

CONSISTENCY AND SHIFTS IN GETTIER CASES

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ABSTRACT: Two Gettier cases are described in detail and it is shown how they unfold in terms of reflective and reflexive desiderata. It is argued that the Gettier problem does not pose a problem for conceptions of knowledge as long as we are consistent in how we understand justification and knowledge. It is only by reading the cases with a reflective understanding of justification but a reflexive understanding of knowledge, without acknowledging that this takes place, that the cases become ‘problems.’

KEYWORDS: Gettier, knowledge, justification, intuition, reflective processes, reflexive processes, consistency

1. Introduction

The paradigmatic definition of declarative propositional knowledge states that justification, truth, and belief (JTB) are individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for knowledge. But, in his widely influential article ‘Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?’¹ Edmund Gettier questions this definition and instead argues that JTB is insufficient for knowledge:

(G): JTB is not sufficient as a definition of knowledge.

Gettier presents two premises for his analysis:

(A): It is possible for S to be justified in his belief that p based on a false proposition.

(B): If S is justified in his belief that p , and q follows from p , and S deduces q from p and accepts q as a result of the deduction then S is justified in his belief that q .

Two counterexamples against JTB are then offered in support of (G) – and many others have emerged – where a subject is presented as being justified in his true belief that x but we, supposedly, are unwilling to accept that the subject *knows* that x .

To exemplify, Gettier’s first counterexample (Case I) presents a situation where Smith and Jones have applied for a job. In a first step, we are told that the president of the company has told Smith that Jones will get the job, and Smith has

¹ Edmund L. Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?,” *Analysis* 23, 6 (1963): 121-123.

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recently counted the coins in Jones' pocket. Smith is hence, supposedly, justified in his belief that:

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

Based on (1), Smith deduces (2) and is thus, supposedly, justified in his belief that:

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

But as it turns out, in a second step, it is revealed that Smith gets the job. And finally, in a third step due to a coincidence, it is revealed that he has ten coins in his pocket. So, (2) is true even though (1) is false. Smith believes that (2) is true and Smith is, supposedly, justified in his belief that (2) is true. All parts of JTB are hence satisfied, but we are, according to Gettier, unwilling to declare that Smith knows that (2), which would support (G).

There is a wide taxonomy of different ways to formulate Gettier cases, as pointed out by for example Blouw, Buckwalter, and Turri,² but I will, below, focus on the aforementioned influential case (I) by Gettier and an additional (fake barn) case by Goldman.³

In section 2, I discuss where intuition-based approaches, as well as experimental philosophical approaches, seemingly leave us. In section 3, I then stepwise explore the formulation and case set-up of two paradigmatic Gettier cases focusing on a reflective (subject-centered, internalist) reading and a reflexive (evaluator-centered, externalist) reading to elucidate 'the problem.'

2. A Smorgasbord of Intuitions

Ever since the article appeared, epistemologists have tried to tackle Gettier's argument and his counterexamples. For example, Dretske⁴ describes how someone who has 'conclusive reasons' cannot have grounded her belief on false evidence. Lehrer and Paxon⁵ reinterpret the traditional definition JTB and add an extra clause of undefeatability. Another version of this undefeatability-form of amendment is

² Peter Blouw, Wesley Buckwalter, and John Turri, "Gettier Cases: A Taxonomy," in *Explaining Knowledge: New Essays on the Gettier Problem*, eds. Rodrigo Borges, Claudio de Almeida, and Peter D. Klein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017): 242-252.

³ Alvin Goldman, "Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge," *The Journal of Philosophy* 73, 20 (1976): 771-791.

⁴ Frederick Dretske, "Conclusive Reasons," *The Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 49 (1971): 1-22.

⁵ Keith Lehrer and Thomas Paxon Jr., "Knowledge: Undefeated Justified True Belief," *The Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1969): 225-237.

