1. **What is Epistemic Relativism?**

1.1. **The Main Elements**

**Epistemic Non-Absolutism:** There are no absolute epistemic facts about what belief a particular item of information justifies.

- In other words, there are no absolute facts of the form $E$ justifies $B$.

**Epistemic Relationism:** If a person, $S$’s, epistemic judgments are to have any prospect of being true, we must not construe his utterances of the form “$E$ justifies belief $B$” as expressing the claim $E$ justifies belief $B$, but rather as expressing the claim *According to the epistemic system, $C$, that I, $S$, accept information $E$ justifies belief $B*."

**Epistemic pluralism:** There are many fundamentally different, genuinely alternative epistemic systems, but not facts by virtue of which one of these systems is more correct than any of the others.

1.2. **Other Ideas**

An *epistemic principle* is a statement that specifies conditions wherein beliefs are justified.

**(Observation)** For any observational proposition $p$, if it visually seems to $S$ that $p$ and circumstantial conditions $D$ obtain, then $S$ is justified in believing that $p$.

**(Deduction)** If $S$ justified in believing that $p$ and $q$ fairly obviously entails $q$, then $S$ is justified in believing $q$.

**(Induction)** If $S$ has often observed that an event of type $A$ has been followed by an event of type $B$, then $S$ is justified in believing that all events of type $A$ will be followed by events of type $B$.

**(IBE)** If $S$ justifiably believes that $p$, and justifiably believes that $q$ best explains $p$, then $S$ is justified in believing that $q$.

An *epistemic system* is a set of *epistemic principles* accepted by an individual person.

2. **Examples of Epistemic Relativism**

Let’s assume that “Our System” is largely defined by the principles (Observation), (Deduction), (Induction), (IBE). Contrast Our System with the following:

- Bellarmine’s system, which includes:
  - (Revelation) If $p$ is the revealed word of God as claimed by the Bible, then $S$ is justified in believing that $p$.

- The Azande’s system, which includes:
  - (Oracle) If a Poison Oracle says that $p$, then $S$ is justified in believing that $p$.

3. **The Argument for Epistemic Relativism**

3.1. **The Main Argument**

R1. If there are absolute epistemic facts, then it ought to be possible to arrive at justified beliefs about them.

R2. It is not possible to arrive at justified beliefs about what absolute epistemic facts there are.

R3. $\therefore$ There are no absolute epistemic facts. (From R1, R2)

R4. If there are no absolute epistemic facts, then epistemic relativism is true.

R5. $\therefore$ Epistemic relativism is true. (From R3, R4)

3.2. **Norm-Circularity Argument (for R2)**

Suppose that there are two epistemic systems, $C_1$ and $C_2$, such that:

a. According to $C_1$, $E$ justifies $B$;

b. According to $C_2$, $E$ does not justify $B$; and

1. If it’s an absolute fact that $E$ justifies $B$, then there is some justification for favoring $C_1$ over $C_2$.
   (From R1)

2. The only justification for favoring $C_1$ over $C_2$ presupposes $C_1$.

3. If the only justification for $C_1$ over $C_2$ presupposes $C_1$, then that justification is circular.

4. According to any acceptable epistemic system, circular justification is impossible.

R2. $\therefore$ It is not possible to arrive at justified beliefs about what absolute epistemic facts there are.
   (From 1-4)