

“What We Learn from Craig’s and Kappel’s Discussion: An Analysis On the Concept Of the Good Informant And the Purpose Of Knowledge”

As Edward Craig suggests, mainstream epistemology discusses the concept of knowledge in terms of different uses of the word ‘know.’ When appealing to propositional knowledge, for instance, the concept takes the form of ‘S knows that p,’ “where “S” refers to the knowing subject, and “p” to the proposition that is known” (Ichikawa, Steup), and this is followed up by set of ‘necessary’ and ‘sufficient’ conditions that justify that the subject indeed ‘knows’ the proposition. Thus, in mainstream epistemology, there is an additional condition that ensures that the subject ‘S’ has knowledge. This additional condition is known as the condition for justification and has been widely criticized for being insufficient: “it might be that there are possible cases of knowledge without j, or vice versa” (Ichikawa, Steup). Craig argues that the condition of justification is where most, if not all, analysis of knowledge fails to develop an account of the concept of knowledge without having to add more conditions when they come across a counterexample. In his book, *Knowledge And the State Of Nature*, Craig takes upon the issue of providing a ‘practical explication’ of the concept of knowledge. In this paper, I present a detailed examination of Craig’s core concept of the good informant and I address some of the issues concerning Craig’s theory. I argue that Craig’s notion of the reliability of the method is not sufficiently grounded. Similarly, I argue that Craig’s concept of the good informant fails as a practical explication and that it does not accomplish its main goal of flagging out sources of

information. Further, I compare Kappel's notion of 'enquiry' with Craig's theory to propose that the hypothesis that the practical purpose of knowledge is to dictate purpose and meaning.

For intuitive reasons, Craig thinks that the concept of knowledge must be understood in terms of what it does for us, rather than in terms of the semantics of the word 'know.' Doing so avoids the "flood of complex ingenious counterexamples" employed against (Craig 2) the semantics of the word 'know' — especially those concerning the justification of a true belief. Similarly, "one doesn't have to commit to a great deal of epistemology or semantic theory" to presume that concept of knowledge has a purpose and, hence, a practical use in our everyday lives. Another interesting consideration, as Craig suggests, might be to ask whether defining the purpose of knowledge would provide any explanation of what it does for us. In explaining the purpose of concepts, there appears to be a distinction between (1) concepts that have a nature and (2) those that do not have a nature— or, at least, it is not clear that (2) they have a nature. For instance, the concept of water has a nature, which one can explain as a phenomenon and say something about what its purpose might be; it is not so clear that the concept of knowledge has such nature. In providing a 'practical' explication of the concept of knowledge, one might be led to the conclusion that the purpose of the concept of knowledge, practically speaking, is to allow us to think and talk about it. There is not much explanatory work in saying that the purpose of the concept knowledge is to simply allow us to think and talk about 'knowledge' just as in saying that the purpose of the concept of water is to allow us to think and talk about 'water' (Craig 2), which is different from saying that the concept of water has a nature — ruled by natural laws— so that one can experience it. To this, Craig responds by saying that there is a fundamental difference: "Knowledge is not a given phenomenon, but something that we delineate by

operating with a concept which we create in answer to certain needs, or in pursuit of certain ideals” (3). The suggestion is that knowledge is a concept which responds to some practical pressures or epistemic needs. When Craig speaks of ‘the concept of knowledge’ he does so for explanatory reasons. For Craig, there are two kinds of concepts: core concepts (like the good informant) and constructed concepts, like the ‘objectivized’ concept of the good informant. In that sense, the ‘concept of knowledge’ refers to a general epistemic need for true beliefs; it is an ascription that we give to informants to ensure ‘certainty.’