Goldman's⁶ 'no-relevant-alternatives' condition, which focuses on the causality and reliability of the processes under consideration. Using a logical approach, Floridi⁷ claims that Gettier does not succeed with his counterexamples since JTB is in principle irreparable, and similarly Zagzebski⁸ claims that both approaches that amend JTB with a fourth condition and approaches that strengthen the justification condition necessarily fail. Williamson⁹ has even suggested that attempts of analyzing knowledge should be discontinued and that a 'knowledge-first' approach should be adopted instead.

Importantly, all the aforementioned lines of inquiry – including Gettier's article – are positioned in what can broadly be construed as the conceptual analytic philosophical tradition, focusing on language and intuitions. However, there have also been a number of attempts to get to the bottom of the issue by empirically exploring just what peoples' intuitions amount to. Thus, several experiments have been conducted where early experimental philosophical findings suggested that intuitions about when knowledge and justification obtains, related to a number of epistemological cases including Gettier cases, systematically differ between various groups.¹⁰ Focusing on Gettier's problem, a number of cultural specific differences were found. Furthermore, intuitions between different socioeconomic groups were shown to vary significantly.¹¹ But, various later studies have claimed that these findings do not withstand closer scrutiny.¹² Moreover, it has been argued that

⁶ Goldman, "Discrimination;" Alvin Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

⁷ Luciano Floridi, *The Philosophy of Information* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁸ Linda Zagzebski, "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 44, 174 (1994): 65-73.

⁹ Timothy Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Jonathan Weinberg, Chad Gonnerman, Cameron Buckner, and Joshua Alexander, "Are Philosophers Expert Intuiters?," *Philosophical Psychology* 23, 3 (2010): 331-355; Jonathan Weinberg, Shaun Nichols, and Stephen Stich, "Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions," *Philosophical Topics* 29, 1-2 (2001): 429-460; Joshua Knobe and Shaun Nichols, eds., *Experimental Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Joshua Alexander, *Experimental Philosophy: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012).

¹¹ Weinberg, Nichols, and Stich, "Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions."

¹² Minsun Kim and Yuan Yuan, "No Cross-Cultural Differences in the Gettier Car Case Intuition: A Replication Study of Weinberg et al. 2001," *Episteme* 12, 3 (2015): 355-361; Hamid Seyedsayamdost, "On Gender and Philosophical Intuition: Failure of Replication and Other Negative Results," *Philosophical Psychology* 28, 5 (2015): 642-673; Hamid Seyedsayamdost, "On Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions: Failure of Replication," *Episteme* 12, 1 (2015): 95-116; John Turri, "Knowledge Judgments in 'Gettier' Cases," in *A Companion to Experimental Philosophy*, eds. Justin Sytsma and Wesley Buckwalter (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016): 337-348.

epistemic intuitions might be more reliable and similar than previously supposed.¹³ Turri¹⁴ even claims that laypeople and professional philosophers of different cultural backgrounds, ages, and genders to a large extent share the intuition of accepting (G). To reach this conclusion Turri has conducted experiments that stage-wise ‘guides’ subjects through the cases under investigation. This guidance, according to Turri, allows ‘laypeople to competently assess Gettier cases,’¹⁵ although such guidance, in my view, is problematic since it might be hard to avoid that test-subjects are influenced to reach a conclusion that suits the experimenter.

So, it remains an open question whether intuitions differ in *systematic* ways, but the sheer amount, and variation, of interpretations about the Gettier problem that has been found in different empirical experiments – as well as those that can be found in the vast Gettier corpus – strongly indicates, or so I argue, that experimental philosophy have, so far, failed to generate closure in this debate that still is alive after more than fifty years.

For discussions about how the fruitfulness of JTB might trump the potential difficulties Gettier introduces see Weatherston,¹⁶ Lozanski,¹⁷ and Olsson.¹⁸ For a discussion about the overarching value of the Gettier problem and the philosophical discussions concerning it see Turri.¹⁹ There are also discussions pertaining to, for example, the possibility of better/correct and worse/incorrect intuitions.²⁰ But it remains dubious whether it is possible to find reasonable grounds to motivate any specific choice regarding who’s intuitions ought to be heard or ignored.

