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THE FOURTH CONDITION

1. INTRODUCTION

Ed Gettier showed that justified true belief is not sufficient for knowledge.¹ Not all epistemologists these days will agree that justified true belief is necessary for knowledge but I hope that most will agree with the following more modest proposal: at least one minimally sufficient condition for knowledge has justified true belief as a necessary part. At any rate, I will assume that this is so in what follows. The problem of the fourth condition (also widely and appropriately known as the Gettier problem) can then be stated as follows: What must be added to justified true belief to make a minimally sufficient condition for knowledge? Of course, we want a minimally sufficient condition that is non-trivial, informative.

Before going on I should explain another basic assumption I am making. I assume that the content of attributions of knowledge, made in sentences of the form 'S knows that p', is not relative to context in a certain radical way that some philosophers have proposed that it is. Some² have suggested that the meaning of 'know' is such that to say that S knows a certain fact is to say that S is in a position to distinguish that fact from certain, but not necessarily all, contrary alternatives. Which alternatives are the relevant ones for a given attribution of knowledge is determined by the context of the attribution, including the intentions of the maker of the attribution. On this view, when we say that S knows that p we are not implying that S knows (or is justified in claiming to know) that the truth is p rather than any contrary alternative but only that S knows that it is p rather than one of some select set of relevant alternatives: q or r or ... etc. We are saying that S knows (and has justification for claiming to know) that if the truth lies among these alternatives then the truth is p. One problem with this view is that it requires rejection of the principle that knowledge is closed under known implication, the principle that if S knows that (p & [p entails q]) then it follows that S knows that q. For if a certain proposition r is not among the relevant alternatives tacitly understood in a given assertion that S knows that p then, even though it may be obvious to S that p entails not-r, on this account it will not follow that S knows that not-r. But surely that is absurd. Some philosophers³ have, however, declared themselves willing to embrace this consequence. It seems clear nevertheless that its having this consequence is at least an undesirable feature of the account,
one that counts against it. An account of the concept of knowledge without that consequence would be preferable, other things being equal. Another problem with the account comes out in some of the examples that give rise to the problem of the fourth condition. Consider, for instance, the well-known example of perceiving a genuine barn among fakes, which is described below (p. 106). Given the facts of the example, one could not speak the truth in saying of the perceiver that s/he knows that it is a barn s/he is looking at, no matter what one's intentions in or the context of one's so saying. This is so even though, given the facts, the perceiver is justified in believing that if the truth lies among a certain selection of alternatives -- its being a barn or a tree or a tractor or ...etc -- then it is a barn. Perhaps this difficulty could be got round by finding some principled way of placing a restriction on the selection of relevant alternatives: certain sorts of selections cannot be taken to be the relevant ones no matter what the context. I do not know what such a restriction might be (but I confess that I have not devoted much effort to the problem).

Although what I have said about this proposal is far from an adequate discussion of it, of either its motivation or its problems, it will at least give an idea of why I find it worthwhile to continue trying to give an account of the concept of knowledge on the assumption that attributions of knowledge are not relative to context in that radical way.4

2. COUNTEREXAMPLES TO JUSTIFIED TRUE BELIEF AS SUFFICIENT FOR KNOWLEDGE

_Deduction from a false premise_ (Gettier): I have a strongly justified but false belief that Smith plagiarized his term paper for my introductory philosophy course. Jones actually did plagiarize his paper for my introductory philosophy course but so far I have no reason to suspect this. If I deduce from my false belief about Smith that someone in my introductory philosophy course has plagiarized his term paper, then my belief in this deduced proposition is true and justified but not knowledge.

_Real barn amid fakes_: I stand on the mainland looking over the water at an island. On the island are several structures that look from where I stand as would old barns. I believe of the structure I happen to be looking at now that it is a barn. Given its appearance and the fact that I have no reason to think otherwise, I am in the circumstances justified in this belief. The belief happens to be true but it also happens to be the case that all of the other barn-looking structures visible on the island from where I stand are not real barns but fakes, built like stage scenery so as to look like barns from the viewpoint where I happen to be. In this circumstance, my justified true belief that I am looking at a (real) barn is not knowledge.

