

INTERNALISM, THE GETTIER PROBLEM, AND METAEPISTEMOLOGICAL SKEPTICISM

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We must recognize that whenever we know something we either do, or at least can, by reflecting, directly know that we are knowing it.

H. A. Prichard¹

Summary

When it comes to second-order knowledge (i.e. knowing that one knows), internalists typically contend that when we know that *p*, we can, by reflecting, directly know that we are knowing it. Gettier considerations are employed to challenge this internalistic contention and to make out a *prima facie* case for internalistic metaepistemological skepticism, the thesis that no one ever internalistically knows that one internalistically knows that *p*. In particular, I argue that at the metaepistemological second-order level, the Gettier problem generates three distinct problems which, taken together, seriously undermine the possibility of anyone possessing second-order internalistic knowledge.

When it comes to second-order knowledge, internalists typically echo Prichard's sentiment that we can, simply by reflecting on it, determine our epistemic status with respect to a given proposition. While they disagree about the ease with which one can know that one knows, they generally contend that there are no insurmountable

1. H. A. Prichard, *Knowledge and Perception* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 86.

obstacles to second-order knowledge. My aim in the present paper is to employ Gettier considerations to challenge this contention and to make out a *prima facie* case for internalistic metapistemological skepticism, the thesis that no one ever has second-order internalistic knowledge. I argue that when it comes to second-order knowledge there are three distinct Gettier problems, each of which threatens the possibility of second-order internalistic knowledge. I begin by clarifying the notion of second-order internalistic knowledge.²

I.

Consider the following question:

Q1 When, if ever, does a person know that she knows that *p*?

Q1 is multiply ambiguous since it fails to specify, in either place, the type of knowledge at issue. To disambiguate Q1, let us start by distinguishing fallible and infallible knowledge. Both fallibilists and infallibilists agree that, for any person *S* and any proposition *p*,

(K) *S* knows that *p* [Kp] only if:

- (1) *p*,
- (2) *S* believes that *p* [Bp], and
- (3) *S* is justified in believing that *p* [Jp].

Where they disagree is over the kind of justification required by (3).

2. My argument should not be construed as an argument against internalism *per se*. Externalists also face problems, albeit different ones, when it comes to second-order knowledge, though that is a topic for another paper [Those interested in some of the problems that second-order knowledge poses for externalism should see Richard Fumerton's *Metapistemology and Skepticism* (Lanham, Maryland: Roman and Littlefield, 1995), especially chapter 6 "Externalism and Skepticism", pp. 159-181.]. My aim is simply to show that, given internalism, we do not have the kind of direct access to our epistemic status that most internalists think we do. I argue that there is good reason to believe that, given internalism, we never know that we know anything, a conclusion most internalists will find both disquieting and unwelcome.

Infallibilists maintain that knowledge requires infallible justification – justification which entails that for which it is justification. *S* is *infallibly justified* in believing that *p* [J^Fp] only if *p*. Accordingly, we can analyze *infallible knowledge* as follows:

(K^F) K^Fp ≡ (p & Bp & J^Fp).

Fallibilists, on the other hand, contend that the kind of justification requisite for knowledge need only render probable, not entail, that for which it is justification. As such, fallibilism entails the following possibility:

(P1) ◊(J^Fp & ~p).

Possibility (P1) and deductive closure with respect to justification together entail numerous "Gettier Possibilities", including:

(P2) ◊[Bp & J^Fp & J^F(p → q) & B(p → q)]
& J^Fq & Bq & q & ~p & ~K^Fq].

Possibility (P2) obtains when, as Gettier illustrated,³ *S* has a fallibly justified true belief that *q* which falls short of knowledge because *S*'s justification for *q* [to wit, Bp & J^Fp & J^F(p → q) & B(p → q)] fails to be appropriately connected to *q*'s truth and thus is defective.⁴ Since fallibilism entails (P2), a fourth condition must be added to the traditional analysis of knowledge to rule out Gettier cases as instances of knowledge. For our purposes, the following condition will suffice:

(4) *S* is not Gettierized with respect to *p* [~Gp].