In short, no universally endorsed position can be found regarding what the lesson from Gettier is, how the cases should be interpreted, if the problem should be

¹³ Kenneth Boyd and Jeniffer Nagel, “The Reliability of Epistemic Intuitions,” in *Current Controversies in Experimental Philosophy*, eds. Edouard Machery and Elizabeth O’Neill (New York: Routledge, 2014): 109-127; Edouard Machery, Stephen Stich, David Rose, Amita Chatterjee, Kaori Karasawa, Noel Struchiner, Smita Sirker, Naoki Usui, and Takaaki Hashimoto, “Gettier Across Cultures,” *Noûs* 51, 3 (2017): 645-664.

¹⁴ John Turri, “A Conspicuous Art: Putting Gettier to the Test,” *Philosopher’s Imprint* 13, 10 (2013): 1-37.

¹⁵ Turri, “A Conspicuous Art,” 34.

¹⁶ Brian Weatherston, “What Good are Counterexamples?,” *Philosophical Studies* 115, 1 (2003): 1-31.

¹⁷ Lukasz Lozanski, “The Gettier Problem,” *Philosophy Now* 63 (2007): 28-29.

¹⁸ Erik J. Olsson, “Gettier and the Method of Explication: A 60 Year Old Solution to a 50 Year Old Problem,” *Philosophical Studies* 1, 172 (2015): 57-72.

¹⁹ John Turri, “Manifest Failure: The Gettier Problem Solved,” *Philosopher’s Imprint* 11, 8 (2011): 1-11; Turri, “Knowledge Judgments.”

²⁰ Alexander, *Experimental Philosophy*; Weinberg, Gonnerman, Buckner, and Alexander, “Are Philosophers Expert.”

solved or dissolved, or if – and if so how – JTB can be salvaged. There seemingly are as many theories and intuitions around as there are theorists.

3. Two Readings of Gettier Cases

As aforementioned, Gettier cases have frequently been viewed as being problematic, forcing numerous theoreticians into reformulating their views and definitions of knowledge. Inspired by Kaplan's²¹ discussion, I will in this section explore how two well-known Gettier cases come across from a reflective (subject-centered, internalist) and a reflexive (evaluator-centered, externalist) perspective on justification and knowledge.²² This is accomplished by delineating the Gettier problem with a focus on the *consistency* of one's reading. In order to retain readability, I have limited my exploration to two illustrative Gettier cases although I believe that similar elucidations can be given concerning other formulations and forms of Gettier cases.

3.1 Careers and Coins

I here present Gettier's²³ first case in full:

Case I:

Suppose that Smith and Jones have applied for a certain job. And suppose that Smith has strong evidence for the following conjunctive proposition:

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

Smith's evidence for (1) might be that the president of the company assured him that Jones would in the end be selected, and that he, Smith, had counted the coins in Jones's pocket ten minutes ago. Proposition (1) entails:

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

Let us suppose that Smith sees the entailment from (1) to (2), and accepts (2) on the grounds of (1), for which he has strong evidence. In this case, Smith is clearly justified in believing that (2) is true.

But imagine, further, that unknown to Smith, he himself, not Jones, will get the job. And, also, unknown to Smith, he himself has ten coins in his pocket.

²¹ Mark Kaplan, "It Is Not What You Know That Counts," *The Journal of Philosophy* 82, 7 (1985): 350-363.

²² George Pappas, "Internalist vs. Externalist Conceptions of Epistemic Justification," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford: Stanford, CA, 2017): URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/justep-intext/>.

²³ In what follows, I will repeatedly return to this quote from Gettier, "Is Justified," 122. For clarity of presentation, I have changed Gettier's two claims '(d)' and '(e)' into '(1)' and '(2).'