_Truth-teller among many liars_ (adapted from Harman5): A political leader is assassinated. A dozen of his associates were the only witnesses (aside
from the assassin who quickly fled the scene). Fearing a coup, they hastily confer and decide to give out the story that an assassination attempt has failed to kill the leader but killed a secret service man instead. When they meet the eager press and are questioned individually by different reporters, all of them tell that story, except one who changes her mind and tells the truth. The reporter who hears her is justified in believing her true story (at least before the reporter hears what the others are saying), but in the circumstance that so many other witnesses are contradicting it the reporter does not know that the story is true.

Deceptively mailed letter (adapted from Harman⁶): Mary believes that Marvin is in Rome on the basis of the fact that Marvin's secretary has just told her that he is. Marvin is in Rome but, wishing to deceive Mary as to his whereabouts, he has given a friend a letter from him to Mary to mail in San Francisco and that letter is now in an unopened batch of mail recently deposited in Mary's mailbox. Given the existence of this evidence against Marvin's being in Rome, although Mary justifiably believes that he is there on the basis of his secretary's statement, she does not know it.

Unknown twin (adapted from Goldman⁷): I am acquainted with a woman named Judy. I pass Judy on the street and justifiably believe that I see Judy. Unknown to me, Judy has an identical twin sister, Trudy, whom I would have thought was Judy had it been Trudy whom I passed. Since I have no reason to think that there exists someone who looks so much like Judy, I am justified in believing that I see Judy; but, given that in the circumstances I could not have told Judy from Trudy I do not know that I see Judy.

Sportscaster’s lucky guess: I hear the radio sportscaster say that Cornell defeated Brown in their basketball game last night. My belief in this proposition on the basis of this testimony is justified and would be knowledge but for one circumstance: owing to a coffee spill the copy from which the sportscaster was reading was illegible on the line which said who won that game and the sportscaster just took a guess in saying what he did, hoping to be lucky, as he was.

Mutually cancelling errors: In this example too I hear the sportscaster say that Cornell defeated Brown in their basketball game last night. Here, however, the sportscaster simply misreads what is plainly visible on the sheet before him, getting the names of Cornell and Brown reversed. But the order of the names on the sheet was wrong, the result of mistyping earlier by a different person who took a report over the phone. The sportscaster's error cancels the typist's error with the result that what the sportscaster says is true. My believing it on the basis of his saying it is justified but, in the circumstances, not knowledge.

Hallucinating reality: I glance out the window and seem to see snow falling thick and fast. Though I have no reason whatsoever to suspect it, I am not actually seeing snow falling but rather having a visual hallucination of snow falling (someone put in my food a drug that tends to induce such
hallucinations). My justified belief, derived from my visual experience, that it is snowing outside is, obviously, not knowledge. But, as it happens, it is true.

Veridical perception amid hallucination: Again I have unknowingly eaten food laced with an hallucinogenic drug, this time one that induces intermittent visual hallucinations of snow falling. I look out the window and alternately hallucinate falling snow and actually see falling snow, but without being able to tell the difference. While I am actually seeing snow falling, my justified true belief that I see snow falling is, in these circumstance, not knowledge.

In each of these examples it is because of a particular special circumstance that my justified true belief fails to be knowledge. In each case the power of the special circumstance to render false my justified knowledge claim depends on (1) the proposition claimed to be known and (2) the nature of the justification I have for this claim. In the case of the just guessing sportscaster, for example, the fact that he was just guessing when he said Cornell defeated Brown does not render false my claims to know other things he said which have the similar justification that I have heard him say them on a newscast. Nor would my claim to know that Cornell defeated Brown be rendered false by that circumstance if I also had another sort of justification for the claim, such as having heard about the outcome from a friend who attended the game. Similar observations could be made about any of the other examples. In all such examples, a particular fact defeats the subject’s claim to know a particular truth just insofar as that claim is based on a particular justification: that special circumstance means that that justification does not give the subject knowledge of that truth. The task in giving the fourth condition is to specify in general terms the relation that any such special circumstance has to a particular justification for a claim to know a particular truth in virtue of which that circumstance defeats that justification for a claim to know that truth.

In what follows I consider what I take to be the two plausible approaches to this task, the reliabilist approach and the justificationist approach, and I argue in favor of the latter.

3. THE RELIABILIST APPROACH

The basic idea in this approach is that the special circumstance defeats the knowledge claim because it means that the sort of justification S has for her belief is in that sort of situation not a sufficiently reliable way of acquiring that sort of belief. A justified true belief fails to be knowledge when there is some circumstance that makes it too much of a lucky accident that the sort of justification S has is for a true belief rather than a false belief of the same sort. More precisely: a fact r defeats S’s justification for claiming to know that p ifff the fact that r means that at some point before S came to be-
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lieve that the probability that S would end up with the same sort of justification for a similar but false belief, instead of for the true belief S in fact acquired, was too high.

