

The Problem of Knowledge

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Abstract: The definition of the knowledge has been disputed from ancient Greece up to now, this paper attempts to analyze the problem from three aspects: Platon's definition, the Get tier Problem and solutions to the Get tier problem by. By means of exemplification to analyze the development of the problem of knowledge. And put forward the personal opinions for this problem.

Keywords: definition of knowledge, The Get tier Problem, truth

1. PLATONIC DEFINITION OF KNOWLEDGE

Theory of Knowledge “is what we usually says epistemology, The main issues involved include: What knowledge is?(know, knowledge, internal state)Where do we get knowledge?How our beliefs are justified?(foundationalism, coherentism, reliabilism)How we perceived the world around us?(Our perception is partly determined by the outside world, and partly by our self)Whether we have knowledge or not ?Whether we can acquire knowledge or not?(skepticism)

Western philosophers generally divide knowledge into three categories : personal knowledge or knowledge by acquaintance; procedure knowledge or know-how knowledge; propositional knowledge or knowledge of facts.“What knowledge is?” involved is mainly proposition knowledge.

What the theory of knowledge need to achieve is a kind of ontological property of the provision that about "knowledge" itself. Because only this kind of provision can ensure the certainty of knowledge and this is Plato to knowledge definition to achieve the objective. Theory of knowledge of the fundamental theory purport is to justify and defend specific knowledge claims and ideas of knowledge. It tries to prove knowledge is really and objectively, trying to put forward a permanent basis and standard for the knowledge of the truth and objectivity.

Platonic definition of knowledge is that knowledge is justified true belief. According to Plato, true opinion isn't knowledge. True opinion must be defended or proved to be knowledge .The theory of that knowledge is justified true belief can be referred to as "JTB" theory, also called the analysis of knowledge. It's about the analysis of the definition of

knowledge and given the three necessary conditions of knowledge: the truth condition, the belief condition and the justification condition. The three necessary conditions are combined to form a sufficient condition for knowledge. As a result, the traditional definition of knowledge is also called the tripartite definition.

JTB theory can be expressed as follows:

S knows that P if and only if:

1. P is true.
2. S believes P.
3. S is justified in believing P.

In the above definition, S represents the subject of knowledge, and P represents any proposition. These three conditions are the necessary conditions of knowledge, are indispensable, the three together constitute a sufficient condition of knowledge. If P is actually a fake, then we can't say S knows P. Even if P is true, if S does not believe that P is true, then we can not say, "S know P". Which belief that meet the requirements of the first two conditions called "true belief". In the past, people believed that true belief is knowledge, but according to JTB theory that true belief does not represent knowledge, because true belief may be just a lucky guess. Suppose we need to decide which one is bigger between the two sizes of A and B, which looks similar to the size of the potatoes. If we have 1/3 of them believe that A is greater than B; 1/3 of people believe that B is greater than A; 1/3 of people believe that A is equal to B. Because these three views must have a true, so the 1/3 of us are true to their beliefs, but we do not believe that those who are true to their beliefs are true. According to JTB theory, this is because their belief has not been defended or proved, at best, just a lucky guess, these people may change their views at any time. According to JTB theory, only the justified true belief can be called knowledge.

2. THE GETTIER PROBLEM

2.1 Gettier's counterexample

Professor Emeritus published his article, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" in *Analysis*, Vol. 23 (1963). In that article, he puts forward two counter examples on Platonic JTB theory.

Case 1:

Suppose Smith and Jones have applied for a job.

Suppose Smith has good evidence for believing the following:

(1) Jones is the man who will get the job, and Jones has ten coins in his pocket.

(1) entails (2):

(2) The man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket.

Case 2:

Suppose Smith, Jones and Brown are working in the same company. Smith believes falsely but with good reason that

(1) Jones owns a Ford.

Smith infers from (1) that

(2) Either Jones owns a Ford (disjunct) or Brown is in Barcelona (disjunct).

Gettier's counterexamples seem to show that traditional definition of knowledge is not sufficient. Then, what is a correct analysis of knowledge? Or what is a sufficient condition or the fourth condition for being knowledge? This is the Gettier problem.

Let us analyze emphatically Case 1:

Suppose Smith and Jones have applied for a job. Suppose Smith has good evidence for believing that (1) Jones is the man who will get the job, and Jones has ten coins in his pocket and (2) The man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket.

Further assumptions, Smith does not know is not Jones, but he will get the job, but also, he did not know that there are 10 coins in his pocket. Proposition (2) is true, but the proposition (1) from Smith's inference appears to be false.

In Case 1,

1. Proposition (2) is true.
2. Smith believes Proposition (2) is true.
3. Smith is justified in believing Proposition (2).