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Proposition (2) is then true, though proposition (1), from which Smith inferred (2), is false. In our example, then, all of the following are true: (i) (2) is true, (ii) Smith believes that (2) is true, and (iii) Smith is justified in believing that (2) is true. But it is equally clear that Smith does not *know* that (2) is true; for (2) is true in virtue of the number of coins in Smith's pocket, while Smith does not know how many coins are in Smith's pocket, and bases his belief in (2) on a count of the coins in Jones's pocket, whom he falsely believes to be the man who will get the job.

3.1.1 First step

Gettier's first counterexample initially outlines a rather mundane situation:

Suppose that Smith and Jones have applied for a certain job. And suppose that Smith has strong evidence for the following conjunctive proposition:

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

Smith's evidence for (1) might be that the president of the company assured him that Jones would in the end be selected, and that he, Smith, had counted the coins in Jones's pocket ten minutes ago. Proposition (1) entails:

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

Let us suppose that Smith sees the entailment from (1) to (2), and accepts (2) on the grounds of (1), for which he has strong evidence. In this case, Smith is clearly justified in believing that (2) is true.

The president of the company has had a casual talk with Smith telling him that Jones will get the job, and for some reason Smith has counted Jones' pocket-change. From this Smith concludes that (1) – Jones will get the job and Jones has ten coins in his pocket – and then extrapolates and accepts (2).

A reflective point of view will make an evaluator focus on Smith's reflective processes such as attention, information-manipulation, reasoning, and decision making, whether he can be seen as epistemically responsible and rational in holding his belief, and whether he has cognitive access to his belief. Since the counterexample, initially, describes a commonplace situation where the president of the company has talked to Smith and told him that Jones will get the job, and Smith has counted Jones' coins, an interpretation that holds Smith epistemically responsible and justified in holding his belief that (1) is true is indeed plausible. Given the evidence Smith has, as Gettier presents the case, Smith is acting rationally in holding his belief. And since the characteristic point of view, from a reflective perspective, is the first-person point of view of Smith, no more, could reasonably be demanded from a person in Smith's position. Smith has cognitive access to his belief and can through reflection, reasoning, and information-manipulation form arguments in favor of his conclusion that (1) is true, on which he then can base

decisions. The evidence or justification Smith has, viewed reflectively, is nothing out of the ordinary but is nevertheless described as 'strong' which could be interpreted as indicating that the justification needed for knowledge can be met or fulfilled to a high enough degree.

Given what an evaluator knows of the situation in the counterexample up until this point, and given that her focus is a reflective reading, thus makes it plausible of her to interpret the situation in a way that we rightfully can say that Smith knows that (2) is true. The initial step of the argument hence presents a situation where Smith is justified (by his reflective processes) and where JTB is sufficient as a definition of knowledge.

If an evaluator instead views the initial step of the case from a reflexive point of view that centers on reflexive processes such as pattern recognition the counterexample makes her focus on whether Smith has gotten his belief in a reliable way, through a reliable process, and whether he is favorably (causally) connected to the world. It is thus the reflexive grounds that Smith has for his justification and knowledge that is relevant. As the counterexample initially is laid out, Smith's conversation with the president of the company and his investigation of Jones' pockets seems to be reliable processes. Smith has taken part of an everyday interaction in which he is likely to correctly pick up on relevant patterns. The characteristic point of view, from a reflexive perspective, is the third-person, and no more seems reasonable of an evaluator to demand from the described situation. Given the everyday formulation of the counterexample and since Smith's evidence is described as 'strong' it is plausible to interpret the situation in a way that makes Smith's conclusion that (1) true. Smith has used a reliable process to form his belief. Everything, so far, points towards that Smith is favorably connected to the world.

Given what an evaluator knows of the situation in the counterexample up until this point, and given that her focus is reflexive, thus makes it plausible of her to interpret the situation in a way that she rightfully can say that Smith knows that (2) is true. The initial step of the argument hence presents a situation where Smith is justified and where JTB is sufficient as a definition of knowledge.

It should however be pointed out that the initial step of the counterexample only describes the way and processes Smith has used to justify his belief. These processes seem sufficient, if charitably interpreted, since they are described as giving rise to strong evidence and since the situation seems ordinary. But, notably, Gettier does not, at this point, explicitly describe Smith's causal connection to the world at this step. Rather an evaluator has to choose how to interpret the presented situation.