At this stage, one might wonder if there is any point in discussing a state of nature in relation to knowledge, since knowledge is a concept and not a natural phenomenon. Craig himself does not seem committed to claiming that his practical explication has indicators of any natural law, but he does seem to imply that the practical applications of the concept of knowledge, and the basic needs that arise from it, do have a place in the natural phenomena. When comparing his hypothesis with Carnap’s approach, Craig says that “Carnap’s intentions were normative, the establishment of the concepts fit to form the rational basis of the unified science, whereas mine are the more purely theoretical ones of shedding light on the nature and origins of present practice” (8). To that respect, Craig thinks that, although purely hypothetical, his hypothesis about the purpose of ‘knowledge’ does inform us about the nature of concepts — especially about the nature of the concept of the ‘good informant.’

This consideration still leaves us with the question as to why we should think that Craig proposes a state of nature theory. For one thing, he says that that is the goal of his project: “unlike political philosophy, epistemology has not started from a consideration of the state of nature. If that is true, and a defect, my project may be thought of as one way to supply the lack”

(Craig 8). We might still ask if a concept of the good informant has anything to do with the state of nature. That is, if Craig's concept of knowledge appeals to more primitive concepts of the good informant, and if hypothetical intuitions supported by an analysis can render an account of such a primitive concept. To that, Craig would say that his concept of the 'good informant,' is shaped by 'general intuitions' that might be representative of both sophisticated and "primitive situations." Craig, however, does not offer a justification here, but limits himself to say that there might be an "intellectual prejudice." In other words, that the sophisticated societies are more highly complex and that "primitive societies have only primitive requirements" (Craig 4). If Craig's grounding for his concept of knowledge is to be understood as a state of nature, Craig does offer a theory of the justification of a practice, but it is not grounded upon historical, or scientific observations, but rather upon 'general intuitions' that are meant to resemble a "prototypical case" (Craig 15) — a case that lays out the general epistemic needs of a good informant. Since the requirement of the concept of the good informant asks that the informant satisfies certain conditions of the "core concept of knowledge" (33), I suggest that Craig's hypothesis must be addressed as a theory of core concepts and not as a genealogical account about the nature of concepts.

Craig, I argue, does not provide a genealogical account of the nature of the concept of knowledge. Instead, Craig offers a hypothetical analysis of the concept of knowledge. Craig's 'practical explanation' of the concept of knowledge does not provide a 'state of nature' concept, but rather a hypothetical concept. In terms of a genealogical account, a genealogy is grounded on observations of historical practices— i.e., the different uses of a concept within different cultures and periods of time— and on scientific (empirical) observations of cultural practices.

Genealogies apply these historical and scientific observations to explain the general conception of a practice or a kind of government. In contrast, Craig's analysis provides what, for lack of a better term, I call a 'hypothetical concept.' Craig offers a hypothesis: "any community may be presumed to have an interest in evaluating sources of information; and in connection with that interest certain concepts will be in use. The hypothesis I wish to try out is that the concept of knowledge is one of them" (11). Craig grounds his hypothetical concept upon a 'hypothesis' and upon general intuitions that, according to Craig, gather the conditions of basic epistemic needs—like the need for acquiring true beliefs. Thus, Craig thinks that these general intuitions about the basic epistemic needs suggests that (1) there is a concept of the good informant, and (2) our concept of knowledge is a construction that adds more conditions to the more fundamental concept of the good informant. Thus, Craig's 'hypothetical concept' is used to explain our use of the concept of knowledge, but the grounding of Craig's concept of knowledge is not a state of nature—it is mainly hypothetical.

