

What's wrong with Irrefutability and Defeasibility Proposals to Gettier Problems?

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Abstract

Gettier problems are cases, or examples, which appear to run counter JTB analyses of knowledge as justified true belief. According to JTB theory of knowledge, S knows p, only if: a) The proposition p is true; b) S believes that p; c) S is justified in his belief that p.

Gettier problems state that the three conditions (a-c) are not sufficient for explaining what knowledge is. Because there might be some counter examples, which are cases of justified true belief but are not considered as cases of knowledge. Most of the epistemologists have accepted Gettier's conclusion and tried to find an alternative theory of knowledge. Many of these epistemologists have tried to add a fourth condition to the earlier three conditions (a-c), to get a Gettier-proof definition of knowledge. According to one of these strategies, the added condition is: d) the epistemic justification for truth of his belief is not a refutable one. And according to another strategy, the added condition is: d') the epistemic justification for truth of his belief is not a defeasible one. However, we will see that both of these proposals encounter to Gettier problem.

Keywords: *Gettier problems, JTB theory of knowledge, justification, refutability, defeasibility.*

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Introduction

Gettier problems or cases are named in honour of American philosopher Edmund Gettier, who discovered them in 1963. They function as a challenge to the philosophical standard definition of propositional knowledge that p , as justified true belief that p (JTB). According to JTB theory of knowledge, S knows that p , only if: *a*) there exists a true proposition p ; *b*) S believes that p , is true; *c*) S is justified in S's belief that p .

The challenge appeared first in an paper by Edmund Gettier, published in 1963. Gettier's basic idea had a striking impact among epistemologists, and has become the subject matter of hundreds of subsequent papers and sections of books since 1963. The problem is that the aforementioned three conditions (*a-c*) are not sufficient for explaining what knowledge is. Because, there might be some counter examples which are cases of justified true belief but are not cases of knowledge. In another word, Gettier problems are actual or possible situations in which someone has a belief that is both true and epistemically justified, yet which — according to almost all epistemologists — fails to be knowledge. Almost all of the subsequent epistemologists have taken the Gettier problem seriously even though the small numbers of epistemologists have regarded it as a deceptive or misleading problem. Epistemologists have spent many of their times and much more of their energy to discuss about the problem. They have made many attempts to refuse the problem, repair or replace the traditional definition of knowledge; attempts that result in several new approaches to knowledge and justification. But why epistemologists become so anxious by the problem? I think, in response to this question, that the Gettier problem represented itself as a counter example (evidence or reason) to the current epistemology and its justified true belief analysis of knowledge. Epistemologists have felt that Gettier situations is not simply a problem for traditional justification theory of knowledge, but it might even be a puzzle for any epistemic theory of knowledge and its capability for analysing the knowledge. So the capability of an epistemic theory of knowledge is necessarily dependant on its passing successfully the Gettier problem test.

Gettier counterexamples

Gettier problems are actual or possible situations, or examples that appear to run counter to JTB analysis of knowledge as justified true belief. The problems are actual or possible situations in which someone has a belief that is both true and supported by sufficient evidence, yet which — according to almost all epistemologists — fails to be knowledge. Hence

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Gettier problems are cases challenging the idea that the three conditions (a-d) are the necessary and sufficient conditions for analysing S's knowledge that p.

Gettier's own counterexamples

Edmund Gettier (1963) described two counterexamples to the JTB analysis of knowledge as justified true belief. We will explain only the first one, as it is the more widely discussed among epistemologists.