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3.1.2 *Second Step*

In the following step of his counterexample, after the deduction to (2), Gettier presents a new development:

But imagine, further, that unknown to Smith, he himself, not Jones, will get the job.

It is Smith that gets the job. But since Smith has not yet been informed of this, it is, from a reflective evaluative perspective, still reasonable for him to believe that it is Jones who will get the job. If the sole focus is on Smith's first-person point of view and reflective processes of active conscious reasoning – he therefore still knows that (2) is true. But since the new situation bluntly states that (2) is false, this conclusion of course seems problematic from an objective third-person perspective. Nevertheless, if an evaluator's only focus is on reflective processes, Smith knows.

Seen from a reflexive perspective, the described situation in the second step puts Smith's processes' reliability in question. If an evaluator demands absolute certainty, they should be considered unreliable. But, if she allows fallibilism, which perhaps is a more plausible interpretation, it is fine that reliable processes sometimes – especially under less common situations – come out false. Thus, there is a vagueness regarding how the situation should be interpreted.

However, as is made clear if the evaluator focuses on the truth-connect, there is an outright falseness involved. As aforementioned, Gettier left this aspect open in his initial formulation. He now fills in some details and the world does not support Smith's initial beliefs. It is not Jones who will get the job. But once again, Gettier leaves an aspect unspecified. On the one hand, an evaluator has been explicitly told that it is Smith – not Jones – who will get the job. But nothing is mentioned regarding coins, and since it might seem to be an irrelevant technicality to the situation as a whole it might be easy to overlook and ignore this detail.

Depending on how an evaluator chose to see the situation, Smith will either be justified or not, and accordingly either know that (2) is true or not.

3.1.3 *Third Step*

In the third step, Gettier describes how it not only is Smith that gets the job, but, due to a coincidence, it turns out that he has ten coins in his pocket:

And, also, unknown to Smith, he himself has ten coins in his pocket.

The evidence Smith has, no longer seems strong but instead irrelevant and coincidental in relation to (2). But even given this new information, Smith still seems to be reflectively justified, since nothing has changed from *his* perspective. It is

therefore still reasonable and rational of him that he should believe what he does from a point of view that focuses on reflective processes. Taking the whole counterexample, and the situation such as Smith sees it into account, Smith is still justified, from his first-person point of view, and thus in a situation where JTB is satisfied and he therefore knows that (2) is true.

From a reflexive perspective, the counterexample's third step is, just as the second step, formulated in a way that makes it ambiguous whether Smith is justified. He can be seen as being causally connected to the world in a favorable way; the person who will get the job, indeed, has ten coins in his pocket. So with this in mind, JTB is satisfied and Smith does know that (2) is true. However, the reflexive processes Smith has used can be considered unreliable since they seem to only involve irrelevant and coincidental information with respect to the situation. On such an interpretation, JTB is not satisfied and Smith does not know that (2) is true. But it is also possible to interpret the described situation to involve reliable processes that only happen to come out wrong given the extraordinary situation. Then JTB is satisfied and Smith does know that (2) is true. Depending on whether an evaluator focuses on the reliability of Smith's process or his truth-connect, different interpretations are thus possible.

3.1.4 Careers and Coins: Discussion

As has been shown, the counterexample can be interpreted in more than one way, and it is thus possible to reach different conclusions regarding whether Smith knows that (2) is true. Smith initially seems to be in a situation where JTB is satisfied and he knows whether the focus is on reflective or reflexive processes. But in the second and third steps of the argument, interpretations regarding this matter can come apart depending on which process-form, and interpretation, an evaluator chooses to focus on. However, (G) does not follow for consistent readings. Either Smith is justified and knows, or he is not justified and does not know.

Gettier continues his article with a second counterexample. However, it is in all essentials identical to the first. An analysis of this counterexample hence leads, *mutatis mutandis*, to the same result as the first counterexample. Rather than repeating myself I will therefore instead investigate an additional, and importantly dissimilar, counterexample offered by Alvin I. Goldman.

