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# The essence and value of knowledge

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**Abstract:**

. This paper aims to deeply explore the essence and value of knowledge, from the perspective of philosophy to its comprehensive and meticulous research and thinking. In the part of discussing the essence of knowledge, we first from the origin and development of knowledge, explore the formation process of knowledge. Knowledge does not exist in isolation but gradually accumulates and evolves through the interaction between human beings and the environment. We further analyze the structure and characteristics of knowledge and reveal the internal logic and laws of the knowledge system. In the discussion of the value of knowledge, we deeply study the Gaettier problem and further clarify the subtle relationship between knowledge, belief, and truth. In this paper, a large number of relevant literatures are reviewed and discussed. By combining and summarizing the previous research results, we can stand on the shoulders of giants and dig deeper into the connotation and value of knowledge.

**Keywords:** Knowledge; Essence; Value; Cognition; Limitation;Application.

## 1. Introduction

This thesis conducts philosophical research by exploring the nature of knowledge, its characteristics, and the relationship between the nature of knowledge and its value. Plato's JTB is an epistemological definition of knowledge as "Justified True Belief." Specifically, JTB holds that the proposition "S knows P" is true only if the following three conditions are met: P is true. S believes that P is true. S believes conclusively or reasonably that P is true. This view emphasizes that knowledge is not only a belief of a knowing subject but that the statement expressed by this belief must be true. Moreover, to ensure that the belief of the knowing agent is not only true because of luck and coincidence; the knowing agent must give reasons for believing the belief, i.e., justify it.

Since its inception, the JTB principle has long been the dominant philosophical view of the definition of knowledge, upheld for more than a thousand years. However, it was not until 1963 that the philosopher Getier proposed a rebuttal to JTB in a paper, which became known as the "Getier problem". Through the study of Gaettier's problem, we can learn that the philosophical study of the nature of knowledge can help to understand that there is an inseparable relationship between the nature of knowledge and its value, and in many ways, has a profound impact on individuals and the whole society. First, the study of Gaettier's problem reveals the complexity of knowledge [1]. Knowledge is not just a simple statement or belief about a fact but also involves the source and process of proving the belief. Even if a belief is factually correct, it cannot be considered knowledge if its sources are unreliable, or the proof process is flawed

Secondly, studying Gaettier's problem has promoted the reconstruction and development of epistemology. These theories attempt to redefine the nature and conditions of knowledge to explain better and respond to the challenges posed by the Getttier problem [2]. These discussions and studies not only deepen our understanding of the nature of knowledge, but also promote the progress and development of the field of epistemology.

In addition, the study of Gaettier's problem also reminds us about the limitations and uncertainties of knowledge. In real life, it is often difficult for us to completely determine whether a belief constitutes knowledge because the process of proving a belief is often affected and limited by various factors. Therefore, we need to maintain a prudent and modest attitude towards knowledge, constantly reflecting on and revising our beliefs and cognition Plato's solution is that knowledge is formed in a special way that is distinct from belief, but knowledge is different from belief, and knowledge must be "tethered" to truth.

## 2. Literary Review

Plato is regarded as one of the greatest philosophers and thinkers in Western culture. His theory of knowledge as a vindicated belief in truth, known as JTB theory, was put forward thousands of years ago. JTB theory defines

knowledge in epistemology, in which he proposes that knowledge is certain true beliefs [2]. Gattier began his work with a stripped three-page paper (“ ls Justified True Belief Knowledge? “) to demonstrate that reasonable true beliefs (JTB) are not sufficient to constitute knowledge. And most philosophers, at the time and for some time, thereafter, agreed with JTB. The “post-Gettelian epistemological era” continues to this day. But not all of Dunn’s epistemology deals directly or indirectly with the details or even the spirit of Getttier’s treatise. Nor do all current epistemologies reflect on phenomena or concepts of knowledge. One version of the Gettell problem used to look like this: Two good friends go looking for jobs. One of them, John, wants a good job, and he has a good reason to believe that the other friend, Smith, has ten coins in his pocket, so John has a better reason to develop the belief that the person who gets the job will have ten coins in his pocket, But it turned out that Smith got the job, and unfortunately he also had ten coins in his pocket. So it’s true that the man who got the job had 10 coins in his pocket. Gattier asks, “Did Smith know he had ten coins in his pocket?” This leads to the epistemic luck at the heart of Gettier’s problem.

The essence of knowledge is the knowledge and understanding of objective things, which has a wide range of applications and manifestations in many fields. Taking physics as an example, we can explore the connotation of this argument in depth [3].

As the science of natural phenomena, the core of physics lies in the cognition and understanding of objective things. Physicists constantly reveal the mysteries of nature through observation, experimentation, and reasoning. For example, Newton’s law of gravitation, based on the observation and understanding of the motion of celestial bodies proposed the mechanical law of mutual attraction between objects. The formation of this knowledge depends not only on the support of experimental data but also on a deep understanding of the nature behind gravitational phenomena[4].