There are serious difficulties for this approach. For one thing, the criterion it offers for what makes a defeating condition seems to be too weak. An example that seems to show this can be obtained by rigging the example of my looking at the genuine barn amid fakes so that it is unlikely that I would have gained a view of any of the structures other than the genuine barn. Suppose that from any viewpoint on the mainland all of the island's fake barns happen to be obscured by trees and that circumstances make it very improbable that I should have got to a viewpoint that is not on the mainland. Here my justified true belief is no more knowledge than it was in the original example, but the reliabilist definition of what makes for a defeating condition seems not to be satisfied, for it was never at all probable that I would end up now with a similarly justified but false belief that I am looking at a barn.

Possibly the reliabilist approach could handle this sort of example by modifying the account to say that the probability of a similarly justified similar but false belief either was too high in S's actual circumstances or would have been too high in circumstances that are relevantly similar. This would oblige the reliabilist approach to give an account of what makes circumstances count as relevantly similar. It is not clear to me how such an account should go, but perhaps a plausible one could be given.

But nothing of this sort would help in dealing with another difficulty the approach faces, one that goes to the basic idea. Compare the example of the just-guessing sportscaster with the following example. I turn on the radio to hear the news, choosing at random one of the two local stations. I hear the sportscaster say that Cornell defeated Brown in their basketball game last night. This statement is true and there is nothing untoward about how the sportscaster came to make it. So I now know that Cornell defeated Brown in basketball last night. Unknown to me, at about the same time on the other local station a just guessing sportscaster says that Brown defeated Cornell in their basketball game last night. At the point when I was selecting the station the probability that I would select the other station and end up with the same sort of justification for a similar but false belief is the same as in the example where I hear the just guessing but lucky sportscaster, about one-half. So the reliabilist account must put both of these cases on the same side of the divide between knowledge and not knowledge, but they are in fact on different sides. In the case just described I know the truth that the sportscaster states but in the case where I hear the just guessing but lucky sportscaster I do not.
4. THE JUSTIFICATIONIST APPROACH

Let us try a different approach. Instead of thinking in terms of what the defeating fact does to the probability that S might end up with a similar justification for a similar but false belief, let us think in terms of the damage it would do to S's justification for p if S's epistemic position were changed in a minimal way so as to give S knowledge of the defeating fact. (S's epistemic position comprises all those facts accessible to S that give S whatever justifications for beliefs S has. If S's epistemic position gives S justification for p then a minimal change so as to give S knowledge of r will not gratuitously give S any new independent justification for p.)

In taking this approach we may be tempted at first to offer suggestions that turn out to be too simple. It is obvious in all of our examples that one thing S's knowing the defeating fact r would do is leave S unjustified in believing (confidently) that p. Can we simply say that a fact r defeats S's justification for claiming to know that p iff, if S's epistemic position were changed in a minimal way so as to give S knowledge of r, then S would not be justified in believing p? No, this is too strong. It makes defectors of facts that are not defectors.

For instance, it makes a defeater of any fact r such that S knows that she does not know that r, when p is the proposition that S does not know that r. Then S's knowing r would, of course, make S unjustified in believing p (=that S does not know that r), for S would then know that not-p (=that S does know that r); but clearly this does not mean that S fails in the actual case to know that she does not know that r. Such examples can be dealt with fairly easily by amending the proposed definition as follows: a fact r defeats S's justification for claiming to know that p iff, if S's epistemic position were changed in a minimal way so as to give S knowledge that r, then it would still be true that p but S would not be justified in believing that p.

But this is still too strong. It would, for example, dictate that I do not know that Cornell defeated Brown by hearing an accurate report on a radio newscast to this effect if there is, unknown to me, some other (equally reputable) newscast that gives a contrary false report. But clearly I do know that fact in such a case.

I once thought that we could deal with this difficulty by a rather simple change in the analysis: say that the fact r is a defeater iff, if S were to know r, then S would be very far (or too far) from being justified in believing p. This suggestion was based on the following thought. Given any two cases where there is a fact r such that S's knowledge of it would leave S unjustified in believing p, if S still knows that p in one of the cases but not in the other then this must be because S's knowledge of r would have made S further from being justified in believing p in the latter case than in the former. This thought is nicely borne out by some examples. For instance, it does seem that the reason why I know in the case of the
conflicting sportscasts but not in the case of the one truth teller among many liars is that my knowing the special circumstance would damage my justification for believing the proposition in question much more in the latter case than it would in the former.

