# Lecture 2
# JTB II: Responses to Gettier

## 1. <u>Review: JTB and Gettier Cases</u>

Recall from Lecture 1 the traditional JTB analysis of knowledge:

> *S* knows that *p* (where '*p*' is a proposition) iff,
> **JTB1.** *S* **believes** that *p*
> **JTB2.** *S* is **justified** in believing that *p*
> **JTB3.** It is **true** that *p*

JTB faced the challenge of *Gettier Cases*. These were cases where **JTB1-3** were satisfied, and yet the subject did not know that *p*. In other words, they showed JTB to be **insufficient** for an analysis of knowledge.

## 2. <u>Responding to Gettier – JTB+</u>

*General Argument Form*

Strategies for responding to Gettier cases often begin by looking for the source of the problem in each case. The hope is that the cause of the problem is the same in *every* case. Find this, the thought goes, and you'll know how to amend JTB so it avoids *any* Gettier case.

### 2.1 Strategy 1: Counterfactual Condition or "Sensitivity"

> <u>DIAGNOSIS</u>:
> In Gettier cases, *S* would still believe that *p*, even if *p* were false.

Here's the first Gettier case again:

**'The person who will get the job has 10 coins in her pocket.'**

Smith and Jones are both up for the same job. Smith is told by her boss that Jones will get the job. Smith also earlier observed Jones put 10 coins in her pocket. So, Smith infers 'the person who will get the job has 10 coins in her pocket.' Smith has this belief (**JTB1**), and has this belief and this belief is justified (**JTB2**). As it happens, Smith is the one who gets the job; Smith has also forgotten that she also has 10 coins in her pocket. So Smith's belief is true (**JTB3**). But does she know?

Here, the argument goes, the Smith's belief isn't ***sensitive*** to its truth or falsity. Even if Smith didn't have 10 coins in her pocket, for instance, she would still believe 'the person who will get the job has 10 coins in her pocket'. To rule out these cases, proponents of this strategy (e.g. Nozick 1983 from the reading list) argue that we should add the following condition to JTB:

> (**Sensitive**) If *p* were false, then *S* would not believe that *p*.

**Counterexample…**
I look out my window and, seeing a sunny scene, form the belief that it is not raining outside. Unbeknownst to me, a wily epistemologist has painted my window with an exact representation of my usual view from that window. What I see is the painting, and not the outside environment. As it happens, it isn't raining outside. Importantly, if it were raining, the paint would wash away.

## 2.2 Strategy 2: No False Lemmas

> <u>DIAGNOSIS</u>:
> In Gettier cases, S's belief that *p* is inferred from a false premise.

Consider the first Gettier case again. Smith's reasoning runs as follows:

> [P1] Jones will get the job.
> [P2] Jones has 10 coins in her pocket.
> [C] Therefore, the person who will get the job has 10 coins in her pocket.

Here, [P1] is false. What's more, without the false premise, the conclusion would not follow. Thus, according to this strategy (from Harman 1973), we should add the following condition to JTB:

> (**NFL**) *S*'s belief that *p* is <u>not</u> inferred from any false premises.

**Counterexample…**
I'm in a shop and see someone who looks exactly like my next door neighbour. I form the belief that my neighbour's in the shop. Unbeknownst to me, the person I'm looking at is my neighbour's identical twin. As it happens, though, my neighbour is also in the shop, but is currently out of my line of sight.

### 2.3 Strategy 3: Causal Theory

<u>DIAGNOSIS</u>:
In Gettier cases, S's belief that *p* is not caused by the fact that *p*.

In the first Gettier case, Smith's belief is at least in part caused by a fact about the coins in *Jones's* pocket, and not at all causally related to the facts about who gets the job.

In other words, according to proponents of this account (e.g. Goldman 1967), it is some fact *other than p* that causes the belief that *p*, and that is why the subject fails to have knowledge. As such, proponents of the causal theory argue that we should add the following condition to JTB:

> (**Cause**) *S*'s belief that *p* is causally connected to *p*.

**Counterexample…**
I'm driving through the countryside. The area has many barns around. I point to one and remark 'That's a lovely red barn there!'. Unbeknownst to me, more troublesome epistemologists have covered the fields with identical red barn-façades. But, as luck should have it, I happened to point to the one *real* barn on the field. Do I *know* that what I've seen is a barn?

## 3. <u>A Different Diagnosis – Zagzebski on Gettier</u>

In her paper, Zagzebski argues that Gettier cases are *inescapable* for any account that allows justification to be fallible. As long as the standard of justification allows for the possibility that I could be justified in my belief that *p* but be mistaken, there will be room for a Gettier case.

