

and 5.³

1 The Legend and its puzzles

The Legend is the claim that “Edmund Gettier’s landmark paper successfully refuted the traditional analysis of knowledge” (Sosa et al., 2009, 189). The claim figures in almost every contemporary handbook.⁴ It has two components: the Justified True Belief analysis was the traditional one, and Gettier refuted it. They cannot both be true. As Gettier (1963) stresses, his counterexamples assume that justification does not entail truth.⁵ But, as I will argue at length below, insofar as we can identify justification conditions on knowledge in traditional views, they are truth-entailing. Thus traditional views are not the ones Gettier refuted. Be that as it may, it is worth listing a few facts that would be puzzling if the Legend was true.

Why is it so hard to find statements of the analysis before the mid-twentieth century? Plato, Kant and Russell are usually cited.⁶ But that is it. I am not aware of any other putative statement in the Western tradition. If there was one it would have been widely reported by now. So what about Aristotle, Epicurus, the Stoics, the Sceptics, Thomas, Ockham, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Reid or Kant, to name a few?

Why did nobody notice Gettier-style cases? The *Theaetetus* is one of the most widely read philosophical texts in history. It ends with the suggestion that a true belief with an “account” is not sufficient for knowledge. So, if the Legend is correct, it raises the question whether justified true belief is sufficient for knowledge. But somehow nobody noticed counterexamples before the twentieth century. Yet Gettier-style cases are not outlandish. A jury may clear a defendant on the basis of an apparently reliable testimony; the testimony turns

³Abbreviations for historical citations. Hellenistic philosophers are cited from Long and Sedley’s (1987) collection (e.g. LS 40H). Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and Kant are cited in the usual standard editions, respectively Estienne (e.g. *Meno* 98a), Bekker (e.g. *Posterior Analytics* 79b10), Adam-Tannery (e.g. AT VII:141) and Akademie (e.g. AA 9:72) except for the *Critique of Pure Reason* cited in the A/B edition pagination (e.g. A822/B850). Other historical works are cited in their own divisions (e.g. bk. 2 q. 1). References to translations are provided in the course of the text.

⁴For a recent sample, see Moser (2002, 4, 29), Huemer (2002, 435), Feldman (2003, 16), Pritchard and Neta (2008, 5–6), Sosa et al. (2009, 189), Dancy et al. (2010, 395), Hetherington (2011, 119), Ichikawa and Steup (2014), Goldman and McGrath (2015, 51–2). Dancy (1984, 22), Zagzebski (1999, 100n14), Williams (2001, 16, 26n), Fumerton (2006, 14) and Pritchard (2013, 23) echo the Legend but without straightforward endorsement. Notable exceptions are Nagel (2014, ch. 4) who only calls it the “leading theor[y] of [Gettier’s] day” and Audi (2010) who avoids calling it “traditional” entirely. To be fair, many authors remain vague about what they mean by calling the Justified True Belief analysis “traditional”. But they presumably mean something stronger than “held by a few philosophers in the 1950s” or “widely assumed to be traditional”.

⁵That is also assumed by subsequent Gettier-style cases. For instance, in Ginet-Goldman’s (1976, 772–3) fake barn case, it is assumed that whatever justifies the subject’s belief that there is barn would have done so even if they were looking at a fake.

⁶Plato, *Theaetetus* 202d, *Meno* 98a; Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* A822/B850; Russell (1948, 171).