

Reading Assignment 3: The Causal Theory of Knowledge

Assigned Reading

1. A. I. Goldman. “A Causal Theory of Knowing”. In: *The Journal of Philosophy* (1967), pp. 357–372
2. J. J. Ichikawa and M. Steup. *The Analysis of Knowledge*. Ed. by E. N. Zalta. 2017, Sections 3, 4, and 6

Technical Requirements

Answer questions two, three, six, seven, and nine below. Together, your answers should not be longer than a single typed page. Remember to provide page numbers indicating which passages you are paraphrasing. For the remaining optional questions, please write down the page numbers on which the authors address the question. More detailed instructions for reading assignments are available on the course website.

Questions

1. What type of theory of knowledge does Goldman defend for mathematical and logical (i.e., purportedly non-empirical) truths?
2. Recall that, in Gettier’s first example, Smith does not know that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket. Explain why using Goldman’s causal theory of knowing.
3. Goldman argues that, in order for you to know a fact p , there must be a “causal connection” between p and the your belief. Does this mean that, if you know p , then p is a cause of your belief? Explain by giving an example of your own.
4. Does Goldman argue it is possible to have knowledge of the future? Explain.
5. Using Saunders and Champawat’s thought experiment as a model, devise your own counterexample to Clark’s analysis of knowledge. Does Saunders and Champawat’s counterexample challenge the necessity or sufficiency (or both!) of Clark’s conditions for knowledge?
6. Using Lehrer’s thought experiment as a model, devise your own counterexample to Clark’s analysis of knowledge. Does Lehrer’s counterexample challenge the necessity or sufficiency (or both!) of Clark’s conditions for knowledge?
7. What is the most important way in which Goldman’s definition of knowledge is weaker than the “traditional” view?
8. The KK principle is the thesis that “If one knows that p , then one knows that one knows that p .” Do you think Goldman would endorse the KK principle? Explain in no more than five sentences.
9. Distinguish truth conditions, meaning conditions, and verification conditions for the following sentence: “Venus will be closer to the sun in July than in April in 2019.”
 - Hint: If you find Goldman’s example and attempt to distinguish truth and meaning conditions difficult, it might help to read about Frege’s puzzle: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/frege/#FrePuz>. To understand Frege’s example, recall that the “morning star”, “the evening star”, and “Venus” all refer to the same object.
10. Does Goldman believe his account of knowledge helps answer skeptical arguments?
11. In what ways does Goldman’s theory “fl[y] in the face of a well-established tradition in epistemology”? Explain in your own words.

12. Ichikawa and Steup argue that the “fake barn” case is a counterexample to Goldman’s causal theory of knowledge. Develop your own example that is analogous to the fake barn case, and briefly explain why Ichikawa and Steup would argue your case is a counterexample to the causal theory.