Gettier's case 1

Smith and Jones have applied for a particular job. Smith has sufficient evidence in favour of truth of the belief that Jones will get the job, for example the verbal testimony of the company president that Jones will get the job. Smith also owns properly observational evidence for truth of the belief that Jones has 10 coins in his pocket, for example he had counted the coins already by himself. Smith combines the company's president testimony with his observational evidence and comes to believe, by applying the law of *indiscernibility of identicals*, that the man who has 10 coins in his pocket will get the job. Now suppose that Jones does not get the job. Instead, Smith does. However, as it happens by luck, Smith also has 10 coins in his pocket; hence the proposition that Smith has 10 coins in his pocket is in fact true. So his belief that the man who has 10 coins in his pocket will get the job is justified and true, given that the proposition that Smith has 10 coins in his pocket and also the proposition that Smith will get the job are true, and that is supported by the aforesaid sufficient evidence. But even if it is a justified true belief that the man who has 10 coins in his pocket will get the job, it could not be counted as knowledge.

As it is presumed by Gettier, Jones and Smith both have 10 coins in their pocket. Hence the proposition that Jones is the man who has 10 coins in his pocket and also the proposition that Smith is the man who has 10 coins in his pocket both are true propositions. But only one, Jones or Smith, (and in this example Smith) will get the job. So Smith's justified belief that the man who has 10 coins in his pocket will get the job is ambiguous and is supported by two conflicting groups of evidence and beliefs. According to the first group, the belief that Jones will get the job is justified, and according to another the belief that Smith is the man who will get the job is justified. But in view of the fact that only one of them, Jones or Smith, will get the job, the justified true belief that the man who has 10 coins in his pocket will get the job should not be capable of being knowledge.

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The Gettier Case 1 counterexample tells us that: *a*) having sufficient reasons or evidence or something like in favour of truth of the belief that *p*, i.e. having justified true belief that *p*, does not necessarily leads us to knowing that *p*. It shows that a belief's being true and justified would not be sufficient for its being a case of knowledge. Therefore, there might be some cases in which one has justified true beliefs but those beliefs are not considered as knowledge. We might have plenty of evidence or reasons in favour of truth of our belief but as long as there is, or might be, any counter evidence proposition or belief in opposition to that belief, it cannot be considered as a case of knowledge. *b*) Justified cases of beliefs are not necessarily incompatible with lucky cases of beliefs, i.e. the cases in which a belief is justified by chance without being built upon any genuine evidence. Gettier case 1 introduces a belief that is justified but lucky.

Some other Gettier counterexamples

Keith Lehrer's (1965) owning a Ford case

Suppose Smith has sufficient evidence (*e*) in favour of his believing that (*q*) Mr Nogot, who is in his class, owns a Ford. Evidence *e* consists in such things as Nogot's having been reliable in dealings with Smith in the past, having just said to Smith that he owns a Ford, and having just shown legal confirming documents. By relying on the proposition *q* and the supporting evidence *e*, Smith comes to believe that (*p*) someone in his class owns a Ford. Now suppose it happens instead that another student in Smith's class, Mr Havit, does own a Ford. So Smith has a justified true belief that (*p*) someone in his class owns a Ford; which is justified and true, because it has been built upon sufficient evidence, and because the proposition that Mr Havit, who is in his class, owns a Ford is true. But for the same reasons as the above Gettier counterexample, Smith's true justified belief that *p* has not the capability of being regarded as a case of knowledge. We have again, here, two groups of conflicting evidence, or beliefs, that might justify Smith in his believing that (*p*) someone in his class owns a Ford; first group is approving truth of the belief that Mr Nogot owns a Ford, while the other group is supporting truth of the belief that Mr Havit owns a Ford.

Chisholm's (1966, 1977, 1989) sheep in the field case

Imagine that James is standing outside a field. He sees, within the field, what looks exactly like a sheep. So he believes that there is a sheep in the field. In fact smith is right, because there is a sheep behind the hill in the middle of the field. James cannot see that sheep and has no direct evidence

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of its existence. Now imagine that what James takes to be a sheep is actually a dog disguised as a sheep. So once again, what we have before us is a justified true belief that doesn't qualify as an instance of knowledge. This belief is directly justified by James' visual experience and is true as there is a sheep in the field. But this belief is opposed by the proposition or evidence that there is a dog in the field in front of James.

