

According to so called virtue reliabilists knowledge is a belief which is true because it is the product of the knower's intellectual abilities. Knowledge is therefore an achievement. This account is subject to the problem of easy knowledge, that is: Some instances of knowledge are too easy to count as achievements.

In my essay, I criticize one prominent strategy to deal with this problem, that of Riggs (2009). According to Riggs it is true that in cases of easy knowledge we are not praiseworthy for believing the truth. But reaching the truth is still attributable to us in the same sense in which the consequences of easy actions are attributable to us. I argue that this proposal is inconsistent – at least for cases of easy perceptual knowledge – with the virtue reliabilist proposal to solve the Gettier problem. According to the virtue reliabilist proposal, Gettier cases are analogous to cases involving deviant causal chains in action theory. In both kinds of cases the person is successful but because of the presence of double luck, virtue reliabilists claim, the success is not due to her abilities but due to luck.

I argue that there is a crucial disanalogy between easy actions and instances of easy perceptual knowledge concerning the direction of the causal arrow. And because of the disanalogy, I argue, it is much more plausible to suppose that the difference between instances of easy perceptual knowledge and Gettier cases has nothing to do with the question of whether reaching the truth is attributable to the knower but whether it is attributable to the object.

My argument is mainly concerned with the consistency between Riggs's rejoinder to the objection of easy knowledge and the virtue reliabilist proposal to solve the Gettier problem. But since it rests on the claim that there is a crucial disanalogy between easy actions and easy perceptual knowledge, it could (if correct) also cast doubt on the consistency between Riggs's rejoinder and the virtue reliabilist explanation of the extra value of knowledge which also rests on a supposed analogy between (easy) knowledge and (easy) action.