Einstein’s theory of relativity, for example, turned Newtonian mechanics on its head. By observing and understanding the invariance of the speed of light, Einstein proposed the relativity of time and space, thus revealing the profound connection between matter, space and time[5]. The essence of this knowledge, too, lies in the deep cognition and understanding of objective things. In physics, every important discovery and innovation is inseparable from the in-depth observation and understanding of objective things. The accumulation and development of such knowledge has not only promoted the progress of physics but also provided a powerful tool for human understanding of the world.

In addition,many outstanding philosophers of later generations supplemented and revised Plato’s framework of knowledge. Aristotle supplemented Plato’s framework of knowledge by deepening and concretizing the classification of knowledge and emphasizing the way knowledge is acquired.

Aristotle divided the structure of human knowledge into three aspects: productive, practical, and theoretical. This classification not only inherits Plato’s understanding of the hierarchy of knowledge but also further refines the content and application of knowledge. For example, productive knowledge includes skills, rhetoric, etc., which can be directly applied to practical production and creation. Practical knowledge covers ethics, politics, etc., and deals with the specific living conditions and moral practices of individuals and groups. Theoretical knowledge focuses more on natural phenomena, mathematical principles, and theological questions.

In addition, Aristotle emphasized the empirical and logical nature of knowledge acquisition. He advocated the acquisition and verification of knowledge through observation, experiment, and reasoning, rather than relying solely on abstract philosophical speculation [6]. This emphasis on the way of acquiring knowledge makes Aristotle’s theory of knowledge more practical and operable.

Therefore, it can be said that the essence of knowledge is the cognition and

understanding of objective things. It is characterized by objectivity, verifiability, organization, dynamics, and practicality. This kind of cognition and understanding is not only based on our perception and experience but also on our ability to reveal the essence and laws behind things through rational thinking and scientific methods. It is this deep understanding and cognition that constitutes the core and essence of knowledge, which also provides us with the foundation and motivation to understand and change the world. Plotinus supplements and revises Plato’s theory of knowledge.

Plotinus was also a major representative of neo-Platonism, further developing Plato’s ideas and forming his unique theory of knowledge. Plotinus believed that the human soul originally existed in the one, and after being separated from the one, it entered the human body and became the human soul. Therefore, the soul itself is a capacity to know the One in which it originally existed, that is, to know God. Plotinus emphasized that the soul’s knowledge of God is acquired through intuition, which is a way of knowing beyond sensibility and reason and can directly grasp the nature of God[7].

Plotinus’ additions and amendments are mainly reflected in the development of Platonic ideology. He further deified the ideas in Platonic ideology and formed the

tripartite entity theory of one, reason, and soul. Plotinus' additions and amendments not only enriched Plato's theory of knowledge but also provided new ideas for the later development of philosophical thought. His ideas have had an important influence on medieval philosophy and mysticism, as well as on the discussion of knowledge, consciousness, and existence in modern philosophy.

## 3. Analysis

In addition to the basic JBT problems, the analysis part of this paper also wants to make a comparative interpretation of the research direction of knowledge problems of later generations of thinkers and philosophers.

First of all, Zagzebowski is a master of the theory of knowledge of virtue, and her thoughts are mainly reflected in her book The Virtue of Mind. Virtue epistemology is a new research direction of contemporary epistemology[8]. It uses the basic concepts of ethics, especially Aristotle's concept of "virtue", to explain the products of normative cognition. Zagzzebowski emphasizes the importance of intellectual virtues in the acquisition of knowledge and argues that intellectual virtues point to deep, acquired, and enduring intellectual qualities that involve not only admirable intellectual motives but also reliable processes in the realization of truth.

Plato, on the other hand, is the originator of Western objective idealism, and his philosophical thoughts mainly revolve around "idealism" and "Republic". He believed that absolute concepts such as truth, beauty, and goodness are not acquired through the senses but exist in ideas beyond the perceptual world. The material world is only the shadow or reflection of the world of ideas, and the real reality lies in the world of ideas[9]. In The Republic, Plato envisioned a social structure ruled by a philosopher who was considered the wisest person, able to understand and lead society. From both ideas, Zagzebowski emphasized the role of intellectual virtue in acquiring knowledge, while Plato emphasized the existence of a world of ideas and the rule of philosophers.