One main concern that Craig has regarding the conditions that dictate the concept of knowledge has to do with the idea that the condition of justification is a necessary condition of the concept of knowledge. For instance, his concern with the mainstream analysis of knowledge is that the condition of justification of a true belief is too strong for the concept of knowledge. For Craig, the formulation 'S knows that P' presupposes that 'P'. It suggests that 'p is true' in the first place. It presupposes that our informant has indeed acquired the truth of P. The suggestion is that, in the mainstream analysis, the proposition which is to be made true is already assumed to be true. Similarly, any additional condition, such as the requirement of justification for the concept of 'S knows that P' — expressed in the form 'S knows that P iff J' — cannot be a

necessary condition of knowledge in the sense that the justification must not require the justification of a true belief. When mainstream epistemologists have failed to establish sufficient conditions for a justified true belief: “[s]ome analyses speak of certainty at this point, some of being sure. But it has been argued that being certain, or sure, or confident, is not a necessary condition for knowledge” (Craig 12). Roughly, Craig wants to propose a middle ground where the importance of true belief can be an important component of the concept of knowledge, but where any additional condition for asserting the certainty or confidence of the true belief is not necessary.

Craig suggests two changes to the mainstream analysis of the concept of knowledge. Craig suggests that the mainstream analysis of the concept of knowledge must be reformulated and that the additional condition of justification of the true belief must not be necessary — meaning that the requirement of true belief is part of the concept of knowledge, but that anything else that asserts its certainty must be removed. Craig suggests to reformulate the analysis of knowledge as follows: “X knows whether p.” This suggests that our informants have already two conditions in place. (1) Either p is the case and she (the informant) believes that p, or p is not the case and she believes that not p. Hence, informants would not necessarily tell us that p, but rather what we are looking for is informants that would tell us ‘p’ were it ‘p’ the case, or not p were it p not the case. This way, says Craig, the standard clause ‘p is true’ is removed from the analysis of knowledge.

Secondly, Craig suggests that the condition of the justification of a true belief must not be regarded as a necessary condition for the concept of knowledge. Craig thinks that the idea of justification as a requirement of the true belief leads to considering cases where the requirement

of true belief itself— not its justification— vanishes. For Craig, the cases where the true belief is not a requirement of an informant's 'knowledge that P' are more often only theoretically possible. Thus, Craig's grants the assumption that "freakish, perhaps wholly imaginary, circumstances" (11), where the informant has knowledge without herself believing that she has it, or those where she obtains a true belief by getting a false belief, are theoretically possible, but are not relevant to our everyday practice: "It is precisely by being everyday practice that everyday practice manages to impress itself upon speakers and so stay what it is" (Craig 16). In other words, it is not relevant to the speaker's gathering of information that there is some theoretical way that suggests that she absolutely cannot be a knower in virtue of her believing that she has gathered the information that describes a true belief. The theoretical counterexample to the speaker's experience — the experience of identifying good sources of information— would not contradict the method through which she practically came about her true belief.

Since Craig does not want to argue about traditional ways of defining the concept of knowledge, he argues that there is a more fundamental concept: the concept of the 'good informant.' While the core concept of the good informant appeals to the most fundamental epistemic needs — those needs in which we use knowledge to discriminate kinds of information for the purpose of coming up with true beliefs—, the 'constructed' concept of 'knowledge' refers to all the forms that the core concept of the good informant takes when one adds on conditions to the concept of the good informant, but the added conditions do not appeal to our basic epistemic needs necessarily. The added conditions of the concept of knowledge (or knower) are constructed upon the core concept of the good informant. In defining the core concept of the good informant, Craig proposes a general intuition (his main hypothesis). Roughly, the concept

of knowledge is used to evaluate approved sources of information. As mentioned, Craig makes the point that there is a general intuition that human beings “need true beliefs about their environments, beliefs that can serve to guide their actions to a successful outcome” (11). Thus, the condition of true belief is necessary for the identification of good informants. That the informant has ‘knowledge’ depends on other conditions, such as the justification of the fact that p. For Craig, however, there is no theoretical concept that amounts to sufficient or necessary conditions of the notion of ‘holder of knowledge’ since the conditions that define the concept of ‘knowledge’ vary from case to case. Sometimes (1) the concept of knowledge depends on the fact regardless of what the informant believes. Other times (2) the concept of knowledge might depend on the fact plus its proper justification. In contrast, there are fundamental epistemic needs that amount to the concept of the good informant. Namely, that she must have a true belief. For Craig, the counter examples that show problems to the necessity of the concept of knowledge, (1,2) do not contradict his basic premise that the belief is more fundamental to the concept of the good informant because the belief of the informant does not always depend on the occurring fact. In other words, facts about the world are verified by means of justification, and they do not have beliefs, whereas informants do have beliefs. Although the informant’s content can be evaluated by means of justification of the fact about the world that she refers to, for Craig, this justification cannot occur without her communicating her belief in practice, which is to say that “where there is no belief there is no genuine communication or 'telling'” (Craig 37).