Goldman's (1976) barn case

Henry is driving along a road in the countryside, looking at objects around the road in the fields. In one of his looking around the road, he sees what looks exactly like a barn. He thinks that he is seeing a barn and, accordingly, he comes to believe that there is a barn over there. Suppose further that, unknown to Henry, there are many of barns in the neighbourhood which all of them are only fake barns — mere barn facades that look like real barns when viewed from the road, so that if he had been looking at one of them he would have been deceived into believing that he was seeing a barn. Fortunately in his aforementioned believing that there is a barn over there, Henry happens to be looking at the one and only real barn in the countryside. So, in this case, Henry's belief is justified and true. The belief is justified because Henry obtains that belief through his sensory perception and is true because it is true that there is a barn over there. But Henry's belief, like other Gettier cases, was not counted as knowledge by epistemologists. Since its justification is overridden by some more evidence that there are fake barns over there in the fields, and the belief is result of luck.

The problems which Gettier cases generate for JTB theory of knowledge

Gettier cases give rise to a number of problems for JTB theory of knowledge. In what follow we will mention three major problems that rose up against the JTB by Gettier cases.

1. The justification that is presumed by JTB is not conclusive or irrefutable. The proposed justification of JTB is not so strong that be able to exclude the opposite actual or possible reasons, propositions or beliefs. Even if we are justified in our believing that p , it is not improbable for us to find a Gettier counter case against of our believing so. So, it is possible all the time of that we face to some evidence or proposition that is not compatible with our justification and this new evidence refutes us in our believing. As we have seen formerly, at the heart of the Gettier problem, there is the idea that even if S is sufficiently justified in his/her believing

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that p is true, because S has plenty of epistemic evidence or reasons in favour of his believing that p , it is not at all sufficient for making S 's justified true belief a case of knowledge. There might be some epistemic counter evidence or reasons which are in opposition to S 's epistemic justification. There are here two different types of propositions, evidence, or beliefs that are in opposition to each other. The first group justifies us in our believing that p , and another refutes us in that believing. Due to this, our believing that p , even is justified, cannot be considered as a case of knowledge.

2. The allegedly epistemic justification of JTB theory of knowledge is so loose that is compatible with non truthfulness of the justifying propositions or beliefs. So being epistemic justified in a belief is not the same as the truthfulness of justifying evidence upon which our belief rests. It is completely possible to have an epistemic justification for a belief which is not rested upon true propositions. This means that the justification leaves open at least the possibility of the belief's being false. In other words, it is possible that to have beliefs sufficiently supported by evidence or reasons or something like which themselves are not true.

3. Having epistemic justification, or adequate epistemic reasons or evidence, in favour of truth of a belief can coincide with the belief's being lucky. So the justificatory condition (c) does not possess the requisite power of excluding the lucky beliefs, i.e. beliefs that are justified without being built upon the sufficient evidence.

Epistemologists, since 1963, have taken the Gettier problem seriously and strive to understand how it can be avoided. They try to know how the standard analyses can be altered so that Gettier cases do not constitute counterexamples to the modified analyses, without bringing about further objections. They have tried, more and more, to revise or repair or replace JTB in response to Gettier cases. The main aim has been to modify JTB so as to reach to a capable "Gettier-proof" epistemic theory of knowledge.

There is no consensus, however, that any one of the attempts which has done within the realm of epistemology to solve the Gettier's challenge to the standard analysis of what it is knowledge, nor as to what constitute the most promising line of research. So the force of that challenge now is being felt in various ways, and to various extents.

In the next chapter, we will discuss some of epistemic attempts to avoid the Gettier problem. And then I will explain why none of them, as epistemic responses, has the required capability of resolving the problem.