But this thought is not borne out by some other examples. Compare the case of the conflicting sportscasts (where I do know the truth spoken by the sportscaster I hear) with the case of the just guessing sportscaster, where I do not know the truth I hear spoken by the sportscaster. In both cases, if I were to know of the special circumstance (in the first, that there was the conflicting sportcast, in the second, that the sportscaster was just guessing) then neither of the two contradictory propositions, 'Cornell defeated Brown' and 'Cornell did not defeat Brown', would be more worthy of my belief than the other. So there is no clear sense in which it could be true to say that in the case of the just guessing sportscaster I would be further from being justified in believing that Cornell defeated Brown if I were to learn of that case's special circumstance than I would be in the case of the conflicting sportscasts if I were to learn of the special circumstance there.12

What we need to notice about these cases is that the ways in which my adding knowledge of the special circumstance would result in my having a much weaker justification for believing the truth in question, the ways in which the special circumstance is potentially damaging to my justification, are importantly different. In the case of the conflicting sportscasts, my knowing of the other sportscast would give me weighty evidence for the contradictory of the truth in question, evidence that conflicts with and weighs against the evidence I actually have for that truth. If I know that some other sportscaster said that Brown defeated Cornell last night, then the first sportscaster's report is still in itself weighty evidence for me that Cornell defeated Brown; but now I have to set against that evidence equally weighty evidence on the other side, for the falsity of that proposition. In the case of the just-guessing sportscaster, on the other hand, my knowing that the sportscaster was just guessing would not give me anything that is in itself evidence for the falsity of the proposition I think I know but would, rather, give me reason to discount completely, to regard as worthless, the evidence I have for that proposition, since it consists just in that sportscaster's report. If I know that the sportscaster was just guessing when he said, "Cornell defeated Brown last night", then his so saying is no longer any evidence at all for me that Cornell did defeat Brown last night. But neither is it evidence at all for the contradictory. I would then have, not conflicting evidence, but no evidence either way on the truth-value of that proposition. So it is not, as with the first kind of case, that knowledge of the special circumstance would give me evidence to put on the other side of the scale, but rather that it would undermine the status of what I already have as evidence for the proposition in question.
This distinction is the key to reconciling my intuition as to what the explanation is for why I know in the case of the conflicting sportscasts but not in the case of the one truth-teller among many liars with the fact that no similar explanation is available for why I know in the case of the conflicting sportscasts but not in the case of the just guessing sportscaster. Until I noticed this fact about pairs of cases of this latter sort, I was tempted to extract from my intuition about pairs of the former sort the general principle that, if we have two cases of potentially damaging circumstances where the circumstance in one case defeats a knowledge claim but in the other it does not, this is because the circumstance would damage the justification much more in the first case than it would in the second. What I see now is that this principle holds up only so long as it is applied to appropriately comparable cases, ones where the kind of damage is the same. It is liable to break down in a pair of cases where the kind of damage differs from one to the other in the way illustrated by the case of the conflicting sportscasts and the case of the just guessing sportscaster.

These observations suggest that the strategy for success in defining what makes a defeating condition is the following. First divide all potentially damaging circumstances into two kinds: those that damage through providing significant evidence for the contradictory (through being the sort of thing S's knowledge of which would give S good reason to believe the contradictory if it were the only relevant thing she knew) and those that damage, not through providing such evidence for the contradictory, but only through undermining the status of what S already has as justification for the proposition. Then replace the principle, "It defeats if it damages too much", with the disjunction of two principles each restricted to one of the kinds of damage distinguished. In accordance with this strategy I propose the following definition of a defeating condition:

Given that p and that S has justification for claiming to know that p, a fact r defeats S's justification for p iff were the facts minimally different so as to give S knowledge that r, then it would still be the case that p but S's knowledge that r either (1) would give S too weighty evidence for not-p as compared with S's actual justification for p or, (2) though not giving S significant evidence for not-p, would give S too strong reason to discount S's actual justification for p.
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5. APPLICATION OF THIS CRITERION

In order to illustrate and confirm this criterion, let us look at how it applies to our other examples of defeating conditions. First, the examples that satisfy our criterion in disjunct (1).