Accordingly, we can analyze *fallible knowledge* as follows:

3. Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?", *Analysis*, 23 (1963), pp. 121-123.

4. In the case of possibility (P2), *S*'s justification is defective because it essentially depends on *S*'s justified-but-*false* belief Bp. However, as we shall see in section V, there are cases of defective justification that do not involve justified-but-*false* beliefs as justifiers.

(K^F) $K^F p \equiv (p \ \& \ Bp \ \& \ J^F p \ \& \ \sim Gp)$.

Given these definitions, there are four possible states of second-order knowledge we might be inquiring about when we ask whether *S* knows that *S* knows that *p*:

- (S1) $K^F K^F p$.
- (S2) $K^F K^F p$.
- (S3) $K^F K^F p$.
- (S4) $K^F K^F p$.

Of these four possible states of knowledge, clearly (S1) and (S2) would be the most intellectually and philosophically satisfying, since in both cases, we would be infallibly certain that we were right with respect to *p*. Unfortunately, the legacy of infallibilism, at least with respect to non-*cogito* empirical propositions, is skepticism.⁵ Since infallibilism entails skepticism with respect to non-*cogito* empirical propositions and since self-knowledge propositions⁶ are themselves non-*cogito* empirical propositions, it follows that neither (S1) nor (S2) is possible. As for (S3), such knowledge, if any, will be extremely rare as it is restricted to *cogito* propositions. Thus, the most plausible type of second-order knowledge is that suggested by (S4), viz. fallibly knowing that one fallibly knows that *p*. My concern in the present paper is with this fourth form of second-order

5. This was perhaps first illustrated by Thomas Reid who observed that Descartes' infallibilism, together with his theory of ideas, inevitably leads to skepticism with respect to empirical knowledge. See Reid's *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* and his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, the definitive editions of which appear in *The Complete Works of Thomas Reid*, ed. William Hamilton, 6th edition (Edinburgh: MacLachlan and Stewart, and London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1863). The point can be made quite simply as follows: Since our evidence for non-*cogito* empirical propositions never entails the truth of those propositions (as demonstrated by demon-manipulated possible worlds), it follows that if the kind of justification required for knowledge is infallible truth-entailing justification, then we are never justified in believing, and hence never know, that such propositions are true.

6. By 'self-knowledge propositions' I mean propositions which ascribe knowledge of a proposition to oneself *as oneself*, e.g. the proposition that I know that *p*. I borrow this terminology from Richard Feldman (1981, p. 269).

knowledge. That said, the "F" superscript will be suppressed from all subsequent second-order knowledge formulae, but it should be understood that I am concerned with $K^F K^F p$ throughout the remainder of the paper.

II.

In light of the previous section, Q1 can be reformulated as follows:

Q1' When, if ever, does a person fallibly know that she fallibly knows that *p*?

But even with the fallibilistic qualifiers, Q1' remains ambiguous in light of the internalist/externalist distinction. Let us stipulate that *S* *internalistically* knows that *p* [$K_i p$] **only if** *S* is internalistically justified in believing that *p* [$J_i p$], where *S* is internalistically justified in believing that *p* **iff** *S*'s justification for *p* is exclusively a function of states internal to *S* (i.e. states to which *S* has cognitive access, e.g. beliefs, perceptual states, memory states, introspective states, etc.). Formalizing, we get:

(K_i) $K_i p \equiv (p \ \& \ Bp \ \& \ J_i p \ \& \ \sim Gp)$.⁷

In English, (K_i) asserts:

- (K_i*) *S* internalistically knows (knows_i) that *p* **iff**:
- (k1) *p*,
 - (k2) *S* believes that *p*,
 - (k3) *S* is internalistically justified (justified_i) in believing that *p*, and
 - (k4) *S* is not Gettierized with respect to *p*.