The epistemic resolutions to Gettier problems

If knowledge is solely justified true belief, as has been held by JTB, then there cannot be any cases of justified true belief that are not also cases of

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knowledge; but Gettier claims that his counterexamples are cases of justified true belief without being cases of knowledge. Gettier, then, concludes that the three conditions (*a-c*) are not the necessary and sufficient conditions for having knowledge. Most of the epistemologists have accepted Gettier's conclusion and tried to find an alternative theory of knowledge. They tried to add a fourth condition to the earlier three conditions (*a-c*), or advance a different account of condition (*c*), to get a Gettier-proof definition of knowledge. However, there might be some people who want to avoid the Gettier problem, instead. In order to do so, they must either accept that

1. Gettier's cases are not really cases of justified true belief, or
2. Gettier's cases really are cases of knowledge after all.

We have outlined, in the above section, three key component notions in Gettier situations, i.e. refutability, falsity, and luck. It is held by many of epistemologists that removing one of those three notions — the removal of which will suffice for a situation's no longer being a Gettier case — would solve Gettier's challenge.

In what follows, we will only consider two epistemic approaches to Gettier problems which try to solve the problem by adding a fourth condition to the three aforementioned (*a-c*) ones.

Removing refutability

It is claimed by Gettier's counterexamples that the presumed epistemic justification of JTB theory of knowledge is not irrefutable. The refutability notion in Gettier problem was saying, shortly, that no epistemically justified true belief could be enumerated as an instance of knowledge as long as there exist or might be existed a refuting belief, evidence, or proposition.

One strategy for addressing the Gettier's problem is to add the irrefutability notion as a necessary fourth condition to the aforementioned three conditions (*a-c*) of JTB theory of knowledge. Proponents of this strategy have expressed the notion of irrefutability as a new fourth condition: *d*) the epistemic justification for truth of a belief is not a refutable one. It has been said earlier that, according to JTB, S knows that *p* if: *a*) *p* is a true; *b*) S believes that *p*; and *c*) S is epistemically justified in his/her believing that *p*. So on this strategy, knowledge is unrefutable justified true belief.

There is no a large conformity among the epistemologists as to the notion of irrefutability. There might at least be two different versions of the notion: 1) strong; and 2) moderate. According to the strong version, a justified true belief cannot be converted into knowledge, unless it proves that there is no refuting case (proposition, evidence, or belief) at issue. That is, one's justification is refutable until it is proved that the justification is not

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irrefutable. While on the moderate version, a justified true belief is a case of knowledge if there are actually no refuting cases at issue. In other words, one's justification is irrefutable until it is proved that the justification is refutable.

There have been philosophers who suggests (independently of encountering to Gettier cases) that allowing refutable justification weakens conditions of having knowledge. "You know that p , if it is improbable to find a refuting case against your justification," they might say. Some people might even say that there is no justification, and as a result, no knowledge exists at all, given that it is not impossible for us to find a refuting case against whatever seems to be justification. In the history of philosophy, many of sceptics, Descartes, in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), Keith Lehrer (1971) and Peter Unger (1971) are among the proponents of the strong version of irrefutability condition d . On Descartes' account, if we could find only a proposition, evidence, or even a belief in opposition to our justified true belief, it will justify us sufficiently to refuse our justified belief.

Irrefutability account of knowledge, thus, claims that by adding the fourth condition, in its strong sense, to JTB's conditions, we become able to eliminate, satisfactorily, Gettier cases as challenges to our understanding of knowledge. The reason that the above Gettier cases are not counted as instances of knowledge is that the justification provided for truth of the considered beliefs leaves open the possibility of existing a refuting proposition, evidence, or belief.