Real barn amid fakes: Here the defeater is the fact that most of the barn-looking structures on the island that are visible from where I stand are not barns but stage flats painted and set up to look just like barns from where I stand. This satisfies our criterion in disjunct (1). My coming to know that fact would give me too heavy weighty evidence that the barn-looking structure I happen to be looking at is not a barn. Contrast this with a similar case where there is an unknown circumstance that would give S some evidence that not-p (enough to make it reasonable to doubt that p) but not weighty enough evidence to make this circumstance defeat S's knowledge claim. Suppose that S is in a fruit and vegetable market and is looking at a large display of what appear to be fine, ripe pears. S happens to be looking at a particular pear and believes, with ample justification, that what she has her eye on is a pear. Unknown to S about two percent of the objects in the display that look like pears are actually very well done wax imitations. Despite the fact that knowledge of this circumstance would give S reason to doubt, or be less than confident, that the object she has her eye on is a pear, I am intuitively disinclined to say that this circumstance defeats S's claim to know; and I believe that this is because S's knowing of it would not give her weighty enough evidence that that object is not a pear. In the real-amid-fake-barns example, the indiscriminable fakes were in the majority; here they are a tiny minority. The line between these points that separates the cases where the evidence would be too weighty from those where it would not cannot be a sharp one of course. I am inclined to say that if at least half the relevant objects are fakes then we have a circumstance that would give too weighty evidence for the contradictory, i.e., we have a defeating condition. If just two barns are visible and one is fake (the one other than the one I happen to be looking at) then we have a circumstance that defeats my claim to know that the object I am looking at is a barn.

But wait a minute. Does this square with what I said about the example of the two conflicting sportscasts? There I said that the inaccurate report broadcast by the other sportscaster was not a defeater for my claim to know, on the basis of the accurate sportscast, that Cornell defeated Brown. But would not knowledge of it give me as strong evidence for the contradictory of what I think I know as would knowledge that one of the two visible barns is a fake, in the example of the preceding paragraph? The answer is no, despite what might appear to be the case at first glance. The defeater in the barns example is the fact that (A) at least one of the two barn-looking objects visible from where I stand is a fake. The unsuccessful candidate for defeater in the conflicting sportscasts case is the fact that (B) at least one of the two sportscaster's reports on the Cornell-Brown
game is in error. The truth is that the probability relative to (A) that the barn-looking thing I am looking at is a fake is significantly greater than the probability relative to (B) that the sportscast I heard was in error on the Cornell–Brown game. This is because, adding the information that at least one of the two sportscasters is incorrect on who won that game (or, in a slightly altered example, on what the score was) does not make it significantly more likely that both are incorrect than it was prior to this information; whereas, adding the information that at least one of the two barn-looking objects visible from here is a fake does make it significantly more likely that both are fakes than it was prior to this information. (This is, of course, owing to general background facts in each case, my knowledge of which is relevant to my being justified in my false claim to know and would be retained under minimal changes that would give me knowledge of the potentially damaging circumstance.)

Truth-teller among liars: Here the defeater is that all the other eyewitnesses, of which there are many, agree in telling a story contrary to the one told by the witness that the reporter spoke to first. This gives too weighty evidence that the leader was not assassinated. Adding just that information to what the reporter knows would make it a great deal more likely that this one witness spoke falsely. Again this contrasts with the example of the conflicting sportscasts.

Deceptively mailed letter: Here the fact that a letter written by Marvin to Mary has been mailed in San Francisco would be too weighty evidence, as against the secretary's statement, that Marvin is not in Rome. That is what I am inclined to say, though it does strike me as a close call. If Mary's evidence for Marvin's being in Rome were significantly stronger -- were, for example, that she has just dialed a Rome telephone number and spoken to Marvin (to someone who sounded just like and represented himself as being Marvin) -- then the existence of the letter would not defeat her thereby justified claim to know that Marvin is in Rome. For her coming to know of the letter would not give her evidence for the contradictory that is too weighty as compared with that evidence for the truth.\textsuperscript{13}

Mutually cancelling errors: Here the second error, the sportscaster's misreading, provides a defeater that satisfies disjunct (1) of our criterion. Thus the defeater is the fact that on the sportscaster's sheet was "Brown defeated Cornell" but the sportscaster misread it as "Cornell defeated Brown". If my position were to change minimally so as to allow me to know just that fact, then I would have too weighty evidence for the proposition that Cornell did not defeat Brown. (Of course, this evidence would at the same time render worthless the sportscaster's statement as evidence that Cornell did defeat Brown.)

