

## Handout #2: Gettier's Objection

### Definition of Knowledge

(3a)  $S$  knows that  $p$  = Df. (1)  $S$  believes that  $p$ , (2)  $p$  is true, and (3)  $p$  is epistemically justified for  $S$ .

**Objection:** This is insufficient for knowledge since conditions (1)–(3) can be satisfied but  $S$  can fail to know  $p$ .

### Gettier's Two Assumptions

**A1<sub>G</sub>:** It is possible for  $p$  to be epistemically justified yet  $p$  is not true.

**A2<sub>G</sub>:** If  $p$  is epistemically justified for  $S$ , and  $p$  logically entails  $q$ , and  $S$  deduces  $q$  from  $p$ , then  $q$  is also epistemically justified for  $S$ .

### Case #1

- (a) Jones is the man who will get the job, and Jones has ten coins in his pocket.
- (b) The man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket.

If (a) is epistemically justified, and **A1<sub>G</sub>** and **A2<sub>G</sub>** are assumed, then,

- (1) Smith believes (b)
- (2) (b) is true
- (3) (b) is epistemically justified for  $S$

But, also

- (4) Smith does not know (b) because Smith does not know that Smith has ten coins in his pocket.

## Discussion of Case #2

## Writing a Philosophical Essay

Gettier's 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?' is a famous philosophical essay that has attracted a lot of attention, is widely read, and many articles have been written in response to it. Part of this has to do with the substance of the essay itself but some of this might have to do with *how* the objection is presented. The essay is roughly three pages long and is written in a terse style without employing a lot of formalism or going into minute details about the meaning of 'belief', 'justification', or 'truth'.

## 1. Introduction

Many people have tried to do *X*. Here are some examples where people do *X* by *y*: [reputable and widely-read individuals with published books, cite books/articles].

I will argue that despite how convincing *y* seems to be, it *not-y* is actually the case.

## 2. Preliminaries

Two Assumptions. Given these assumptions, *not-y* is the case, and I will prove this with two examples.

## 3. Body

Two Examples. *Case 1* shows that *not-y*. *Case 2* shows that *not-y*.

## 4. Conclusion

Since case 1 and 2 show that *not-y*. It cannot be the case that *y*. Therefore, people who have tried to do *X* by *y* have not succeeded.

## Remarks

The general format of the essay is *argumentative*: introduction, preliminaries, counter-examples, and conclusion.

This is a good format to replicate if you identify a claim that you think is wrong. Writing a good philosophical essay does not always require that you show something to be the case, e.g. God exists or God does not exist. You can be skeptical by presenting a strong objection to someone else's position, e.g. 'Philosophers Mr. X, Mrs. Y, and Dr. Z say that God does not exist, they argue for this claim by saying *a*, *b*, and *c*. But *a*, *b*, *c* cannot be true for the following reasons.'

## Three Things Not to Do

No One Holds this Position  
Strawmen Objections  
Controversial Assumptions

## Objections to the Gettier Problem

*No False Lemmas/Grounds Objections*  
*Defeasibility*  
*Epistemic Justification as Causal*