

Introduction: The theory of knowledge has persisted to be an issue that philosophers are bound to discuss at some point in their career, if in fact, not their entire career. Here I address two small parts of this problem as a whole, the Gettier Problem and Free Will and Determinism.

## Part 1

### How My Chosen Theory of Knowledge Resolves the Gettier Problem

I am inclined to choose Defeasibility Theory as my theory of knowledge that resolves the Gettier problem. Gettier showed that having only “justified, true, belief” does not always lead directly to knowledge. So, by that nature of incompleteness there must be another category that needs to be satisfied in order to have knowledge; in the Defeasibility Theory that fourth condition is “undefeated.”

Adding “undefeated” to “justified true belief” as the definition for knowledge is satisfactory for me. Lehrer and Paxton try to use the “Demented Mrs. Grabit” example to disprove this fourth condition, but they do not succeed. Since Mrs. Grabit is a demented liar, she did not believe that it was her “fake” son John in the library, she just made that claim that it was not Tom Grabit in the library, since she did not have knowledge, then how is it that she disproved someone else’s knowledge? The observer’s knowledge is not actually defeated. Since Mrs. Grabit’s statement was blatantly false, it simply cannot be used. When does a falsity overrule a truth? Even assuming that Mrs. Grabit’s statement is valid, and should be applied; all she does is defeat the statement that the observer made. And, if defeated, the observer cannot claim that “knowledge” to be knowledge, the observer must submit. The observer always has the choice to challenge Mrs. Grabit and should do so as such if he thinks that he is correct. In no situation should someone

with what they suppose as knowledge submit to someone else's interpretation without proof and support for their statement.

The concept of "defeated justified true belief" counting as knowledge is just outlandish. If you have a belief that is justified and true, just by the meaning of the words and the inherent meaning of "knowledge" there cannot be a defeated aspect. If the object or claim of knowledge is reasonably defeated (not by some quack who does not have control over their faculties) then it is just not knowledge. I would not support, however, the inclusion of a word such as "reasonably" into the definition of knowledge because that would just confuse the issue and make it more ambiguous.

Also, the Defeasibility Theory, of the several valid theories of knowledge posed in the textbook that satisfies the Gettier problem as directed. To solve the Gettier problem there was supposed to be a fourth condition added, the other theories considered reasonable do not add a fourth condition as cleanly and simply as this theory does. The other theories require elaboration within the definition itself, or substitutes/removes one of the traditional three conditions of knowledge.

## Part 2

### The Bearing of My Theory of Knowledge on the Problem of Free Will and Determinism

The problem of free will and determinism can be established in itself as knowledge by the defeasibility theory. The idea that there is a problem of free will and determinism is confirmed in the defeasibility theory. As of yet, no one has established a

concrete theory for either free will or determinism (or anything in between,) so since the existence of this conflict is yet undefeated, and justified, and apparently a true belief it must be knowledge in itself. Now that we have established that we have knowledge of a problem we are now able to attempt to solve it. Basically there are three dominating views in the attempt to rectify this problem, compatibilism, determinism and libertarianism.

In the hierarchical compatibilism, as defended and posed by Frankfurt, there is an underlying theory that people cannot be held responsible for their actions if they cannot do, or have done, otherwise. This stems from the second-order volitions that, when acted upon, cause free actions. I think it is not unreasonable to seriously question the validity of this argument, in light of Frankfurt's defense of drug addicts, or any for that matter. I reach a philosophical impasse with the compatibilists at this point, they allow for addicts actions to be determined by the force of the drug, whereas I hold each person responsible for their actions in situations like addiction. It is accepted that libertarians always oppose compatibilists so I choose the libertarianism. My theory of knowledge can support this distinction.

Defeasibility theory requires the addition of "undefeated" to the commonly accepted definition of knowledge. I think that again adding a category to compatibilism is necessary, in the same nature that adding to the common definition of knowledge was to make it stable. Frankfurt implies that the defining characteristic of a person is free will. If that is the case then the defining characteristic of a person cannot be limited to use in only part of a person's life and decision. In order to accept that free will is the defining characteristic of the person, it must be able to and employed constantly.

I feel that Frankfurt's theory of hierarchical compatibilism is not complete and in compliance with the defeasibility theory, because it can be defeated. The example of addicts, wonton, unwilling or willing, defeats Frankfurt's ability to defend free will. I propose to add a section to Frankfurt's work, in order to allow for his theory to remain "undefeated." I would add a section called, "false second order desires," (essentially, a second order desire in people who continue to be addicted.) By including this into the framework of compatibilism as Frankfurt sees it will allow for people to remain "addicted." I only add this to Frankfurt's theory because I think that it is necessary for his theory to be sound and remain "undefeated" so that others may justifiably debate it and continue to develop his thought.

As for determinism, I am at odds on how to try to include this theory with defeasibility theory. I am so opposed to the idea that we have no free will that it is difficult for me to see this as an undefeated idea. So, I will try to defeat it, and by defeasibility theory then this idea of determinism will not be valid. The argument of hard determinism goes as follows; 1 every event has a cause, 2 if every event has a cause there are no free actions, 3 therefore there are no free actions. The theory of indeterminism is much more in line with current scientific knowledge, it allows for randomness in the field of physics. Certain lead isotopes are known to be radioactive, unstable and move in a purely random path. Randomness is not determined, and thus determinism is defeated.

With Determinism defeated, all that is left is to confirm that libertarianism is "undefeated." If events or agents cause free actions then this could allow for both events that seem determined and those, which are obviously not. I do not see how libertarianism has yet been defeated, and thus is in compliance with Defeasibility Theory.

Reference:

Schick, Theodore, *Doing Philosophy*. November 1999