Veridical perception amid hallucination: Here the defeater of my claim to know that I see snow falling is the fact that at least some intermittent stretches of its seeming to me that I see snow falling are hallucinatory. Knowledge of this fact would give me too weighty reason to think that I do
not see snow falling, comparable to what would be given me in a fake barns sort of case by the knowledge that at least some of the barn looking objects visible from here are fakes. For a contrasting case where a potentially damaging circumstance fails to be a defeater because it would not give weighty enough evidence for the proposition that I do not see snow falling (despite how it seems to me), suppose that the potentially damaging circumstance is that I have ingested a drug that is known to cause intermittent snow hallucinations in two per cent of the people who take it.

Now let's look at examples that satisfy disjunct (2) of our criterion. **Deduction from a false premise:** Here the defeater is the fact that Smith did not plagiarize his term paper. If I were to come to know this fact then this, without giving me significant evidence that no one in my class plagiarized their term paper, would give me conclusive reason to discount completely the evidence I had that someone did so, since that was evidence only that Smith did so.

**The unknown twin:** Here the defeater is the fact that Judy has an identical twin who would be visually indistinguishable from Judy in the circumstances in which I thought I saw Judy. While this would not provide significant evidence that the person I saw was not Judy, it would completely undermine the worth of the evidence I have that the person I saw was Judy, which is only that the person looked just like Judy.

**Hallucinating reality:** Here the defeater of my claim to know that snow is falling is the fact that I am having a visual hallucination of snow falling rather than seeing snow falling. While not in itself much reason to think that it is not snowing, it would, if I knew of it, completely undermine my justification for believing that it is snowing, crucial to which is its seeming to me that I see snow falling.

6. CONCLUSION

Our disjunctive criterion for a defeating condition appears to explain satisfactorily my intuitions concerning a considerable variety of cases. So I venture the conclusion that we have found an adequate and (modestly) informative way to specify the fourth condition for knowledge. We may say that S knows that p if: S has a justified true belief that p, and there is no truth r such that were the facts minimally different so as to give S knowledge that r then it would still be the case that p but S's knowledge that r either (1) would give S too weighty evidence for not-p as compared with S's actual justification for p or, (2) though not giving S significant evidence for not-p, would give S too strong reason to discount S's actual justification for p.

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NOTES

1 Gettier [1963].
2 For instance, Dretske [1971], Dretske [1972] and Goldman [1976].
3 For instance Dretske [1971], and Nozick [1981], Ch. 3.
4 Knowledge attributions may be relative to context in some other ways, for example, in the level of justification the knower is required to have; but here too it seems to me that, other things being equal, a non-relativistic account is preferable, perhaps one in terms of looser and stricter uses of 'know'.
5 Harman [1973], p. 144.
6 ibid. and Harman [1980], p 164.
7 Goldman [1976], p. 779.
8 At least, so my intuition tells me. What Harman says (Harman [1973]) about a case of a single truthful news report versus a single false one suggests that his intuition may disagree. My project is to work out a definition that accounts for my intuitions, a criterion of which I can plausibly say that it is what guides my judgment about cases. This is project enough for me but people who disagree with me in judgments about cases may, understandably, not take as much interest in it as I do.
9 For another example where I do not know but my chances were 50-50 of ending up with a similarly justified similar belief that is false, suppose that the number of genuine barns on the island visible from the mainland equals the number of fake ones.
10 This sort of example is due to Shope [1978].
11 See my [1975], Ch. 4, and my [1980].
12 These examples are the same ones I cited above to show that the reliabilist approach will not work. Before I noticed that this pair of examples upsets both that approach and this too simple version of the justificationist approach, I thought that the two approaches could yield equally adequate, equivalent criteria.
13 Harman appears to think that it matters whether or not the evidence of the letter is obtainable by Mary, so that, although the letter's awaiting Mary in her mailbox is a defeating condition, if it had been lost by the post office after being mailed, then there would be no defeating condition (see Harman [1980], p. 164). It seems to me, on the contrary, that if the fact that a letter from Marvin has recently been mailed from San Francisco would, if known by Mary, be as weighty evidence for her that Marvin is not in Rome as the fact that such a letter has been mailed and has arrived in her mailbox -- as it surely would be -- then the former fact is as good a candidate for a defeating condition as the latter.

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