

Read the "Box 4" (this is from Jennifer Nagel, Knowledge). It describes the work of the Indian philosopher Dharmottara from 770 CE.

#### Box 4 Ancient Gettier cases

In Western philosophy, 1963 is taken as the date of the discovery of cases illustrating the gap between justified true belief and knowledge. But in a text that dates to around the year 770 CE, the Indian philosopher Dharmottara offers the following cases:

- A fire has just been lit to roast some meat. The fire hasn't started sending up any smoke, but the smell of the meat has attracted a cloud of insects. From a distance, an observer sees the dark swarm above the horizon and mistakes it for smoke. "There's a fire burning at that spot," the distant observer says.
- Does the observer know that there is a fire burning in the distance?

A desert traveller is searching for water. He sees, in the valley ahead, a shimmering blue expanse. Unfortunately, it's a mirage. But fortunately, when he reaches the spot where there appeared to be water, there actually is water, hidden under a rock.

- Did the traveller know, as he stood on the hilltop hallucinating, that there was water ahead?

These cases involve a belief that is true and based on what could seem to be good evidence, and just like Gettier, Dharmottara uses these cases as counter-examples to rival theories of knowledge. Many cases like these were actively debated by Indo-Tibetan epistemologists following Dharmottara. Some of the proposals that emerged in Western philosophy since 1963 to handle these cases appeared in the Indo-Tibetan tradition centuries earlier. For example, a detailed causal theory of knowledge was advanced by Gaṅgeśa in the 14th century.

Knowledge

The relationship between knowing and believing is in many ways similar to the relationship between the circle and the at least roughly circular: knowing is the ideal, and believing is some kind of approximation to that ideal. According to the knowledge-first programme in epistemology, it is a bad idea to try to analyse knowledge in terms of belief plus further factors, just as it would be a bad idea to try to analyse the concept of a circle in terms of roundness plus further factors. According to Williamson, rather than trying to explain knowledge as a compound state formed by adding various factors to belief, we should explain believing in terms of knowing: 'Believing *p* is, roughly, treating *p* as if one knew *p*.' In his view, knowing is a state of mind that essentially involves being right; believing is a state of mind that ideally aims at being right, while perhaps falling short of that target.

Because so much recent epistemology has been devoted to the task of analysing knowledge in terms of true belief plus further factors, it's somewhat revolutionary to declare knowledge to be more basic than belief. If analysing knowledge were the only thing that an epistemologist could do, then declaring knowledge to be basic (or resistant to analysis) would be a way of stopping epistemology in its tracks. However, even if knowledge is not a compound of belief and other factors, there are many things to be learned about it: for example, we can study how it relates to justification, how it is generated and transmitted through processes like perception and testimony, and how it appears when viewed from different perspectives. These issues continue to matter for both knowledge-first and belief-first approaches in epistemology. One of the questions that is agreed to be very important to both sides (and even to the debate between them) concerns the difference made by shifting from a first-person to a third-person perspective. The next chapter investigates the significance of this shift.

The analysis of knowledge