

"I'm not sure I follow you about the benefit of a causal theory of knowledge," said Schroeder. "Everything has causes, right? Surely interpretation itself has causes too."

"That's right," continued Linus, "interpretation has causes too, but in neurologically embodied thought processes the causal (all that's physically interactive) is curiously linked with what, conceptually speaking, cannot be causal in the simple mechanical or physical sense. Logical relations, for example, are not physically causal; neither is the discernment of evidential relations; neither are the heuristic strategies by which we solve practical problems. The list goes on. What is nice about physical causes (in our world) is that they are infallible. No one violates a physical law; physical laws always get their way. That includes statistical laws of science too. Applied to a case of simple perception, for example, the infallibility of laws getting their way would mean that *if* my brain's optical system is affected in lawlike ways by light reflected by a tree, and my brain causally produces the belief in me that there is a tree nearby, *then* it would be *true* that there is a tree nearby. No ifs, ands, or buts. Interpretation could not introduce a wedge of doubt or uncertainty. Misperception there could well be, but it could not come about through misinterpretation, only through mechanism malfunction.

"The problem, of course," Linus went on, "is that human minds *are* interpreters so knowledge can't be a simple causal function of environment/brain interaction. That means that presuppositions are logically basic, not brute causes. I presuppose The Great Pumpkin while Charlie presupposes the God of Christian theism. That's where the matter begins and ends. Unless there's a way to *non-presuppositionally* test a presupposition, we just have to agree to disagree."

"And this is what justifies your adherence to The Great Pumpkin?" asked Schroeder.

"Well, it doesn't *justify* me in the sense that with these epistemological insights I can *prove* the existence of The Great Pumpkin. All that I have said, rather, *entitles* me to give an ultimately 'Pumpkinish' construal of life. It is epistemic entitlement, on my view, that defending one's faith is all about."