Problems with irrefutability proposal

Nevertheless the strong irrefutability proposal, as an epistemological approach to the Gettier problem, has not been able to solve the problem. The standard objection to strong irrefutability account of knowledge is that it seems to exclude too much from what we know. In another words, our everyday understanding of knowledge is not in agreement with strong irrefutability conception of knowledge. Most of us, in our ordinary epistemic practise, take ourselves as having too much knowledge than a strong irrefutabilist holds. In many cases, we take ourselves as knowers, even if we rarely, if ever, possess irrefutable justifying support for our beliefs. Accordingly, most of the epistemologists have regarded the strong irrefutability account as a drastic response to Gettier's challenge and embraced the moderate version.

The epistemic irrefutability strategy is faced, in its two versions, with another more serious problem. This problem arises from the epistemic irrefutability notion itself. As we have seen formerly, the notion of

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irrefutability was expressed, by epistemologists, in the form of *d*) the epistemic justification for truth of a belief is not a refutable one. But it may be asked that whether the notion, or the belief, that the epistemic justification for truth of a belief is not a refutable one, is itself an epistemically justified and irrefutable one or not? Given that it is approved sufficiently by Gettier's examples that it is a justified notion, at the same time, since it is faced to JTB's counter examples, is a refutable notion. But, in that case, how can we regard the irrefutability notion as a decisive constituent of a theory of knowledge? To put it another word, is the notion of irrefutability itself epistemically justified or not, one might ask? And in the event of its being an epistemically justified notion it will encounter again to the Gettier problem and its disturbing outcomes. And the foundationalist's excusing that it is a basic and self-evident (or self-justified) notion should not be listened to here. Since there are many of epistemologists who are in doubt that refutability is a self-evident notion or a constituent part of a theory of knowledge, on the contrary.

There seem to be no epistemic way for answering the above questions, and one might come to the conclusion, accordingly, that the notion of irrefutability is not explicable in terms of the standard epistemology.

Defeasibility response to the problem

There is a main strategy in dealing with Gettier problems in the field of epistemology, known as "defeasibility" theory of knowledge. The solution that this proposal provides for Gettier problems is in some measures similar to that of irrefutability analysis of knowledge. It holds, roughly, that possessing supportive evidence for a belief is not the only important point for having knowledge; it is equally important that there is no defeating evidence that one does not possess and is in disagreement with the original evidence in its justificatory status. That is, in order for our belief to be a case of knowledge it needs not only to be justified, but its justification must be such that there is no true proposition which if added to the evidence that justify our believing the belief would no longer be a justified one.

On defeasibility account of knowledge, we cannot consider S believing that *p*, as a case of knowledge if there exist some true propositions whose hypothetical inclusion in the system of propositions that S believes would have a negative impact on the epistemic status of the belief that *p*. There is a group of propositions in which S justifiably believes. And there might also be true propositions that S is not aware of, and accordingly, are not believed in by S. But they are such that if S were to believe them, then S's epistemic status towards the proposition *p* would change and as a result, S would not know that *p*. So the truth of the belief that *p*, is supported by the truth of

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only the first group of propositions, not by the truth of both groups in combination with each other. So they are opposed with each other in their justificatory status towards S's true believing that p . And that is why they cannot justify truth of the S's belief that p conjointly. Those true propositions, which work as counter-evidence, have been called "defeater" of S's original epistemic status.

Hence, this strategy proceeds to modify JTB theory of knowledge, by adding a fourth condition to the preceding three necessary conditions of knowledge: d') the epistemic justification for truth of a belief is not a defeasible one. So, on the basis of this proposal, knowledge is indefeasibly justified true belief. On defeasibility theory of knowledge, a justified true belief will count as knowledge only if the justification cannot be overridden by the unpossessed true proposition. When there is a conflict between the evidence or propositions that confirm truth of the belief that p , and special additional true propositions which disapprove and override that justification, we can say that the original evidence or proposition is defeated and the purported justified belief is not capable of being a case of knowledge. Even if S's belief that p is justified by the evidence which S possesses, it might be possible that there exists some additional unpossessed true propositions which undermine that justification. In that case, the additional propositions function as defeater of the first justification provided by the original evidence. So there might be a conflict between possessed evidence that support truth of the belief that p , and true additional unpossessed propositions that weaken the justified status of the first group of evidence. Hence, if we add the second group to the first one, the resulting body of evidence would have a negative impact on the epistemically justified status of the first so much that the person which holds the belief will no longer be justified and his/her belief not capable of being a case of knowledge.