In defending his hypothesis, Craig defines the conditions that define the core concept of the good informant as follows: “the good informant is that who satisfies[2] any condition which correlates well with [1]telling the truth about p” (13). In that sense, Craig’s basic definition of the

good informant contains two conditions. The first (1) condition is ‘telling the truth about p,’ and the second condition(2) is ‘any condition,’ where the former(1) has to correlate to the later(2). The former (1) refers to the informant’s belief, whereas the later (2) refers to practically any condition that the inquirer can associate with the informant. Thus, the conditions that sometimes say something about who the inquirer is must correlate with her belief about the truth that p. In terms of the ‘good informant,’ condition (1) is satisfied insofar as the informant is likely to know the truth of whether p. Condition (2) is satisfied insofar as it somehow correlates with the informant’s belief. For instance, Craig says that “being a taxi-driver correlates very well with giving the right answer to [questions about knowing the way” (26). However, being a taxi driver is not essential to the capacity of giving the right address. A stranger on the street could satisfy the same task. Thus, condition (1) is all that is fundamental to the informant as well as to the inquirer as “our inquirer doesn't need, strictly speaking, to impose any conditions on how they do it[i.e., how informant provides an address]; so long as he believes that they do, and can recognise them” (Craig 26). This is not to suggest that the informant has knowledge in virtue of its belief, but that the inquirer recognizes the good informant in virtue of her belief. Similarly, any condition that correlates with the informant’s belief can help the inquirer recognize her.

The idea that the inquirer has to rely on her belief that the informant is likely to hold the right belief makes us wonder in what sense the informant’s belief is reliable. Craig argues that the indicator of the fact ‘that p’ is the informant’s method for acquiring the fact that p. It is important noticing that the informant’s method flags the fact that ‘p,’ but not the justification of the fact that ‘p.’ The informant’s method, however, does tell the inquirer how the informant’s belief is reliable in virtue of her method. Craig borrows Nozick’s idea that the informant’s beliefs

are sufficient for his beliefs to be true and adds the following two conditions to his concept of the good informant: “(i) if p were not true, he wouldn't believe that p (ii) If p were true (but under circumstances differing slightly from those actually obtaining) he would believe that p” (Craig 19). Similarly, Craig borrows Lewis’ idea that some possible worlds more closely resemble the actual world to suggest that (i) and (ii) must not be understood in relation to all possible worlds, but only to those that are more close to the actual world. The suggestion is that the fact ‘that p’ is not necessarily true, but it is more likely to be true, and similarly, that what is strictly true is that the informant acquires her belief through some method. To cite one of Craig’s examples, a person might have the belief that there was a dog in her garden, but she does not have the belief without reason, there is a method — call it evidence or visual experience — through which she came about that belief. In this case, the inquirer has seen paw-prints in her garden. The conditions through which she comes about her belief might be different — it might be that she saw the dog — but regardless, it is still said that she came about her belief through some method. Similarly, there is a possible world where a lion cub left its paw-prints on the garden, but as far as the inquired is concerned, this possible world does not closely resemble her actual world. As Craig puts it: “the property is that of having arrived at the belief by a reliable method, in the sense of one which (nearly) always leads to true beliefs” (25). The method of the good informant for obtaining beliefs is said to be ‘reliable’ in the sense that it is more likely to resemble true beliefs: “[w]ere that not so, then although the belief might be called reliable, there would be nothing particularly reliable about the method” (Craig 30). If the belief was not reliable in virtue of its method, then one implication would be that human beings just have beliefs without being

produced by some method, but “[w]e do not just have beliefs, we come by them in specific ways” (Craig 30).

