

Reading Assignment 4: The Sensitivity Condition

Assigned Reading

1. Instructor's notes on logical terminology
2. Nozick, "Knowledge and Skepticism", p. 255-262. You may stop reading when you reach the section entitled "Skepticism."
3. Dretske, "Epistemic operators", p. 1007-1010

Technical Requirements

Answer questions one, three, five, and seven. Together, your answers should not be longer than a single typed page, but your assignment may be longer if you choose to copy the questions as well. 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 author addresses the question. More detailed instructions for reading assignments are available on the course website.

Questions

1. Give an example of a conditional that is true when expressed in the indicative mood but false in the subjunctive mood. Briefly explain your answer.
2. To answer this question, you might need to revisit the article on "The Analysis of Knowledge" by Jenkins-Ichikawa and Steup. What does the causal theory propose as a necessary condition for knowledge? In one sentence, explain how an advocate of a causal theory of knowledge explain why you know some object that you're perceiving right now has the properties that it does. What might Nozick mean when he says "The causal condition on knowledge . . . provides an inhospitable environment for mathematical and ethical knowledge"?
3. What does Nozick mean by "tracking"?
4. Consider Gettier's example involving Brown, Jones, Smith, and Barcelona. Explain why, according to Nozick's theory of knowledge, Smith does not know "Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona" in Gettier's original example. Note that Nozick's thought experiment is slightly different from Gettier's, and that I have asked you to apply Nozick's theory to Gettier's original example.
5. In no more than a paragraph, explain why Nozick's grandmother thought experiment is a counterexample to his original theory of knowledge and how he modifies the theory to accommodate the example.
6. What is a sentential operator? Provide an example, and if you can, choose an example that is not in the reading.
7. Keep the answers to the following two parts as short as possible.
 - (a) According to Dretske, what makes a sentential operator "penetrating"? Give two examples of non-penetrating sentential operators', and for each, provide an example that motivates the operator is non-penetrating.
 - (b) What makes a sentential operator semi-penetrating? What is Dretske's thesis?

References

- [1] F. Dretske. "Epistemic operators". In: *The journal of philosophy* 67.24 (1970), pp. 1007–1023.
- [2] R. Nozick. "Knowledge and Skepticism". In: *Epistemology: An Anthology*. Ed. by E. Sosa, J. Kim, and M. McGrath. Blackwell Publishing, 1981, pp. 255–279.