7. NOTE: What I am calling 'internalistic knowledge', as defined by (K_i), still requires the satisfaction of two externalistic conditions, namely, *p* and $\sim Gp$. Some internalists have wanted to insist that they are internalists with respect to justification, but externalists with respect to knowledge because of conditions *p* and $\sim Gp$. But the crucial point is that as internalists they would accept (K_i) with its internalistic justification condition $J_i p$ as a proper analysis of knowledge.

In contrast, *S externalistically knows* that p [$K_e p$] **only if** S 's belief that p is externalistically justified [$J_e p$], where S 's belief that p is externalistically justified **iff** what justifies S 's belief that p is at least partly a function of states external to S (i.e. states to which S lacks cognitive access, e.g. the actual reliability of the process which produced Bp). Accordingly, we can define externalistic knowledge as follows:

$$(K_e) \quad K_e p \equiv (p \ \& \ Bp \ \& \ J_e p \ \& \ \sim Gp).$$

(K_i) and (K_e) entail that there are many possible states of second-order knowledge. Consider the most obvious four:

- (S5) $K_i K_i p$.
- (S6) $K_i K_e p$.
- (S7) $K_e K_i p$.
- (S8) $K_e K_e p$.⁸

I assume that when internalists claim that whenever we know something, we can, by reflecting, directly come to know that we know it, they have $K_i K_i p$ in mind. So, while all of these different potential states of second-order knowledge are of interest, I shall focus on (S5).

8. The reason (S5)-(S8) do not exhaust the possibilities is because, as I have defined internalistic and externalistic knowledge, they are not mutually exclusive. My having extremely good evidence for p (which internalistically justifies *me* in believing that p) is compatible with my belief that p having been produced by a reliable cognitive process (which externalistically justifies *my belief* that p). [For a further discussion of the distinction between internalistically justified persons and externalistically justified beliefs, see my "Personal and Doxastic Justification in Epistemology", *Philosophical Studies*, 67 (1992), pp. 133-150.] Let us represent the possibility of simultaneously satisfying (K_i) and (K_e) as: $K_i p$. Given this possibility it is obvious that (S5)-(S8) do not exhaust the second-order knowledge possibilities. Here are a few more: $K_i K_i p$; $K_e K_i p$; $K_i K_e p$; $K_i K_i p$; $K_e K_e p$.

III.

In light of the foregoing, Q1' should itself be reformulated as follows:

Q1" When, if ever, does a person internalistically (fallibly) know that she internalistically (fallibly) knows that p ?

While numerous answers have been proposed,⁹ the most natural and most plausible answer to Q1" is arrived at by substituting $K_i p$ for p in (K_i) above:

$$(KK_i) \quad K_i K_i p \equiv (K_i p \ \& \ BK_i p \ \& \ J_i K_i p \ \& \ \sim GK_i p).$$

Or, equivalently:

$$(KK_i^*) \quad S \text{ knows}_i \text{ that } S \text{ knows}_i \text{ that } p \text{ iff} \\ (KK1) \quad S \text{ knows}_i \text{ that } p,$$

9. Hintikka (1962), Hilpinen (1970), and Lehrer (1974) have defended the "pure KK-thesis" according to which knowing entails knowing that one knows:

$$(PKK) \quad K_i p \rightarrow K_i K_i p.$$

Danto (1967) defends what might be called the "semantic KK-thesis" according to which:

$$(SKK) \quad (K_i p \ \& \ UK_i p) \rightarrow K_i K_i p,$$

where $UK_i p = S$ understands the self-knowledge proposition that S knows that p . Pritchard (1950) and Chisholm (1977) have defended what might be called the "reflective KK-thesis":

$$(RKK) \quad (K_i p \ \& \ CK_i p) \rightarrow K_i K_i p,$$

where $CK_i p = S$ considers the self-knowledge proposition that S knows that p . Gettier (1970) defends the doxastic KK-thesis according to which:

$$(DKK) \quad (K_i p \ \& \ BK_i p) \rightarrow K_i K_i p.$$

As we shall see in section VI, the possibility of second-order Gettierization entails that all of these proposals are false. Since no subset of the conditions specified in (K_i) is sufficient to guarantee that S is not Gettierized with respect to the self-knowledge proposition $K_i p$ and since none of the antecedents in the above proposals entails that S is not Gettierized with respect to $K_i p$, it follows that in order for S to have second-order knowledge (i.e. for S to know a given self-knowledge proposition $K_i p$), S must satisfy all of the conditions for knowledge *simpliciter* with respect to the self-knowledge proposition in question.

- (kk2) *S* believes that *S* knows_i that *p*,
 (kk3) *S* is justified_i in believing that *S* knows_i that *p*,
 and
 (kk4) *S* is not Gettierized with respect to the proposition that *S* knows_i that *p*.

I shall refer to $(K_i K_i^*)$ as “the iterative KK-thesis”. In “Fallibilism and Knowing that One Knows”, Richard Feldman defends the iterative KK-thesis and argues that the Gettier problem poses a minor, but hardly insurmountable, obstacle to second-order knowledge.¹⁰ Feldman’s arguments for iterative KK are decisive and will not be repeated here. Where I disagree with Feldman is over the ease with which $(K_i K_i^*)$ ’s *analyzans* can be satisfied. Feldman contends that it is relatively easy to satisfy conditions (kk1)-(kk4) and that the hindrance which the Gettier problem poses for second-order knowledge can be overcome with minimal intellectual effort. In what is to follow, I shall argue that the Gettier problem generates three distinct obstacles for the would-be second-order knower – obstacles corresponding to (kk1), (kk3), and (kk4), respectively – and that at least two of these problems appear to be insurmountable, at least where internalistic second-order knowledge is concerned.

IV.

One way in which the Gettier problem can preclude *S* from knowing that she knows that *p* is by preventing *S* from knowing that *p*. If *S* is Gettierized with respect to *p*, then *S* fails to know that *p* and *a fortiori* she fails to know that she knows that *p*, since (kk1) of $(K_i K_i^*)$ is unsatisfied. Call such Gettierization “first-order Gettierization”. Whenever *S* is first-order Gettierized with respect to *p*, *S* lacks both first-order and second-order knowledge that *p*. Thus, the first way in

10. Richard Feldman, “Fallibilism and Knowing that One Knows”, *Philosophical Review*, XC (1981), pp. 266-281. For an earlier defense of the iterative KK-thesis, see Peter Klein’s “A Proposed Definition of Propositional Knowledge”, *Journal of Philosophy*, LXVIII (1971), pp. 471-482. Like Feldman, Klein maintains that there is no special problem with satisfying (kk1)-(kk4) of $(K_i K_i^*)$. (pp. 480f.)

which the Gettier problem can undermine second-order knowledge is through *actual* first-order Gettierization. Of course, *actual* first-order Gettierization falsifies (kk1) and *ipso facto* precludes second-order knowledge *when but only when* it obtains, and so, it poses no greater and no less threat to second-order knowledge than it poses to first-order knowledge.

As just noted, the first Gettier obstacle to second-order knowledge – *actual* first-order Gettierization – undermines $K_i K_i p$ by undermining $K_i p$. However, even when $K_i p$ is true, the Gettier problem presents two more obstacles for the would-be second-order knower. In order to make these additional obstacles as conspicuous as possible, I will assume that *S* does in fact possess first-order knowledge that *p* [i.e. I will assume $K_i p$] throughout the remainder of the paper.

V.