Note that this puts Zagzebski in direct opposition to the theories we looked at earlier. Each of those theories claimed that Gettier cases *could* be avoided, using the strategy they prescribe. However, since each of them allows for fallible justification, on Zagzebski's argument, they are all vulnerable to Gettier problems.

**4. Infallibility**

One obvious response to Zagzebski's observation—and, indeed, one that she considers—would be to *deny* that any false belief could be justified. That is, you might require that our justification be *infallible*. This would certainly satisfy the sufficiency condition for knowledge. But it seems to set the bar for justification unreasonably high.

**5. Pritchard's Anti-Luck Epistemology**

Pritchard begins by trying to identify the problematic kind of luck that plagues the unwitting subjects in Gettier cases. He calls this kind of luck *epistemic luck* and defines it as follows:

(LTB) *S*'s true belief is lucky *iff* there is a wide class of near-by possible worlds in which *S* continues to believe the target proposition, and the relevant initial conditions for the formation of that belief are the same as in the actual world, and yet the belief is false.

And, based on this, states his anti-luck condition thus:

(AL) *S*'s true belief is non-lucky *iff* there is *no* wide class of near-by possible worlds in which *S* continues to believe the target proposition, and the relevant initial conditions for the formation of that belief are the same as in the actual world, and yet the belief is false.

***An Aside on Safety:***

Pritchard notes that his (AL) is very similar to what others have called a *safety condition*. Safety is another kind of counterfactual condition. It requires that in close possible worlds where I form the belief that *p* (in the way that I actually did), *p* is true. He argues that it is our intuition about epistemic luck that motivates the safety condition.

At first glance, this condition is a peculiar one. The first thing to note is that, despite how it sounds, it is **NOT** suggesting that your belief that *p* at all causally influences *p*'s obtaining. Instead, safe beliefs are those that *could not easily have been false*.

Compare a belief that your lottery ticket is the winning ticket (assuming the lottery is not rigged) with a belief that you are in Cambridge right now. The odds of your ticket winning are as good as those for any other ticket, so there are *hundreds* of close possible worlds where your belief is false. Thus, that belief is not safe. Contrastingly, in close possible worlds to ours, your belief that you are in Cambridge is true. Thus, that belief is safe.

## Scepticism and Two Kinds of Luck

According to Pritchard, his anti-luck epistemology provides a means of avoiding scepticism. But, he qualifies that it can only do this in combination with *externalism*.

Anti-luck epistemology avoids scepticism by providing reason to think that we know that we're not in a sceptical scenario. Sceptical arguments take the following form:

> (SCEPTICAL HYPOTHESIS) I do not know I am not in a sceptical scenario
>
> (CLOSURE) If I don't know I'm not in sceptical scenario, I don't know that I have hands.
>
> (SCEPTICAL CONCLUSION) I don't know I have hands.

The "neo-Moorean" response to the sceptic is to invert this argument.

> ¬(SCEPTICAL CONCLUSION) I know I have hands.
>
> (CONTRAPOSED CLOSURE) If I know I have hands, then I know I'm not in a sceptical scenario.
>
> ¬(SCEPTICAL HYPOTHESIS) I know I am not in a sceptical scenario.

The anti-luck condition of Pritchard's theory helps to establish ¬(SCEPTICAL CONCLUSION) in this argument. We can know that we have hands because, the argument goes, we have a justified true belief that satisfies the anti-luck condition. Our belief that we have hands is safe.

"But," you might ask, "how do we *know* our belief is safe?". This is where externalism comes in. Externalism and internalism will be covered in upcoming lectures, but right now it is enough to know that only the internalist, and *not* the externalist requires that we know that we know.

"Okay," you might respond. "But doesn't this just make our belief that we have hands hostage to fortune too? Doesn't this violate the anti-luck condition?" Pritchard answers no.

There are two different kinds of epistemic luck, he explains: **veritic** and **reflective** luck. *Veritic luck* is the kind of luck described above, where the possible worlds we consider are ordered according to how similar or different they in fact are (regardless of what we're in a position to know). *Reflective luck*, contrastingly, involves ordering possible worlds according to what we know.

To see the difference between these kinds of ordering, consider the toss of a rigged coin: it has a 75% chance of landing heads. Imagine that I don't know that it is rigged, though. You toss the coin and ask me whether it landed heads or tails. I don't know that it's rigged, so from my perspective, there are equally as many close possible worlds where it landed heads as where it landed tails. But objectively (i.e. independent of my epistemic perspective), there are *more* worlds where it landed heads than those where it landed tails.

According to Pritchard, it is only *veritic* luck—the perspective-independent kind of luck—that is inconsistent with knowledge. Whereas, as belief can be *reflectively* lucky and still count as knowledge.

**NEXT WEEK: Externalism about Justification**