Second, Dretske and Nozick's tracing theory proposed a new view on the source and formation of knowledge in epistemology. Their theory emphasized the dynamic process of knowledge formation, not just static true beliefs. Tracing theory asserts that knowledge is not just about whether beliefs are true or false but also about where beliefs come from and how they are formed. This dynamic view helps us understand why, in some cases, even if beliefs are true, they don't necessarily constitute knowledge. Specifically, tracing,theory,may have influenced the understanding of Gettell's problem in the following ways:

Dynamics of knowledge: Tracking theory emphasizes that knowledge is a dynamic process rather than a static result. This helps us to realize that just because a belief is true at one point in time does not mean it is knowledge all the time. The situation in Gattier's problem often involves dynamic changes in belief, and tracking theory provides a framework for explaining such changes.

The origin and reliability of beliefs: Tracking theory focuses on the origin and formation of beliefs and whether these processes are reliable[10]. This helps us to analyze the reliability of beliefs in Gaettier's problem. Sometimes, even if a belief is true, it cannot be considered knowledge because its source or formation process is unreliable.

Conditionality of knowledge: Tracing theory may also help us understand the conditionality of knowledge. That is, knowledge does not exist absolutely, but is limited by specific conditions and circumstances. In some cases of Gaettier's problem, it may be because of ignoring these conditions that the definition of knowledge is misunderstood.

The influence of Dretske and Nozick's tracing theory on Gaettier's problem is mainly reflected in the deepening and extension of the field of epistemology, which provides a new understanding of the source, formation process, and conditionality of knowledge, and helps us to recognize and understand the concept of knowledge more comprehensively[11]. However, the specific impact of these theories on the Gettytier problem still needs further research and exploration.

Third, the Gaettier problem challenges the traditional definition of knowledge, which is "known true beliefs". Goldman's causal connection theory attempts to solve this problem by emphasizing the causal link between belief and knowledge[8]. Knowledge, he argued, is not merely the truth of the belief but also requires an appropriate causal connection between the belief and the facts it describes. This causal link ensures the reliability of the belief, allowing it to be a true reflection of the external world.

Reliabilism is a broader theoretical framework that emphasizes the reliability of knowledge conditions. According to reliabilism, for a belief to be knowledge, it must derive from a reliable cognitive process. This reliability ensures that the belief is true and accurate, thus avoiding the possible "true belief is not knowledge" situation in Gettell's problem[12]. Goldman's causal connection theory emphasizes the key role of causal connections between beliefs and facts in the formation of knowledge. According to this theory, for a belief to be knowledge, there must be an appropriate causal connection between it and the facts it describes. This causal connection requires not only the truth of the belief but also that the belief is based on direct interaction or observation with the facts[13].

Through this causal connection, beliefs are able to reflect the external world truthfully and thus constitute knowledge. Reliabilism is a broader theoretical framework that focuses on the importance of the reliability of cognitive processes to knowledge. Reliabilism holds that for a belief to be knowledge, it must derive from a reliable cognitive process. This reliability ensures the accuracy and stability of the belief, making it resistant to error and misdirection. Reliabilism emphasizes the reliability of cognitive processes rather than focusing solely on the truth or falsity of beliefs, thus providing a more comprehensive and in-depth definition of knowledge[14].

Combining Goldman's causal connection theory with reliabilism further deepens the understanding of Gettell's problem. Causal connection theory provides a concrete way for reliabilism to be realized by ensuring a causal connection between beliefs and facts to achieve the reliability of knowledge. This combination helps to clarify the nature of knowledge, emphasizing that knowledge is not only the truth of beliefs but also requires the reliability of beliefs and the causal connection to facts.

## 4. Verdict

If you follow the "checklist" your paper will conform to the requirements of the publisher and facilitate a problem-free publication process.

In general, the nature of knowledge is closely related to the JBT theory and the Gaettier problem. As a classical formulation of the definition of knowledge, JBT theory emphasizes the central role of truth, belief, and reason in the composition of knowledge. However, the raising of Gaettier's problem, like a magic mirror, reveals the limitations and deficiencies of this traditional theory in explaining the nature of knowledge. With its unique logical structure,

Gaettier's problem challenges our inherent cognition of the definition of knowledge. It reveals that even if a belief is true and there are reasons to support it, it does not necessarily constitute knowledge. This questioning of the truth and reason of belief forces us to reexamine what knowledge is and what constitutes it. Therefore, we need to explore and understand the nature of knowledge more deeply. Knowledge is not only about the truth of our beliefs and the reasons we hold but also about the intrinsic connections between those reasons and our beliefs. The connections should be strong and reasonable enough to ensure the reliability and stability of the belief. Only in this way can we grasp the nature of knowledge more accurately to better pursue and apply knowledge. On the road to pursuing knowledge, we should not be satisfied with superficial understanding and superficial cognition. We need to constantly dig into the deep connotation of knowledge and explore the logic and laws behind it. Only in this way can we swim unimpeded in the ocean of knowledge and contribute our strength to the progress and development of mankind.

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