Reviewing Epistemic Authority

Summer Undergraduate Research Program
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Preview

- Introductions
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Introductions
Background

- Epistemology
  - Theory of knowledge
- Autonomy vs. Community
- How do we navigate peer disagreement?
- On which bases we may rationally accept someone as an authority in the formation of our beliefs?
Authorities: From Mom to Moses
Abstract

- Coauthor scholarly review for ACPQ
- *Epistemic Authority*, Linda Zagzebski
  - Rational trust as framework for understanding
- Increase depth of study
- Foundation for writing sample
Preliminary Research

- Thomas Crisp
- Richard Foley
- Alvin Goldman
- John Greco
- Thomas Kelly
- James Kraft
- Byeong Lee
Epistemic Authority by Linda Zagzebski
Epistemic Authority

- Enlightenment
  - Intellectual autonomy, self-reliance, egalitarianism
- Problem of epistemic circularity
- Response of intellectual self-trust
- Self-trust grounds trust in others
- Remaining chapters extend and develop
  - Trust in emotions
  - Trust in authority
  - Authority of testimony
  - Authority in communities
  - Moral authority
  - Religious authority
  - Epistemology of disagreement
Aristotle’s jump from proper function *oughts* to moral *oughts* is perilous, and we believe similar perils await those who wish to move from what’s natural to what’s rational.

- Natural, yet irrational, resolutions of dissonance?
  - Gambler’s fallacy
  - Post-hoc rationalizations
Critical Review

• With her project built around *Rationality is Natural*, Zagzebski can provide us with no principled way to steer between skepticism and steadfastness.

• Try your best, get a trophy!
• Smith, Brown, and Jones split the check...
  • Marvel, mediocre, terrible
  • Cautious, complacent, cavalier
• Unresolved dissonance
Critical Review

• Still worth the read.
Results

- Book review expected in summer issue of ACPQ
- Increased depth in epistemology
- Created foundation for further research
  - AYURI with Professor Pendergraft on epistemic circularity
    - Increasing research breadth
    - Draft writing sample
  - SURP 2014 with Pendergraft
    - Build upon AYURI research
    - Working draft of writing sample
    - Expand research to related topics
Q&A