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3.2 Real and Fake Barns

Goldman²⁴ presents a case that differs importantly from the previous counterexample regarding the reflexive perspective, and I will thus only address that aspect. I will treat Goldman's case as a Gettier case even though it is part of a discussion concerning a more general theory of 'knowing' pursued by Goldman. In defense of this usage it is worth pointing out that Goldman, in direct connection to the presented situation, does state that 'the traditional justified-true-belief account of knowledge is of no help in explaining this change.'²⁵

3.2.1 First Step

A perfectly ordinary situation is described:

Henry is driving in the countryside [... and] identifies various objects on the landscape as they come into view. [...] Henry has no doubt about the identity of these objects; in particular, he has no doubt that the last-mentioned object is a barn, which indeed it is. Each of the identified objects has features characteristic of its type. Moreover, each object is fully in view, Henry has excellent eyesight, and he has enough time to look at them reasonably carefully, since there is little traffic to distract him. Given this information, would we say that Henry *knows* that the object is a barn? Most of us would have little hesitation in saying this, so long as we were not in a certain philosophical frame of mind.²⁶

3.2.2 Second Step

Once again a shift is introduced:

Suppose we are told that, unknown to Henry, the district he has just entered is full of papier-mâché facsimiles of barns. These facsimiles look from the road exactly like barns, but are really just façades, without back walls or interiors, quite incapable of being used as barns. They are so cleverly constructed that travellers invariably mistake them for barns. Having just entered the district, Henry has not encountered any facsimiles; the object he sees is a genuine barn. But if the object on that site were a facsimile, Henry would mistake it for a barn. Given this new information, we would be strongly inclined to withdraw the claim that Henry *knows* the object is a barn. How is this change in our assessment to be explained?²⁷

²⁴ Goldman, "Discrimination."

²⁵ Goldman, "Discrimination," 773; Goldman formulates his view on knowledge in the following words: '[A] person is said to know that *p* just in case he *distinguishes* or *discriminates* the truth of *p* from relevant alternatives' (Alvin Goldman, "Discrimination," 772).

²⁶ Goldman, "Discrimination," 772.

²⁷ Goldman, "Discrimination," 773.

In the second step of Goldman's argument, the occurrence of facsimiles is mentioned – which is similar to the way the aforementioned case is laid out. But a change compared to the previous counterexample should be noted. Henry is causally connected to the world in a favorable way – it is an actual barn that he sees. But, whereas it, in the previous case, was an irrelevant coincidence that saw to the world-connection, it is in this case unproblematic. It is instead the surrounding context that might instill a sense of ambiguity in an evaluator since it consists of possible 'defeaters.' Nevertheless, since there is a truth-connect between Henry and the world, the reflexive processes he uses are reliable and JTB should be seen as being satisfied.

3.2.3 Real and Fake Barns: Discussion

According to Goldman the new situation presented in the second step would make an evaluator inclined to withdraw the claim that Henry knows that the object is a barn, and he asks how this change in assessment is to be explained. It could be debated whether this is necessarily counterintuitive or not. But if we accept that there is a problem here – how can it be elucidated?

One way of making sense of this view is to point out that the counterexample's shift questions the reliability of the reflexive process Henry has used to attain his evidence. In an area filled with facsimiles it might no longer be enough to just look at objects from a distance, it might instead be necessary to investigate further. The traffic in the area might no longer be ignored since it perhaps will require absolute focus to reliably separate a real barn from a fake barn. The processes Henry uses might no longer plausibly be interpreted as reliable, because of the accidental new feature attached to them. But even so, Henry is in fact favorably causally connected to the world, and it is rather the context that involves an element of unreliability than the specific process he used. This formulation might thus give rise to conflicting interpretations if evaluators are unclear as to which aspect of the reflexive processes they prioritize as being most important.

