistemology. This strikes me as a highly interesting aspect of Melchior's work. At the same time, it also strikes me as a potentially troubling one. It involves Melchior in producing apparently substantive psychological hypotheses about what is going on in "our" (peoples'? students'? epistemologists'?) minds (consciously? subconsciously?) when responding to certain



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epistemological test-cases. Melchior seems to be producing these psychological hypotheses about the goings on within other cognizers from his armchair. In the talk, I reflect on natural worries this raises about Melchior's methodology.

**Nenad Miščević, University of Maribor**

*Rationality, Checking and Knowing: A Virtue-Theoretical Perspective*

Melchior's account based on the need to keep checking under control, offers a fine recipe for a rational reaction to skepticism from the perspective of epistemic virtues. It could be developed as a new virtue-theoretic answer to skepticism, and compared, for instance, to Wittgenstein inspired answers that also limit the scope of legitimate checking. Finally, the same line due to Melchior can be applied to other important issues in epistemology, low vs. high stakes, closure puzzles and the like, following Melchior's checking restricting recipe.

**Robert Wes Siscoe, Florida State University**

*Checking and the Argument from Inquiry*

In his recent book *Knowing and Checking*, Guido Melchior argues that, when we attempt to check whether  $p$ , we tend to think that we do not know  $p$ . Melchior then uses this assumption to explain a number of puzzles about knowledge. One outstanding question for Melchior's account, however, is why this tendency exists. After all, Melchior himself argues that checking is not necessary for knowledge, so why think that we fail to know that  $p$  when we are in the midst of checking that  $p$ ? In this talk, I will attempt to offer one such suggestion for why this occurs, arguing that the connection between checking and inquiry can shed light on the impact that checking has on knowing.

**Danilo Šuster, University of Maribor**

*"Which alters when it alteration finds": A Note on Knowing and Checking*

According to Melchior sensitivity is necessary for checking but not for knowledge. And so it marks a crucial distinction between knowing and checking. I raise some critical questions about the modal profile of checking. The case of a stony oracle is supposed to be a case of checking method which is (weakly) sensitive but not (weakly) safe. I raise some doubts about this and similar cases based on the assumption that counterfactuals do not contrapose and that, therefore, modal conditions like sensitivity and safety are not equivalent.