**Evidence of Falsehood**

What is the first business of philosophy? To part with self-conceit. For it is impossible for anyone to begin to learn what he thinks that he already knows. ~Epictetus

It has been largely assumed from the start that truth, the first premise of the Tripartite theory of Knowledge, is necessary for a mental state of knowing. And this has intuitively made sense. Examples that demonstrate the logic of this premise are wide-spread and easily found. Yet, if one tries to establish the necessity of this condition for oneself, one may discover, a logical flaw in this premise. In theory truth is necessary, however, in practice it is not truth that establishes knowledge.

We obtain knowledge using our perception or five senses. We accept the subjectivity of perspective, even though truth may or may not be established. We reject knowledge only when evidence of falsehood is obtained, if ever.

In practice, in the obtaining of knowledge of the conditional, those things we experience that could have been otherwise, truth is not established. The fundamental application of how we attain knowledge is in witnessing with our perception, our five senses, evidence for our conclusion. However, evidence provides support for our conclusion, by way of justification, but does not by itself provide truth. And therefore, it is not truth that is necessary for knowledge. It is the lack of evidence of falsehood in our conclusion that is the basis of our knowledge. And a lack of evidence of falsehood, is not the equal of truth.

The following thought experiment will demonstrate this flaw between theory and practice.

**A Thought Experiment**

Let us consider this thought experiment. Suppose we have Robert and twin-Robert, who are philosophical duplicates. For this experiment Robert and twin-Robert share all intrinsic and extrinsic properties.

**The Story**

I tell Robert and twin-Robert to both empty their desks. And they each empty their desk by themselves and do an excellent job of it. Each has removed all discernible items from the desk. Each has used his five senses to verify the emptiness of the desk and there is nothing wrong with either of their five senses, nor their capacity to perceive. Neither is hallucinating an empty desk. Each from his personal experience and his five senses confirms the emptiness of the desk. Each further confirms his mental state, by saying, "Yes, I know the desk is completely empty."

However, one of the desks has a secret compartment containing two objects and the other does not. What's more, the secret compartment and the two objects inside it were there the whole time. So nothing changed about the desk. And neither is aware of the secret compartment. Only we are aware that one desk is not empty.

**Definitions**

According to Dictionary.com the definition of the word, knowing: is having knowledge.

And furthermore, according to Dictionary.com the definition of the word, knowledge: is a familiarity, awareness or understanding of someone or something, such as facts, information, descriptions, or skills, which is acquired through experience or education by perceiving, discovering, or learning.

According to Merriam-Webster.com the definition of the word, knowing is: having or reflecting knowledge, information, or intelligence.

And furthermore, according to Merriam-Webster.com the definition of the word, knowledge is: a (1) :  the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association (2) :  acquaintance with or understanding of a science, art, or technique b (1) :  the fact or condition of being aware of something (2) :  the range of one's information or understanding <answered to the best of my knowledge> c :  the circumstance or condition of apprehending truth or fact through reasoning :  cognition d :  the fact or condition of having information or of being learned <a person of unusual knowledge>

**The Philosophical Argument**

**Premise 1** - Robert and twin-Robert are in the exact same mental state.

**Premise 2** - Robert and twin-Robert are each in a mental state of knowing their respective desk is empty.

**Premise 3** - Robert or twin-Robert is in mental state of knowing something that is not true.

**Conclusion 1** - It is possible to know something that is not true. A mental state of knowing does not necessitate truth.

**Refuting the Philosophical Argument**

**Premise 1 - Robert and twin-Robert are in the exact same mental state.**

Based on their exact same starting point, exact same experience, and exact same ending point, I have proposed the premise that Robert and twin-Robert are in the same mental state.

If you believe that Robert and twin-Robert’s state of mind is somehow different, then you should be able to show where or how they are in a different mental state. And, if you can do that, then necessarily, you should be able to identify whose desk is not empty.

**Premise 2 - Robert and twin-Robert are each in a mental state of knowing their respective desk is empty.**

Based on the definition of knowing and knowledge above, I have proposed that identical mental state is one of knowing, as opposed to one of believing.

There are arguments against this premise.