The idea that the indicator property of a good informant is the ‘reliable method’ might be confused with the idea that we must trust that an informant has a true belief because she has obtained it in virtue of her reliable method. This is not what Craig wants to say. Rather, the idea is that “the reason that convinces us [the inquirers] to place confidence in a certain belief is a further belief about the way in which its owner came to hold it” (Craig 30) We do not trust the informant’s belief is true because of her reliable method, but rather her method indicates that (1) there is a fact that p (2) that the method tracks the likelihood that p is the case, and (3) hence the informant is likely to have a true belief. Craig lays out his argument as follows:

- (1) It is true [an occurring fact and not a belief]
- (2) S believes it
- (3) Its truth significantly raises the likelihood that p is true
- (4) S believes that (3) holds (Craig 31).

Although Craig does not want to concede any connection between the informant’s belief and the occurring fact, one can notice that the truth of the informant’s belief could not be established without the truth of the occurring fact in the first place.

One thing that has been criticized about Craig’s argument is the connection between the concept of the good informant and the ‘constructed’ concept of knowledge. Craig does not make explicit how the mechanics of such connection take place in practice, which seems important if one argues about a ‘practical explanation.’ If the idea is that the concept or ascription of knowledge arises from the fundamental concept of the good informant it appears that there are two aspects of the mentioned connection. First, there is a fundamental concept (good informant) and its practical need for true beliefs, and second, there are constructed concepts of knowledge

and their practical pressures, and these pressures arise from less fundamental needs. Craig does seem to argue about the connection between the concepts of good informant and knower, meaning that the connection is conceptual, but it is not clear to what extent the theory that describes the conceptual development of knowledge tells us where the process of constructing knowledge takes place concretely.

Although Craig is primarily concerned with answering the question of ‘why or how we come up with the concept of knowledge?’, it is not clear, nonetheless, that the need for true beliefs is a ‘practical need’ and one that is also essential to describe the process of how human beings come up with concepts of knowledge. Surely, there might be some practical cognitive need that outlines the process of acquiring beliefs, but the claim that this cognitive need is essential to our construction of ‘knowledge’ seems difficult to establish. Saying that the belief is a fundamental requirement to the informant is not showing how the belief is practically fundamental for the communicative exchange between the informant and the inquirer. For instance, if I see a stranger on the street who I identify as a Latina, and I have the need to know my way to some place, I might utter the expression ‘hola, como llego a tal lugar.’ If it happens that my informant was not spanish speaker and have to replace my utterance for the expression: ‘Hello, how do I get to such and such place,’ it does not seem that there are good reasons to think that my belief about the effectiveness of language, as a practical means of communication, is fundamentally necessary—practically speaking. In other words, does my belief that english is the adequate means to communicate to my informant is fundamental for communicating with other informants? Is this belief fundamental for me to communicate with other informants, i.e., spanish speakers? It seems to me that the answer is no.

Klemens Kappel argues that the purpose of knowledge is inquiry. When criticizing Craig's approach to a practical explanation of knowledge, Kappel suggests that the right approach does not concern the question: 'how the concept of knowledge is constructed,' but rather the question "[w]hat is the point of X?questions" (Kappel 3), where X refers to the question 'what is the point of' or why? In doing this, it appears that Kappel avoids the gap between the theoretical concept of the good informant, and where the process of the construction of knowledge takes place concretely. While Craig's approach addresses the concept of knowledge, and so its process in relation to practical or cognitive processes, Kappel seems to directly address the question of what is the purpose of questions such as the one Craig proposes in the first place. For Kappel, "without some form of enquiry, we cannot have truth" (8). In that sense, Kappel's notion of enquiry as essential to truth is similar to Craig's view that a method is the indicator of reliability of the informant's belief. Like Craig, Kappel shares the view that there is a method that is the producer of truths. For Kappel, the method is enquiry: "beliefs about facts are nonetheless always acquired by some method of enquiry" (8). Thus, Kappel places the method (inquiry) as the purpose of knowledge in his theory.