To put it another words, a particular true proposition t defeats a body of justification j which support S's believing that p , if by adding t to j , it is shaped a new body of justification j^* , that seriously weaken the original justificatory support being provided for truth of S believing that p — so much that S's belief has not the required capability for being a case of knowledge. Even there may be a loss of justification when the new true proposition is added to the existing evidence for truth of the belief.

Now, by relying on the notion of defeasibility, defeasibility theory find itself capable of explaining why the justified true beliefs, in the above Gettier counterexamples, are not cases of knowledge. In Case 1, for instance, we might think that the reason why Smith's justified true belief, that the man who has 10 coins in his pocket will get the job, fails to be

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knowledge is that his evidence includes no awareness of the true propositions that he will get the job himself and that his own pocket contains 10 coins. If we add these overlooked true propositions to the original evidence supporting Smith believing that the man who has 10 coins in his pocket will get the job, we will receive, then, at a new body of evidence that support two incompatible beliefs, i.e. the belief that John will get the job and the belief that Smith will get the job. Thus Smith's original justification being defeated and he does not know that the man who has 10 coins in his pocket will get the job, accordingly.

The situation in Lehrer's owning a Ford and Chisholm's sheep in the field cases is the same. Because Smith's original justification, provided by a group of propositions supporting the belief that Nogot owns a Ford, is defeasible, he does not know that someone in his class owns a Ford. In this case there is a group of opposing true, but overlooked, propositions, such as the proposition that Havit owns a Ford, which function as a defeater. The overlooked true propositions would undermine Smith's original justification for his belief, and so they have a negative impact upon the epistemic status of Smith' believing that someone in his class owns a Ford.

And we are not allowed to consider James' justified true believing that there is a sheep in the field, as a case of knowledge. Because there is a neglected true proposition that opposed to the evidence James has for his true believing. The true, but neglected, proposition that there is a dog in the field would undermine the justification provided by the possessed proposition that there is a sheep in the field. There are here two sorts of rival different propositions; while one sort supports truth of James' belief that there is a sheep in the field, another would disconfirm him in that belief.

The same thing can be said about Goldman's barn case. One of the best examples for illustrating the defeasibility theory of knowledge is Goldman's barn case. This case, unlike some other of Gettier's cases, is consisted only of true propositions on both sides. Both groups of involved propositions, whether possessed or unpossessed, are true. In this case, Henry's justification for his true belief that there is a barn over there is rendered defeasible by an unpossessed true proposition; which asserts that there are many fake barns over there in the fields. Given the proposition that there is a barn over there, Henry is epistemically justified to believe that there is a barn over there, but given the conjunction of that evidence and the true proposition that there are many faked barns over there, Henry is not justified in his believing, and his belief is not capable of being a case of knowledge. For Henry to know that there's a barn over there, it is not sufficient that there is adequate evidence which confirm truth of the belief,

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but there must not be any opposing true proposition that disconfirms truth of Henry's belief as well.

Problems with defeasibility proposal

Even if the defeasibility account of knowledge has some advantage over JTB theory of knowledge, it has its own problems.

One of the serious problems facing the defeasibility proposal is the existence of examples in which there appear to be unpossessed true propositions which are against the subject's possessed evidence even though the justification is not defeated. This phenomenon is illustrated in the well-known example of Tom Grabit, presented by Lehrer and Paxson (1969).

