

Critical Paper 1: Gettier

In “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge”, Gettier argues that the conditions that were considered necessary and sufficient for knowledge are indeed *not sufficient*. One example of these groups of conditions he mentions is the following:

S knows that P iff _____ (i) P is true,
(ii) S believes that P, and
(iii) S is justified in believing that P.

He states that, “it is possible for a person to be justified in believing a proposition that is in fact false” (Gettier 121). He also claims that, “for any proposition P, if S is justified in believing P, and P entails Q, and S deduces Q from P and accepts Q,” then S is justified in believing Q (Gettier 121).

Gettier then presents two cases in which he claims that, even though the conditions above are met, the statement of the person in question is not considered knowledge. I will focus on the first of these cases which goes as follows:

Smith and Jones have both applied for a job. Smith has evidence and is justified in believing that:

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

Therefore, (i) entails the following point, which Smith is also justified in believing:

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

However, to Smith’s surprise, he ends up getting the job, and he had ten coins in his pocket.

What Gettier argues is that (ii) *The man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket* is a justified, true belief -- what would appear to be the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge -- but is, indeed, not knowledge, given that Smith was not aware that it was he who would be getting the job and had ten coins in his pocket.

If (ii) were a separate belief Gettier would be right, but I do not consider (ii) to be an independent belief due to the fact that Smith is actually referring to Jones when he mentions “the man” in point (ii). How could Smith declare (ii) if not by thinking that the man is Jones?

Moreover, the reference to Jones would make this statement *false*.

Therefore, whether (ii) is not considered an independent belief at all, or it is considered a justified, *false* belief, it is not a case of a justified, true belief which is not knowledge.

Bradley Rettler 2/7/18 4:20 PM

Comment [1]: Exactly right.

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Comment [2]: Why does he state these? Relate them to the conditions and/or the cases.

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Comment [3]: Excellent thus far.

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Comment [4]: Good!

| 100 A This is pretty much perfect. Well done!

Works Cited

Edmund L. Gettier. "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis*. Vol. 23, No. 6, Jun., 1963, pp. 121-123.