1. The dictionary definition of knowledge is insufficient because it does not require truth.

If you hold that knowledge requires truth, then you are professing a dogmatic belief in the Tripartite Theory, a broken, insufficient model of knowledge. Since when does a premise to a theory constitute a law or rule? It does not. Hence, we see the dictionary definitions of knowledge reflect that knowledge can be of true things, such as facts, but can also be obtained by subjective means, such as by perception. And so, what is needed is a modern model, one that provides a complete recipe for knowing. In this paper, I propose a model that matches our experience of the world and how we obtain knowledge and you will see how truth fits into my theory.

1. Robert and twin-Robert’s efforts to obtain knowledge are insufficient.

Perhaps you believe that their effort was insufficient in some way to obtain knowledge or that knowledge can only be of things that are necessarily true, such as logical truths or mathematic truths.

If you believe that their effort was insufficient, then consider the basis for all scientific knowledge. We obtain all knowledge by our five sense or perceptions. And, on some occasions only one of our perceptions is necessary, usually sight, hearing, or touch.

Even logical and mathematically necessary truths have their basis in what is perceived. The language and symbols of math are taught to us and relate to the objects in our environment. If there were only consciousness and no environment, would we have math? What would we be adding up? Likewise, logical truths, such as, there are no married bachelors, do not have any meaning without having external application.

Furthermore, consider what we admit as evidence in court. If Robert and twin-Robert testified in court, would the court find their testimony valid? We admit evidence in court obtained with much less effort than the twins supplied.

What additional effort could Robert and twin-Robert have performed to obtain the truth? Additional witnesses only serve to strengthen the philosophic argument, not weaken it.

Should they have destroyed their desks in order to ensure it was empty? Is that really a model you want to propose for obtaining knowledge?

**Premise 3 - Robert or twin-Robert is in mental state of knowing something that is not true.**

Based on the fact that both desks are not, in fact, empty, I have proposed the premise.

I’m pretty sure this one is irrefutable. The only ways to argue this premise would reduce to an argument of: 2=0 or false = true. Good luck proving either of those!

**Conclusion 1 - It is possible to know something that is not true. A mental state of knowing does not necessitate truth.**

If you accept the three premises of this argument, then the conclusion necessarily follows.

However, let us be careful and clear. While knowing does not require truth, it does not withstand evidence of falsehood. I will explain how truth fits into a new model for knowing/knowledge.

**What does the conclusion accomplish?**

The Tripartite Theory was proven an insufficient model for knowing by Thomas Gettier in the 1960s. Thomas Gettier proved that truth, belief, and justification were in some cases, known as Gettier cases, insufficient to provide a mental state of knowing. Nonetheless, the model persists to this day as a working model for knowledge.

Particularly, the premise truth is advanced as necessary in most, if not all, models for knowledge. And thus most, if not all, models of knowledge are by this philosophic argument disproven.

The premise truth has from the start been accepted without controversy, and wrongly so. However, a premise to theory should be established before it is accepted. And that has never been the case with the necessity of the premise truth. Why? Because it made intuitive sense that you can’t know something that is false. More careful consideration of the premise was not performed. When one tries to establish proof of the necessity of the premise, it comes up short. It requires itself to be true, in order to be true. When we look closer at this premise, we find you can know something false in the absence of evidence of falsehood. And absence of evidence of falsehood does not necessarily mean truth.

As an additional consideration, the Tripartite theory, does not account for subjective truth. It is entirely possible for truth to be conclusively different when obtained from different perspectives. If person A says the sky is medium blue, and person B says the sky is light blue, who is telling the truth? Isn’t that a matter of perspective? And so, can’t they both be telling the truth? Yet, under the Tripartite theory, one must be asserting a false belief.

In conclusion, all theories of knowledge requiring truth as a necessary condition are shattered models and a new model is needed - one that provides a complete explanation of our experiences and perceptions of the world.

**Unified Model of Knowledge**

This model demonstrates how truth really does fit in the discussion of knowledge. It builds upon the understanding that truth is not necessary for knowledge as I have previously established. Furthermore, if truth is not necessary for knowledge, then justification is not necessary either. For justification supports truth or falsehood equally well. Therefore, knowing is a mental state that consists only of belief, but a very special kind of belief, as we will examine.