While *actual* first-order Gettierization, when it obtains, undermines $K_i K_i p$ by falsifying (kk1), *possible* (but non-*actual*) first-order Gettierization threatens to thwart one of the most natural ways of satisfying (kk3). According to (kk3), in order for *S* to know_i that she knows_i that *p*, *S* must be justified_i in believing that she knows_i that *p*. While there are numerous ways in which *S* might satisfy (kk3), the most straightforward way is for *S* to be justified_i in believing that she has satisfied all the conditions needed for first-order knowledge_i that *p*, i.e. for *S* to be justified_i in believing that each condition in the *analyzans* of (K_i^*) is satisfied:

- (JK_ip-1) *S* is justified_i in believing that $K_i p$ if:
 (jk1-1) *S* is justified_i in believing that *p*,
 (jk1-2) *S* is justified_i in believing that *S* believes that *p*,
 (jk1-3) *S* is justified_i in believing that *S* is justified_i in believing that *p*, and
 (jk1-4) *S* is justified_i in believing that *S* is not Gettierized with respect to *p*.

Since (jk1-1) is identical to (K3), (jk1-1) is obviously satisfied on the assumption that *S* knows that *p*. If we assume both doxastic and justificatory transparency (i.e. introspective accessibility), as do many internalists, then (jk1-2) and (jk1-3) pose no special problems for the would-be second-order knower. It is worth noting that both of these assumptions are controversial and if false would further support metaepistemological skepticism. However, for the sake of argument, I will grant that there are no special obstacles to satisfying (jk1-1)-(jk1-3). My concern is with (jk1-4).

Condition (jk1-4) requires that *S* be justified_i in believing that the possibility of being first-order Gettierized with respect to *p* does not obtain. Whether (jk1-4) can be satisfied from an internalistic perspective turns on the following questions:

- Q2 Could *S* justifiably_i believe that (K4) is satisfied with respect to a given *p*?
- Q3 Could *S* justifiably_i believe that her evidence for *p* is not defective and that, as a result, she is not a hapless Gettier victim with respect to *p*?

While there are a plethora of different internalistic theories of justification, what they all have in common is that they maintain that justification is exclusively a function of internally accessible evidence [The evidence may be either experiential or propositional in nature, but must be cognitively available to the cognizer.] Thus, re Q2, if *S*'s to be justified_i in believing that (K4) is satisfied with respect to a given *p*, she must possess internally accessible evidence of (K4)'s truth. It is not entirely clear what such evidence would look like, since even internalists generally regard (K4) as an externalistic necessary condition for knowledge,¹¹ but presumably it would be evidence indicating that her first-order evidence for *p* is not defective, which brings us to Q3:

- Q3 Could *S* justifiably_i believe that her evidence for *p* is not defective and that, as a result, she is not a hapless Gettier victim with respect to *p*?

11. "Externalistic" in the sense that *K_p* only requires that (K4) be satisfied, not that *S* be able to tell that it is satisfied.

Feldman answers Q3 in the affirmative and offers two arguments to show that it is relatively easy to be justified_i in believing that one's first-order evidence is not defective. First, if, per our assumption, *S* knows_i that *p*, then *S* is justified_i in believing that *p*. Since *S* is justified_i in believing that *p*, she is also justified_i in believing that all of her evidence for *p* is true. As such, she is justified_i in believing that her belief that *p* does not rest on any false assumptions. Since, according to Feldman, "[false evidence] is what usually makes one's justification defective", she is justified in believing that her justification is not defective.¹² Second, Feldman argues:

[S], if she is like the rest of us, has found that in the past very few other justified beliefs have been defectively justified. That is, she has very rarely found herself to be the victim of situations somewhat like those in Gettier-examples, in which a person has a justified belief that depends upon some false proposition. She has reason to believe, then, that she is not such a victim in this case. Thus, she is justified in believing that her justification [for *p*] is not defective.¹³