The described situation is however not mysterious in any deeper sense. Under ecologically normal situations the reflexive processes Henry uses, at least on a charitable reading, are plausibly seen as being reliable. In the described contrived situation, this is no longer the case, and so Henry would not know that what he sees is a barn. But, as long as Henry doesn't spend too much time in this new outlandish context he could reasonably still be considered to use a reliable process – albeit a fallible one – and thus know that what he sees is a barn.

3.3 The Problem-creating Shift?

Focusing on Gettier's first counterexample, a consistent reflective reading gives that Smith is reflectively justified and knows that (2) is true. (G) would then not follow. Concerning a reflexive reading, the situation is slightly more complicated. On the one hand there is a truth-connect, and if seen as representative of a typical situation the processes involved seem reliable. Accordingly, from a consistent reading that heeds these commitments Smith is justified and knows that (2) is true, and so (G) would not follow. On the other hand, the relevant reflexive processes' reliability is questionable. A consistent reading from this outlook would then conclude that Smith is neither justified nor knows that (2) is true, and so (G) would not follow.

Depending on whether an evaluator focuses on reflective processes or reflexive processes – some form of reflexive reading – she will thus reach different conclusions regarding whether Smith is justified or knows that (2) is true. However, (G) does not follow for consistent readings, and so, Gettier cases do not undermine consistent analyses of justification and knowledge.

But, importantly, Gettier's case is instead formulated in a way that, arguably, makes most sense if its initial step is read from a reflective perspective. Especially premise (A) fits rather uneasily with a reflexive perspective, as well as seeing Smith as being 'clearly justified' based on the presented evidence. The second and third steps instead make more sense from a reflexive perspective – where the lack of a truth-connect is highlighted concerning (1), followed by a newly introduced situation of relevance for (2). But, when Gettier then writes the following:

In our example, then, all of the following are true: (i) (2) is true, (ii) Smith believes that (2) is true, and (iii) Smith is justified in believing that (2) is true.

He seems to have gone back to a reflective understanding of justification. However, his understanding of knowledge is, arguably, reflexive since he concludes:

But it is equally clear that Smith does not know that (2) is true; for (2) is true in virtue of the number of coins in Smith's pocket, while Smith does not know how many coins are in Smith's pocket, and bases his belief in (2) on a count of the coins in Jones's pocket, whom he falsely believes to be the man who will get the job.

It thus seems that in order to accept all steps of Gettier's argument – which leads to (G) – the case must be read with a reflective understanding of justification but a reflexive understanding of knowledge.

4. Concluding Remarks

It has been argued that as long as evaluators of Gettier cases are clear about which positions they choose to take concerning justification and knowledge – if their reading is reflective or reflexive – different conclusions will be reached. However, on all consistent readings, (G) does not follow and so Gettier cases do not need to undermine analyses of justification and knowledge, or be seen as genuine problems. It is by allowing the vagueness, and shifting focus back and forth, in the cases to influence one's evaluation into an inconsistent reading that (G) becomes an option.

This said, it is not clear that JTB is a fruitful definition of declarative propositional knowledge. It can also be argued that the above discussion indicates that a naturalist approach to investigating knowledge is preferable, in that its methodology is not plagued by the vagueness of intuition-based inquiries. Furthermore, it could be claimed that justification indeed should be seen as involving something reflective whereas knowledge involves something reflexive, although in that case this ought to be clearly stated to avoid confusion, and would render Gettier cases unproblematic – as long as one accepts this view.

Lastly, I want to highlight that even though it probably is possible to compose new Gettier cases *ad infinitum*, a lot seems to have been gained if an evaluator, when faced with each new problem, can ask herself how this problem handles reflective processes and reflexive processes.²⁸

²⁸ Acknowledgements: I want to thank Martin L. Jönsson who has been exceedingly generous with his knowledge, eye for detail, and time. Thanks to Erik J. Olsson, Ylwa Sjölin Wirling, Asger Kirkeby-Hinrup, participants at the higher seminar in theoretical philosophy at Lund University, and my anonymous reviewers for insightful comments.