

In 1960, Gilbert Ryle still ascribes the infallible mental state view to the tradition in his “Epistemology” entry for Urmson’s *Concise Encyclopedia*.⁹ Seven years later, in the “Knowledge” entry for Edwards’s *Encyclopaedia*, Anthony Quinton (1967) writes that the Justified True Belief analysis was the traditional one and that it has been refuted by Gettier. What happened? Woozley (1949, 181-184), Malcolm (1952, 179–80) and Ayer (1956, 21) all took the infallible mental state view to have sceptical consequences. That was deemed unacceptable and prompted Malcolm, Ayer and Chisholm to defend the idea that fallible justification and truth were sufficient for knowledge. Gettier (1963, 121n) was perhaps the first to note that a formally similar account appeared in Plato.¹⁰ Soon some called the Justified True Belief analysis “traditional” and by 1967 the Legend coalesced.

If that is right the New Story is not so new. A fairly close view was widespread at the time the Justified True Belief analysis was introduced. But it was lost on the following generation of epistemologists.¹¹

2 Classical Infallibilism

Epistemological views varied so much across history that one may doubt whether there is such a thing as “the traditional conception of knowledge”. I think there is, at least in the Western tradition. It goes as follows:

Classical Infallibilism One knows p iff one has a belief that p bears a *discernible mark of truth*, where:

A property of a belief is a *mark of truth* iff necessarily, only true beliefs have it,

A property of a belief is *discernible* iff necessarily, a sufficiently attentive subject believes that a belief of hers has it if and only if it has.

Section 5 I introduce other forms of Infallibilism. In this section “Infallibilism” refers to Classical Infallibilism only.¹²

⁹Ryle (1960). He only discusses Locke and modern philosophers. Entries were not signed in the first edition but Ryle is named in later ones (Rée and Urmson, 2004).

¹⁰Some may also have remembered that Russell (1948, 140) called a formally similar analysis “traditional”.

¹¹The shift creates a tension that is particularly visible in Chisholm’s *Theory of Knowledge*. The first edition merely calls the analysis “common” (1966, 1) but the second calls it “traditional” (1977, 102). Chisholm says that Gettier only refutes view that assume that there are justified (“evident”) false beliefs (1977, 103). He also thinks that the assumption was rejected at least up until the seventeenth century (1977, 15n). Yet he claims that Gettier refuted the “traditional” analysis (1977, 103).

¹²The present account of Classical Infallibilism owes much to Van Cleve (1979), Frede (1987, 1999) and Barnes (1990, 136–7). That is not to say that any of them would endorse it. Note that like DeRose (1992b) I think Van Cleve’s account is right on Descartes’s *cognitio* but does not properly take into account his distinction between *cognitio* and *scientia*. See sec. 4.2.