Neither of these reasons is adequate to justify *S* in believing that her first-order justification for *p* is not defective. As for Feldman's first reason, it is surprising that he would even offer such a reason since, in a much earlier article (1974), Feldman himself showed that one can be Gettierized with respect to *p* even when all of one's evidence for *p* is true and even when one knows that all of one's evidence for *p* is true.¹⁴ As it turns out, cases like the one Feldman described in 1974 abound. Consider a version of Brian Skyrms' famous example concerning Sure-Fire matches.¹⁵ Pyromaniac Pete truly and justifiably believes and knows that Sure-Fire matches have always lit in the past when struck. Pete truly and justifiably believes and knows that the match he is holding is a Sure-Fire match. On the basis of this evidence, Pete justifiably believes that *L*, where *L* = the match that I am holding will light when struck. However, unbeknownst to Pete, the match he is holding is a defective Sure-Fire match (the first

12. Richard Feldmann, "Fallibilism and Knowing that One Knows", p. 273.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 273f.

14. Richard Feldman, "An Alleged Defect in Gettier Counter-Examples", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 52, 1 (1974), pp. 68-69.

15. Brian Skyrms, "The Explication of 'X Knows that P'", *Journal of Philosophy*, 64, 12 (1967), pp. 373-389.

ever¹) with impurities which raise its combustion temperature above that which can be produced by striking friction. As luck would have it, just as Pete strikes the match, a sudden burst of Q-radiation ignites the match. Thus, Pete has a justified true belief that *L* which is based entirely on true evidence which Pete knows to be true.¹⁶ The fact that examples like Feldman's and Skyrms' are easy to multiply shows that even if the quintessential Gettier cases are cases in which *S*'s justification for *p* essentially depends on a justified-but-false belief that *q*, there are still many Gettier cases which appeal only to true evidence. As a result, the fact that *S* is justified in believing that all of her evidence for *p* is true does not justify her in believing that she has not been Gettierized, for she still might be the victim of an "all-true-evidence-Gettierization".

Feldman's second reason – namely, that *S* has rarely found herself to be the victim of Gettier cases – fares no better, for as Michael Roth points out:

There are at least two plausible explanations for why she has so rarely discovered herself to have been fooled by such cases. The first and most obvious is that she has rarely, if ever, *been* in such cases and if this were the only explanation or even the only plausible explanation, then one could justifiably argue that from the fact that [*S*] has rarely found herself to be in such situations it followed that she (most likely) has rarely, if ever, *been* in such situations. But for a large class of Gettier-type cases, we could easily imagine that the victim simply never finds out that she has been victimized. If it was the burst of Q-radiation, rather than the match-cover which caused my match to ignite, I would have been the victim of a Gettier case but wouldn't have any reason to believe that I was. Thus, a second plausible explanation for why one so rarely discovers one's own Gettier cases is that they occur (with more or less frequency), they look and feel exactly like items of knowledge, and they pass away undetected.¹⁷

16. NOTE: Pete does not have to hold the false belief that the match he is holding is not a defective match, in order to be justified in believing that *L*. Given Sure-Fire matches perfect track record, he need have no beliefs at all concerning whether or not this match is a defective match, and in all likelihood, he would have no such beliefs. The possibility simply wouldn't cross his mind, and not because he suffers from some sort of epistemic defect.