Kappel's view about the purpose of knowledge seems more plausible than Craig's idea of a method in the sense that the method is the point of knowledge. If I ask Craig how to identify the reliability of the belief? Well, Craig would say, it has a method, beliefs do not come from nowhere. Whether the method is right or not is an ascription of knowledge that I must determine. It is I (the inquirer) who must determine if the informant has knowledge. This raises the question: if the method is the indicator of reliability of the belief, wouldn't that suggests that the method makes the belief reliable? So, in some sense, the method is reliable, not because it

produces beliefs, but because there is something about the method — its mechanics— that makes it reliable. Craig, however, would say that the method is reliable in virtue of its relation to the belief. Thus, if I continue and ask: what makes the method reliable? It's the belief, Craig would say. But this is circular. One of Craig's motivations for making this argument is that he wants to reject the idea that there can be knowledge without belief, because it makes it seem as if knowledge is accidental. The problem, then, is not the rejection that there can be knowledge without belief, but rather that Craig does not want knowledge to be accidental. Thus, if the belief is a necessary condition for the good informant, and so to the constructed forms of holder of knowledge, then both the informant and the knower are said to 'have' knowledge in virtue of their capacity and not merely as a result of an accident. Given his concern for denying the possibility that knowledge is accidental, Craig would also argue that enquiry cannot be the purpose of knowledge since that would concede the possibility that knowledge is accidental. For instance, in Craig's example where there is a person who climbs a tree, Fred, so that he is able to see a tiger near her friend who is in the cave, Fred does not need to be in any situation that involves 'enquiry' to obtain the knowledge that his friend does not. Fred might have been climbing the tree without any intention of enquiry. Thus, if we place the enquiry as the purpose of knowledge, and we can come up with counter examples where the 'enquiry' is not the purpose of knowledge, it seems as if the informant, Fred, came up with his true belief about the wandering of the tiger by accident. Thus, for Craig, it must be that Fred is rather identifying the tiger as a source of information.

One main criticism of Craig's core concept of the good informant is that it does not accomplish its purpose. That is, Craig's concept of the good informant does not always help

to flag out good informants in practice. Let us test Craig's practical application with practical examples. The first objection that we can take into consideration is that Craig imagines his informant-inquirer epistemic relationship in terms of a one-on-one interaction. That is, Craig does not consider cases where there are two informants that communicate opposed beliefs about the same occurring event to the inquirer. For instance, in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*, depicts a trial case where Tom Robinson, a black person, defends his case against the accusation of rape. Mayella Ewell says that she was physically and sexually abused by Tom. Tom, in his defense, says that Mayella tried to kiss him without his consent, so he ran away from Mayella's place and had to push her. This example has been discussed in relation to the idea of testimonial injustice by Amanda Fricker. Roughly, testimonial injustice is the idea that informants are given a credibility deficit due to a negative identity prejudice so that they are "wronged specifically in [their] capacity as a knower[s]" (Fricker 20). Although it is likely that we identify Tom as a good informant in light of the fact that Southern white communities were highly prejudicial against black people in the 1930's, the question, the Southern communities of the 1930's were not in the same epistemic position as some people are in today's society. The question remains: can Craig's theory of the good informant help white Southerners identify the good informant in Tom's Robinson case? In regards to the role of credibility in the case, Craig would say that it is not fundamental for identifying the good informant. Credibility would be a condition that pertains to that who is considered a 'holder of knowledge,' and not to that of the good informant. From Craig's theory, it follows that both Tom and Mayella are likely to tell the truth of 'whether p,' so they both should be regarded as good informants. After all, Tom's and Mayella's beliefs do not come out of nowhere; they both have acquired their beliefs by a method,

