

## Philosophy 311: Knowledge and Justification

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### Handout 2: The JTB Analysis & The Gettier Problem

Some common variables this semester:

'p' will stand for any proposition (as will 'q' and, occasionally, subsequent letters)  
'S' will stand for a subject; i.e., a person (etc.) who knows / believes / desires / etc.

'S knows that p' refers to any sentence of that form

JTB: S knows that p = S has a justified t re belief that p

Cases: Feldman, pp. 14-15, examples 2.3, 2.4

What is a justified belief?

First pass: belief based on *good reasons*

Well, okay, what are good reasons?

First pass: reasons that make the belief *likely to be true*

"Monty will be at the party." "Oh yeah? Why do you think so?"

'Good' reasons: "Because he told me."

"Because Sam invited him, and I know he wants to go."

'Bad' reasons: "Because if he doesn't I'll be sad!"

"Oh, I just have a feeling he might be."

### More on truth

What is truth? Hard to say. Feldman says: p is true = p "corresponds to" the facts  
Some propositions may be neither true nor false due to vagueness or tense

Possible counterexamples to T part of JTB theory?

"Everything you know is wrong." / "I knew I was going to die."

Possible explanation: protagonist projection (Richard Holton)

"I saw two shooting stars last night – I wished on them, but they were only satellites."

"He gave her a diamond ring, but she found out later it was glass"

### More on belief

S believes that p ≈ S accepts that p ≈ S is confident that p ≈ S treats p as true

Possible counterexamples to B part of JTB theory?

"I don't *believe* that Favre is the greatest—I *know* it!"

Possible explanation: metalinguistic negation (Larry Horn)

"It's not a car; it's a Volkswagen!"

"I'm not *Geoff*. I'm *Dr. Pynn*."

## The Gettier Problem

Gettier cases are counterexamples to JTB: subjects have JTB that p but don't know that p

Gettier's case. Smith's boss told him that Jones would get the job, and he "counted the coins in Jones's pocket ten minutes ago." So he has a justified belief in (1):

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

From (1), Smith deduces and comes to believe (2):

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

So Smith has a justified belief in (2). And (2) is true. So Smith has a justified true belief in (2). But --- unbeknownst so Smith --- *he* has ten coins in his pocket, and in fact it's not Jones who is going to get the job, but Smith himself. So he doesn't know (2).

Others: Nogot/Havit case, sheep in the field case (Feldman 26-27)

JTB defender could respond by denying that Gettier cases are counterexamples. How?

### Denying that Smith has a JTB that (2)

Gettier's case depends on two assumptions:

1. *Justified Falsehood* (JF). It's possible to have a justified belief in p even though p is false.
2. *Justified Deduction* (JD). If you have a justified belief in p and deduce q from p, then you have a justified belief in q.

If you deny JF or JD, then Smith may not have a JTB that (2):

If JF is false, then Smith's belief in (1) is unjustified, and so (probably) is his belief in (2), since it's based on (1).

Problems with denying JF (Feldman 29)

If JD is false, then perhaps Smith's belief in (2) is not justified, since deduction from justified belief doesn't always get you justified belief.

But even if JD is false, surely sometimes deduction from justified belief gets you a justified belief. Why not here? What *should* Smith's attitude to (2) be?

### Affirming that Smith knows (2)

Seems that it's just by *luck* that Smith's belief is true. A common idea:  
If you know that p, then it's not just luck that your belief that p is true.

Next class: modifying JTB in response to Gettier cases.