Consider this example. If I flip a normal coin, you might believe that it will come up heads and bet accordingly. However, if I flip a two-headed coin, you know that it will come up heads and bet everything you own. When you say you know something you are merely indicating that with 100% certainty you believe it, regardless of whether you are right or wrong.

Now here is how truth fits in. Can you know (believe with certainty) something that is not true? Yes, as we have established previously. Can you know (believe with certainty) something that you know is not true? No. And that is where truth fits in. If/when you discover evidence or are confronted with evidence that something you know (believe with certainty) is not true, then you can no longer believe it, can you? And so, your belief is no longer certain and what you know changes accordingly.

And how does justification fit in? Can you know (believe with certainty) something without having a reason to believe it? (That is not to say that the reason was a good one. As stated before justification can support true premises or untrue premises). And does that reason support certainty? If you think you could be wrong, then you aren't certain. If you aren't certain, you wouldn't say that you know something.

So truth and justification support a belief and help it to reach a state of certainty. When we become certain of something, we say that we know it. However, a state of knowing (certain belief) can be misplaced, when we discover that what we thought was true wasn't and what was justified was justified for the wrong reason(s). Thus, what we know changes accordingly.

**Unified Model for Knowledge**

*S* knows that *p* if and only if:

1. *S* is certain in his/her belief in *p*;
   1. S has no evidence that *p* is false;
   2. S has a reason to be certain of *P*, whether that reason is justified or not.

Let us consider some examples.

**Example 1. – A mental state of knowing (certain belief), supported by no evidence of falsehood, and by justification**

Let us consider, Fred, who is in a mental state of knowing that it is raining out. Fred is looking out the window, he sees, in fact, it is raining out. He is certain in his belief. He is unaware of any evidence that it is not raining out. He is justified in his belief based on his perception.

This example and all examples of knowledge, which support the Tripartite Theory of Knowledge, support the Unified Theory of Knowledge equally well.

**Example 2. – A mental state of knowing changes to a mental state of belief**

Next, let us examine Robert and twin-Robert from the previous philosophical argument. We see that they are certain of their belief that each of their respective desks is empty. Supporting their belief, they have no evidence that their belief is false, and they have a reason to believe it, based on their own assessment. Therefore, when they say, "Yes, I know the desk is completely empty," they are indicating a true statement of their mental state.

However, we know that one of them is not right. And should we present our understanding of the desks to Robert and twin-Robert, neither of them can remain sure that their desk is empty. And so, their mental state of knowing (certain belief) is no longer supported by a lack of evidence of falsehood, nor by a valid reason. Instead, there is considerable doubt, even though one of them is still correct, he does not have a certain belief and no longer knows he is correct. At this point, they may have a belief, but they cannot assert their belief as a mental state of knowing based on their uncertainty.

**Example 3. – A mental state of knowing changes to a corrected mental state of knowing**

Let us consider, a classroom where the teacher asks the class, “Who knows the capital of China?” And little April puts up her hand, and says, “I know! It's Hong Kong!” Does April, in fact, know the capital of China? She is certain in her belief, which is supported by her having no evidence of falsehood. And she has a reason to believe it - her grandfather told her so. She has indicated her mental state is one of knowing.

However, Hong Kong is not the capital of China. The teacher confronts April with the true capital, Beijing. And so, April’s mental state changes accordingly from one of knowing the capital of China is Hong Kong, to knowing it is Beijing. And we might also say, she believed the capital of China was Hong Kong, and now she knows it is Beijing. And this makes sense too because all we are really discussing are beliefs - one that was consistent with mankind’s knowledge base, and one that wasn’t.

**Example 4. – A mental state of knowing changes mankind’s knowledge base**

Let us consider, Nicholas Copernicus. He was certain in his belief that the earth traveled around the sun. His belief was supported by his perception of his five senses in regard to astronomic observations. And he had good reason to believe it, because it is true. So, he knew it.

Meanwhile, the rest of the world knew otherwise. Mankind knew (believed with certainty) that the sun revolved around the earth. They did not believe this because they were stupid. They had no evidence that it was false. And they had a very good reason to believe it was so. Every day, thousands of men observed the sun rise in the east and set in the west as it traveled around the earth. So, mankind knew (believed with certainty) that the sun traveled around the earth.