and such beliefs can correlate with ‘any condition.’ In Craig’s view, Tom Robinson is not wronged in his capacity as a knower. This is because when considering his testimony, the psychological features of his agency are taken into account by his community: “the special psychology of teamwork in a community, something which is involved in the use of informants but not in the use of sources of information” (Craig 36). Namely, Tom’s testimony is heard and received by other psychologically capable human beings, so that he is not regarded in the same way they would regard a textbook.

Like Craig and Kappel, I subscribe to the idea that knowledge has some practical purpose. However, I reject the idea that the purpose of knowledge is either the identification of sources of information or enquiry. An important place where to start a workable practical explication of knowledge is to consider how the purpose of knowledge should be described. To begin with, it does not seem right to say that the concept of knowledge has a practical purpose. As Craig implies, it seems that some concepts, such as natural kinds concepts, have a practical purpose. Let’s take the case of the concept of water. I must make a distinction here: water, the physical stuff, has two kinds of concepts, (1) a practical explanation and (2) a conceptual explanation. The practical explanation of water, I think, says nothing about its conceptual explanation. As Kappel would agree, practical explanations do not tell us the contents of the concept — the answer to the ‘what is X’ question— but rather they provide the answer to the why-X? or how-X? question. For instance, one practical explanation of ‘water’ could be: it is the liquid stuff that helps humankind to stay alive. This tells us what the purpose of water is, but it does not need to tell us what water is fundamentally. A conceptual explanation of water would be: water is H₂O.

At the least, knowledge does not have a purpose that is fundamental as Kappel and Craig would argue.

The distinction between a practical and a conceptual explication leads one to consider whether ‘knowledge’ can have both kinds of explications such as in the case of water. This leads us to a further consideration that has been discussed by some in epistemology: is knowledge a natural kind? (Kusch, Mackena 1066). Kappel does not say much about this point, but Craig thinks that knowledge is not a natural kind: “[k]nowledge is not a given phenomenon” (3). This, I think, is another reason why it seems difficult to locate where Craig’s concept of the good informant and knowledge take place concretely. Natural kinds are natural phenomena that take place in the world and are evident to us. Although natural kinds can have conceptual explanations, one can always point out the natural kind to which they refer to—we can point out what the concept of water refers to empirically. I will not attempt to define the concept of knowledge so concretely, but I argue that ‘knowledge’ is a natural kind in the sense that it takes place in our cognitive human capacities. It cannot be denied, I think, that, practically speaking, our human brain and its cognitive capacities play an important role in the production of knowledge and beliefs.

Like Craig and Kappel, I propose a hypothesis as the center of my candidate for a practical explication of knowledge. Roughly, knowledge dictates purpose and meaning. One major problem in Craig’s hypothesis is that his worry about not allowing knowledge without belief leads him to the implausible claim that good informants can be detected by inquirers without having to identify the fact that correlates with their beliefs. We cannot identify good informants a priori. The information they communicate to us is evaluated by identifying the facts