Suppose you are well-acquainted with your friend Tom Grabit, and you observe him in the act of stealing a book from the library. Then you come to the belief that Tom has stolen the library book. The proposition that Tom has stolen the library book is true; your belief is true; and you have adequate evidence justifying that your belief is true. Unbeknownst to you, however, there is a true proposition which is expressed either by the sentence "Tom's mother has said sincerely that Tom has an identical twin, Tim, who is a kleptomaniac and has done stealing the library book" or by the sentence "Tom's mother believes that Tom has an identical twin, Tim, who is a kleptomaniac and has done stealing the library book". Given this scenario, your justification for truth of your belief will be defeated by that unpossessed proposition or belief and you really do not know that Tom stole the library book. Now suppose that Tom's mother is lying and has fabricated the story. So there is no twin brother, and it was in fact Tom who has stolen the library book. Hence it seems that you knew all along that Tom has stolen the library book.

Defeasibility theorists, like Gilbert Harman (1973), David Annis (1973), Peter Klein (1980, 1981), Barker (1976), Swain (1974, 1981), Lehrer (1990), and Pollock (1986), have tried to solve the problem by making a distinction between the so-called misleading defeaters and the genuine ones. But there is no clear cut epistemic distinctive standard for distinguishing genuine defeaters from the misleading ones. According to a version of defeasibility notion, suggested by Barker (1976), Swain (1974, 1981), Lehrer (1990), and Pollock (1986), the proposition that Tom's mother believes that Tom has an identical twin, Tim, who is a kleptomaniac and has done stealing the library book, is a misleading defeater, because what appear to be defeater of your justification is itself defeated by further unpossessed evidence or propositions. The apparently defeating effect of Tom mother's testimony is itself opposed by the additional true proposition that she is lying. But if there is no such an extra true proposition which would defeat the first one,

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the true proposition that Tom has in fact an identical twin, Tim, who is a kleptomaniac and has done stealing the library book, would be considered as a genuine defeater. According to this account, for a defeater to be a genuine one it ought not only override the justification, but it must be such that there is no other true proposition (defeater) which if it were added to the original defeater it would no longer function as a defeater. So we are not allowed to consider a defeater as genuine if there might exist some extra true proposition (defeater) addition of which to the first defeater would have a negative impact on the epistemic status of that defeater.

Yet there is no agreement among epistemologists that this version of defeasibility notion has succeeded in correctly capturing the distinction between genuine and misleading defeaters. And some epistemologists, like Klein (1980, 1981) has argued that even in cases of genuine defeating, it will turn out that the justification is ultimately undefeated, since the original proposition is a true one.

But there is a more severe problem which the defeasibility proposal is subjected to. The source of problem is the notion of epistemic defeasibility, i.e. the condition d' , itself. According to defeasibility account of knowledge, the condition d' , i.e. the proposition that the epistemic justification for truth of a belief is not a defeasible one, is true. So the defeasibilist's belief that the epistemic justification for truth of a belief is not a defeasible one, is true. Now suppose that the defeasibilist's true believing in condition d' is justified, since he/she possesses adequate reason, for example the Gettier's counterexamples, in support of truth of his/her believing. Yet, on the basis of the very notion of defeasibility, there might be a defeater which by its addition to the original evidence the defeasibilist's justification for the notion d' would be rendered defeasible and will no longer be capable of becoming a case of knowledge. All of the JTB's examples are, in the sight of a proponent of JTB's theory of knowledge, to be considered as defeaters of the notion of d' .

So, the defeasibility account of knowledge, despite its claiming, does not provide us with a Gettier case-proof notion of justification. Defeasibility account of knowledge proposed the notion of defeasibility, i.e. d' condition, in order to resolve the Gettier' problem, yet it has been involved in the same problem at the end.

Notes

1- According to the law of indiscernibility of identical, every instance of the following scheme is valid

$$a = b$$

$$F(a)$$

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Therefore, $F(b)$

So, if $a=b$ is a true identity proposition, and $F(a)$ is another true proposition, we can substitute a by b in that proposition and conclude the true proposition $F(b)$.

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