17. Michael Roth, "The Wall and the Shield: K-K Reconsidered", *Philosophical Studies*, 59 (1990), p. 152.

Roth's point is simply this: Many of the Gettier cases described in the literature are what we might call "invisible Gettier cases", i.e. they are cases which, were they to obtain, the victim would never find out. Now if every imaginable invisible Gettier case were extremely fanciful and highly contrived, then that might give us a reason to think that such cases were rare; but in fact, we can imagine many invisible Gettier cases which are far less fanciful and contrived than the Gettier cases typically found in the literature. Consider the following example: Sitting in my office at noon, I suddenly wonder if the doors to my house are locked. Then I recall locking them and double-checking them to make sure that they were locked when I left the house earlier this morning. As a result, I come to believe that they are locked. Unbeknownst to me, my partner who left the house before me, forgot something she needed for work, and returned to get it after I had left. Since she locked the doors when she left, it is true at noon that the doors are locked. Hence, I have a justified true belief that the doors to my house are locked, but I do not know that they are locked because *my reason* – my having locked them when I left – is not the reason they are locked at noon. Things like this happen all the time. Why do we so rarely find out that we were Gettierized? Why, for example, do we so rarely discover that our partners have returned home after we left the house and locked the doors on their way out? Because, at the end of an exhausting day, our partners simply never think to tell us about their hectic mornings. Or perhaps they remember to tell us about their hectic mornings over coffee a few days later, and we never make the connection that it occurred on the day when we thought we knew the doors were locked. Add to this the fact that most people have never had a course in epistemology and have never heard of Gettier cases, and it is no wonder that so few people recognize that they have been Gettierized. After all, most people do not even know to be on the lookout for such cases. It is considerations such as these which make it plausible to think that invisible Gettier cases are much more likely to be the norm than visible ones. The upshot is this: While *S*'s having rarely found herself to be Gettierized in the past may provide her with a reason for thinking that visible Gettier cases are rare and that,

thus, she probably is not the victim of a visible Gettierization with respect to p , it does not provide her with any reason to think that invisible Gettier cases are rare, and without the latter sort of reason, she is not justified; in believing that she is not being invisibly Gettierized with respect to p .

Since neither of Feldman's reasons is adequate to justify S in believing that she is not Gettierized with respect to p and since it is not even clear what sort of evidence, if any, could justify S in believing that she is not Gettierized with respect to p , we have at least a *prima facie* reason for thinking that no one is ever justified; in believing that (k4) is satisfied with respect to a given proposition p . Since we have a *prima facie* reason to think that no one is ever justified; in believing that (k4) is satisfied with respect to a given proposition p , we have a *prima facie* reason to think that no one ever satisfies (jk1-4) of (JK_ip-1), and *ipso facto* we have a *prima facie* reason to think that no one is ever justified; in believing K_ip on the basis of satisfying (JK_ip-1). There are, of course, other ways in which we might come to be justified; in believing that we know_i that p – ways which do not require us to be justified; in believing that we are not first-order Gettierized. As we shall see, these ways avoid the second Gettier obstacle to second-order knowledge only to encounter the third Gettier obstacle to such knowledge.

VI.

The third and most serious Gettier problem facing second-order knowledge has received almost no attention in the literature. The problem concerns second-order Gettierization – what I call “meta-Gettierization”. Just as first-order Gettierization arises when one's justification for p is defective, meta-Gettierization occurs when one's justification for K_ip is defective. Feldman is the only epistemologist to have discussed meta-Gettierization in any detail, and he maintains that examples of meta-Gettierization “are contrived, but possible”.¹⁸ He then offers such a contrived example which runs as follows: A student, I'll call her “Faith”, comes to justifi-

ably believe that she knows that p on the basis of the expert testimony of her epistemology teacher. Since Faith really does know that p , Faith has a testimony-based justified-true-belief that she knows that p . Unbeknownst to Faith, her epistemology teacher has become senile and no longer understands what he is asserting. So, even if what he asserts about her epistemic status with respect to p is true, Faith's justification is defective since the epistemic pronouncements of a senile epistemologist are not appropriately connected with the truth. I will return to Feldman's example momentarily, but first I wish to consider a less contrived example.

The year is 1956. Professor Cleaver, a pre-Gettier epistemologist, embraces the traditional analysis of knowledge and justifiably so, what with over 2000 years of epistemological history on his side. Moreover, Cleaver is an internalist (though, with the internalist/externalist distinction over a decade away, he doesn't realize it yet), since he maintains that justification is a function exclusively of evidence accessible to the cognizer. Thus, the theory of knowledge which Cleaver justifiably accepts is the traditional analysis:

(TA) K_ip ≡ (p & Bp & J_ip).

(TA*) S knows_i that p iff:

(ta1) p ,

(ta2) S believes that p , and

(ta3) S is justified_i in believing that p .

