

Consider the following passages:

"[E]pistemic authority involves the double claim that knowledge is attainable and that there is some independent criterion for testing the truth claims of another. One might, though it is not common usage, speak of the authority of reason or of facts, meaning thereby that in some sense [we] must submit to or conform to reality, or to facts, or to the rules of logic, or to the power of reason, and so on in order to achieve knowledge. Such submission seems to be quite different from the acceptance of something on the word of another. If one chooses to describe such cases as instances of authority we might refer to such conformity as submission to 'logical' or 'ontological' authority. The important point is that *p* is not true simply *because x says p*. . . . [E]pistemic authority implies the implicit [*sic!*] acknowledgement of the possibility of attaining truth independently of *x*'s assertion of *p*, and the acceptance of certain truth-making criteria or conditions.

"Epistemic authority is thus in principle substitutional in nature. Its purpose is to substitute the knowledge of one person in a certain field for the lack of knowledge of another. It is in principle expendable and is always open to challenge. Theoretically, the knowledge of an individual, of a lawyer or of a doctor, of a scholar or of a scientist could, in principle, be acquired by another, thus making the substitution unnecessary.

"It is only because others can in fact acquire the knowledge of the bearer of epistemic authority that an epistemic authority can achieve the authority [she or] he has. In order for *x* to be recognized as a legitimate authority in *z*, it must be possible for others to have sufficient knowledge in that field to be able to test [*x*'s] claims to knowledge. . . . Ultimately, (1) *y* must have some knowledge upon which to build if [her or] his acknowledgement of *x* as an epistemic authority is to be anything but blind acceptance; and (2) *y* must ultimately (and usually implicitly) make an act of faith or trust in whomever [she or] he accepts as an epistemic authority" ("The Nature and Function of Epistemic Authority": 81 f.).

"A general grounding of legitimate epistemic authority requires not only someone's knowledge but also some criterion for testing another person's claims to truth. If accepting what someone says is one way of attaining knowledge, it cannot be the only way. Someone must have attained

what knowledge [she or] he has in some other way. The reason why p is true is not because X enunciates p ; and though Y believes p because X enunciates p , if Y thinks Y 's belief is justified, Y also believes that p is true independently of X 's having said p .

"We need not go into the alternate ways of knowing, so long as we admit that there are several such ways. All of them, assuming that they are valid, constitute part of the source of legitimate epistemic authority. The source of such authority should not be confused with epistemic authority itself. Though it is not common usage, one might speak of the authority of facts or the authority of reason, meaning that, in some sense, human beings, in order to attain knowledge, must submit to or conform to reality, to facts, to the rules of logic, or to the power of reason. If we choose to describe such cases as instances of submitting to authority, we might describe such conformity as submission to 'ontological' or 'logical' authority. Submission to such 'authorities' constitute[s] some of the alternate ways of knowing that are prior to and presupposed by legitimate epistemic authority.

"As a way of knowing, the acceptance of p on X 's say-so is secondary. Legitimate epistemic authority is thus substitutional in nature. Its purpose is to substitute the knowledge of one person in a certain field for the lack of knowledge of another. It is in principle expendable and is open to challenge. X 's knowledge of law or of medicine or of physics could, in principle, be acquired independently by Y , thus making the substitution unnecessary. Whenever one's belief is based on evidence that coerces belief or that constitutes it, then the belief is not based on authority" (*The Nature and Limits of Authority*: 36 f.).