that correlate well with their beliefs. Craig's point that beliefs do not come out of nowhere, and that therefore they have a purpose seems also implausible. It does not follow that things have purpose in virtue of their coming from somewhere. Automobiles come from somewhere, but we do not think that their social function as means of transportation relies on the fact that they were invented at some time in history. I suspect, however, that Craig's idea about the precedence of beliefs implies another assumption: truth and falsity do not come out of nowhere, hence there must be some purpose to truth and falsity. To this, Kappel would say that it shows that enquiry is the point about questions like 'what is the point of knowledge?' since there is no truth without enquiry. However, the enquiry does not take place without knowledge. That is, without the inquirer's cognitive capacities, her beliefs, and her knowledge. What follows from this comparison about Craig's and Kappel's hypotheses is that, practically speaking, the point of knowledge is to dictate purpose and knowledge. The purpose of knowledge cannot be the identification of sources of information because "[a]nimals can know things, but they do not flag good informants" (Kusch, Mackena 1066). Similarly, the practical purpose of knowledge cannot be inquiry, since inquiry does not occur without knowledge. Rather, it must be that, cognitively, whatever one takes to be knowledge—justified belief, or necessary truths—the practical purpose of knowledge is to dictate purpose and meaning. Craig's and Kappel's hypotheses do not contradict my proposed hypothesis, I think. Both Craig's and Kappel's hypotheses are meant to establish the purpose or meaning of a concept, which cannot be elaborated without knowledge.

An important difference between Craig's and Kappel's practical explanation is that Craig is trying to offer a definition of knowledge—which he disguises as the 'good informant'—while Kappel does not offer a definition of knowledge. In light of this consideration, we can notice a

major weakness in Kappel's argument. Let's consider what the central question he attempts to answer entails. The question of 'what is the point of X?-questions?' suggests that Kappel asks 'what is the point of what-is-the-point-of questions?' In terms of how this relates to questions about knowledge, one can ask: What is the point of my search for knowledge? Kappel would say that it seems that there is no more fundamental point to knowledge than the search for knowledge itself. But this is not the same as asking 'what is the point of my knowledge entailed in X?-questions, my reasons for searching more than what I know about the X?-questions, and the knowledge that I hope to obtain at the end of my enquiry regarding X?-questions. All of these questions imply that there is some knowledge at place. In his discussion, however, Kappel seems to imply that the entirety of new concepts comes from nowhere; meaning that the enquiry leads us to some entire new concept that we absolutely know nothing about. These questions show the different stages of the enquiry, but they all entail knowledge. Enquiry works its way out with some knowledge — justified beliefs, hypothesis, necessary truths, or all. Enquiry does not carry on without the inquirer cognitive capacities. It does not begin or carry on at any stage without knowledge. The new obtained knowledge is not revealed to the informant from nowhere, it comes from the basic understandings or knowledge that she had since her beginning of her enquiry.

There is no state of nature. There is no state that is fundamental for the elaboration of concepts. Consider the concept of a law. In any society, it seems to me that the law is employed to establish order (purpose and meaning). The order that the society precisely lacks collectively. No society would need laws if there was such a state of nature and these were so evident and palpable as the concept of water, or mathematical truths. What we learn from Craig's concept of

the good informant is that either knowledge is justified or not justified and, within that process, either there is a belief in place or no belief involved. What can we say about those cases where it seems that no knowledge is in place? It seems that we do have knowledge that comes from experience. For instance, Fred knows that he climbed a tree. Supposed that this is the first time he climbs a tree and had never seen anyone climb a tree so that his climbing the tree was executed out of instinct. Fred now knows that tree climbing is an activity that involves the use of his arms and legs. This does not show that Fred climbs the tree purely by instinct. Fred does have some knowledge: I am seeing that tree over there. That is a tree. Feet help me climb things and I can try to use my feet to climb that tree. Similarly, Fred does not learn that there is a tiger — Fred's advantaged epistemic position— out of nowhere. In other words, Fred's new knowledge is not accidental. Fred's new knowledge has been constructed out of other concepts:

1. Tigers have black stripes and look like felines
2. Tigers walk on their four feet
3. Hence, there is a tiger right there on the ground

Fred's knowledge is constructed on some other knowledge or beliefs that he already had. His knowledge of 'there is a tiger over there' did not come from nowhere. And even if this was his first time seeing a tiger, there was at least some cognitive capacity taking place. Thus, in my view, cognitive capacities do not account for a 'conceptual' explication of knowledge, but they do account for a practical explication of knowledge so that where there is a cognitive capacity, there is also knowledge instantiated.

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