For a person in Cleaver's epistemically naive situation, it is relatively easy to be justified; in accepting K_ip. All anyone who justifiably accepts (TA*) need do in order to be justified; in believing that she knows_i that p is satisfy the *analysans* of:

(JK_ip-2) S is justified_i in believing that K_ip iff:

(jk2-1) S is justified_i in believing that p ,

(jk2-2) S is justified_i in believing that S believes that

p , and

(jk2-3) S is justified_i in believing that S is justified_i in believing that p .

Now, for any proposition p that Cleaver knows_i, if he believes that he

18. Feldman, “Fallibilism and Knowing that One Knows”, p. 281.

knows that p and if he is justified_i in believing that he knows that p on the basis of his justified_i beliefs (TA), (TA*), and (JK_iK_ip-2), then he will have a justified-true-belief that he knows that p , which falls short of knowledge because his justification *essentially depends* on the justified-but-false beliefs (TA) and (TA*). The fact is that any time Cleaver comes to believe that he knows a proposition on the basis of his justified-but-false beliefs (TA) and (TA*) he will automatically be meta-Gettierized. Notice, moreover, that prior to 1963 every epistemologist was in the naive epistemological situation just attributed to Cleaver, and as a result, no epistemologists prior to 1963 ever possessed second-order internalistic knowledge, since their justification for believing any given self-knowledge proposition K_ip would have inevitably rested on a justified-but-false belief about the nature of knowledge.

Back to the present. Are those of us who grew up in the post-Gettier enlightenment any better off than Cleaver when it comes to meta-Gettierization? That depends on whether any of us has a justified-true-belief regarding the nature of knowledge_i which specifies the conditions necessary and sufficient for S to know that p . Given that the myriad of mutually exclusive epistemologies currently proposed have roughly equal numbers of proponents, it follows that most epistemologists have a false epistemology. And since no epistemology to date is immune to objection, it is doubtful that any of us hold a true epistemology (no matter how well justified_i we may be in accepting our own epistemology). Given the extreme likelihood that we all hold false epistemologies, whenever we come to believe a given self-knowledge proposition K_ip on the justificatory_i basis of our preferred epistemology, we are almost certain to become yet another meta-Gettierization casualty.

There is, of course, one way to become justified_i in holding a given self-knowledge proposition K_ip which does not depend on one's own false theory of knowledge, namely, to follow Faith's example and ask an expert. The problem is that it is extremely likely that any expert you ask is operating with a false epistemology, and so even if the expert is right in her pronouncement that you know that p , your justification_i for believing that you know_i that p will be defective because it will rest on that expert's justified-but-false epistemology. Feldman thinks that in order to come up with a case of

meta-Gettierization one must come up with an extremely contrived example involving a senile epistemologist, but he is mistaken. The truth is almost any sane and sober epistemologist will do.

Conclusion

We have seen that the Gettier problem poses three distinct problems for the would-be second-order knower: (1) The problem of *actual* first-order Gettierization which precludes K_iK_ip by precluding K_ip; (2) the problem of the *possibilities* of "all-true-evidence" and "invisible" first-order Gettierizations which appear to preclude attaining K_iK_ip through (JK_ip-1) by blocking satisfaction of (jk1-4); and most importantly but least recognized, (3) the problem of meta-Gettierization which threatens to undermine all purported instances of K_iK_ip, since all instances of JK_ip seem to be grounded in false epistemologies (either one's own or the expert's). These three problems taken together provide us with a strong *prima facie* case for internalistic metaepistemological skepticism, i.e. the thesis that no one ever knows_i that one knows_i that p . Perhaps there is a rare and extremely fortunate epistemologist with an entirely true epistemology out there who can on some occasions manage to avoid all three problems, but one thing is clear: When internalists claim that "Whenever we know something we either do, or at least can, by reflecting, directly know that we are knowing it", they are mistaken.¹⁹

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