It took centuries for mankind as a whole to accept that the earth traveled around the sun, because of the dogma of their belief supported by their perception and no access to evidence that this was false. Each man had to eventually be confronted with the truth and have their belief change accordingly. Eventually, mankind’s knowledge base changed to reflect the new understanding.

**Example 4. - A mental state of knowing is not confronted or changed**

Let us consider Dr. Aloysius Mudhead, a fictional expert podiatrist. Dr. Mudhead's patients might say, "He's a great Podiatrist! He knows so much about feet!" They might base this on the medical terms he uses including Latin names for anatomical parts of the foot, and on his authoritative demeanor. However, Dr. Mudhead's colleagues might say, "Dr. Mudhead doesn't know what he's talking about," and laugh with each other about some of his mistakes.

In this example, Dr. Mudhead, is not confronted with the truth, he receives no information to refute his misunderstandings of the subject of his profession, podiatry. And so, Dr. Mudhead will continue to know (believe with certainty) a lot of things about podiatry, some of which are false.

**Example 5. – complete support for Subjective Truth**

Let us consider, Person A, who says, “*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a boring old poem.” Meanwhile, Person B, says, “*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a beautiful romantic poem.”

And finally, Person C, says, “*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is my favorite. It’s the poem of all time!”

Each person can know what they are saying is true, because truth is subjective. Every perspective is equally valid and true so long as it is what the person believes. And a person may change their mind, as they’re perspective may change, their belief may change.

**Conclusion**

We see from these examples of the Unified Model that a mental state of knowing, meaning belief with certainty, provides an explanation that is consistent with the way we obtain knowledge. Furthermore, it provides a better explanation for the things we as individuals believe to be knowledge, but later are confronted with evidence to the contrary. And, it provides an explanation for when mankind’s knowledge base changes, as individuals discover new truths and provide mankind with better information. And finally, the Unified Model logically supports subjective truth, as well, as objective truth.

Can a mental state of knowing be this simple? Yes. Does this not completely explain the concept in a way that matches what you observe in the world? Does it not match your experiences? Isn't that what philosophy is all about?

**Mankind’s Knowledge Base**

The secret drawer in the desk is more than a secret drawer in a desk. It is a metaphor. The secret drawer represents the secrets of the universe. It is the drawer of knowledge that mankind is unaware exists. It is everything in the universe that is true, that mankind does not know is true. These secrets are everywhere, even in the spaces between our ears!

Here are all the drawers of knowledge:

* + - 1. The things mankind knows, that are true. (Mathematical truths, logical truths, conditional truths)
      2. The things mankind knows, that are actually false. (The things we have wrong.)
      3. The things mankind does not know, that are true. (The secrets of the universe.)
      4. The things mankind does not know, that are not true. (Mathematical falsehoods, logical impossibilities, conditional falsehoods)

Now, let us consider the size of these drawers.

Think about Drawer 1 - everything that mankind knows, that is in fact true. That is a lot of things! We know so much about so many subjects! At the same time, not all of it, but much of our knowledge is based on our perspective of the universe. And that is a very limited perspective, as it is virtually entirely bound to the planet earth.

Now, let us think about Drawer 4 - the things mankind knows to be, in fact, false. And our knowledge is suddenly doubled! Great!

Now, think about Drawer 2 - the things we have wrong. And we are left scratching our heads, because, as far as we are aware, this drawer is empty. We cannot distinguish the things we have wrong from the knowledge that is in Drawer 1 and Drawer 3. In other words, there are items we think are in Drawer 1 and Drawer 3, that are actually in drawer 2. And they are a mystery until evidence of falsehood reveals our knowledge to be false. So, sadly, we know less than we think we know.

Finally, think about Drawer 3 - the things that mankind does not know. There is a whole universe out there and we know virtually nothing about it. We only know what we can gather from our mostly earth-bound perspective. And so, in an infinite universe, this drawer is infinite in size. And that means, that our knowledge is relatively finite when compared to the infinite.

In conclusion, mankind knows relatively very little and even in regard to what we do know, we know less than we think.