But it can also be said that Smith did not know Proposition 2 is true. Because Proposition 2 is really based on the number of coins inside the Smith's pocket and Smith did not know how many coins in his pocket. Based on the belief that the number of coins in Jones's pocket in Proposition 2, Smith is wrong to think that Jones would get the job. so Proposition 2 not Smith's knowledge.

First, the counter example is a proof that shows traditional definition of knowledge is not a necessary and sufficient condition. It shows that JTB is only a sufficient condition of knowledge, but not a necessary condition. According to the previous analysis, Get tier at least to find a proposition, it is in compliance with the JTB conditions, but not the knowledge of S. Secondly, the logical form of the Get tier counter example is valid. For example, the logical form of Case 1 is, A is B / B is C // so that A is C. Finally, the Get tier counterexample shows that JTB definition is too wide. It does not exclude the belief outside the scope of knowledge which is due to chance but not knowledge. Get tier did not argue that traditional analysis is completely wrong, the key point what counterexample shows is, the three elements of traditional analysis perhaps are the necessary condition to constitute the knowledge, but they do not combine to form a sufficient condition of knowledge.

2.2 My example

Suppose I have good evidence for believing the following:

(1) The thermometer is normal and the thermometer shows the indoor temperature is 25 degrees centigrade.

(1) entails (2):

(2) Indoor temperature is 25 degrees centigrade.

Further assumptions, the thermometer is broken, it will always show only 25 degrees no matter how the external temperature changes. And it happens at this time of room temperature is 25 degrees .Proposition (2) is true, but the proposition (1) from my inference appears to be false.

In My example,

1. Proposition (2) is true.
2. I believes Proposition (2) is true.
3. I am justified in believing Proposition (2).

But it can also be said that I don't know Proposition 2 is true. Because Proposition 2 is really based on the real indoor temperature and I don't know how many the room temperature is. Based on the belief that the temperature shows by a broken thermometer, I am wrong to think that the thermometer is normal .So Proposition 2 not my knowledge.

3. SOLUTIONS TO THE GETTIER PROBLEM

3.1 Solutions to the Get tier problem

In order to answer the question, the western philosophers have analyzed and explained the nature of knowledge in different ways. There are at least three kinds of strategies: internalist, externalist and explanationist.

The internalist strategy

The internalist strategy concentrates on the analysis of the believer's justification. It contains *No false premise theory*(S's justification for believing P does not include any false beliefs.) and *The defeasibility theory* (Knowledge is undefeated justified true belief.)

The externalist strategy

It is the externalist strategy that try to explain the condition of knowledge from the outside of the subject. It contains *The causal theory* (Knowledge is suitably caused true belief.) and *The reliability theory* (Knowledge is reliably produced true belief.)

The explanationist theory

The explanationist theory (Knowledge is justified true belief that provides the best explanation for the justifying evidence.)

3.2 My view

I don't think that Platonic account of knowledge is plausible even not facing the challenge of the Gettier Problem. Because knowledge is not definite and necessarily, but can be wrong. Platonic definition of knowledge is that knowledge is justified true belief. But what is "true" and how to judge a belief is "justified".

From the challenge of the Gettier Problem to the solution of the problem of the internalist, externalist and explanationist. I think them in their own show, knowledge can be wrong, every theory proposed will be a theoretical rebuttal, but they are still in pursuit of a certain definition

of knowledge, I think it is almost impossible. For example, Gettier said in the Case 1, Smith is wrong to think that Jones is the man who will get the job so he got a conclusion that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket. But a lot of knowledge of our history is so produced, we will find that the knowledge gained is wrong as we broaden our horizons and understand the depth. As Smith would find that the knowledge gained is wrong when not the Jones but he got the job, but at that time of Smith, this is the knowledge that he can get. We just from a perspective of god to see that Smith is actually getting the wrong knowledge, but God did it in the same way. Some knowledge is just a chance coincidence, but limited to our cognitive level, we cannot know in time that the generation of this knowledge has something wrong. And sooner or later we will find the problem and improve our knowledge, and the improved knowledge still waiting for us to improve.

Popper said "We understand the environment, not due to his inspiration, but due to the challenge. Our reactions (including our expectations, predictions and conjecture) by its arouse. We learn from the eliminating of unsuccessful reflection -- that is to say, we learn from our mistake." "Science is science does not due to it can be empirically proved or not, but because it has wrong, it can be denied by experience. The most fundamental is: any scientific theory that contains the possible errors." There is no eternal truth. All the truth we talking about is only temporarily true for a period of time. There is no eternal true belief too. Because any belief can be wrong, so is the knowledge.

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