

It is essential to De George's analysis of legitimate epistemic authority to argue that "[a]s a way of knowing," it is "secondary," because it depends on "alternate ways of knowing that are prior to and presupposed by legitimate epistemic authority." In this connection, he allows that "[t]hough 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" (*The Nature and Limits of Authority*: 36).

Clearly, De George is here allowing, in effect, that "authority" can be used in another analogical, or symbolic, sense, distinct from the sense it has in the properly social context in which we commonly use it. Moreover, it is clear that the "ontological" or "logical authorities (*sic!*)," submission to which he takes to be prior to and presupposed by legitimate epistemic authority, could only be "executive" as distinct from "epistemic," or any other kind of "nonexecutive" authorities—naturally, in the same analogical or symbolic sense of "authority."

Thus, in his own way, De George allows for the very analogical extension of the entire "authority" conceptuality/terminology to ultimate reality that a radical monotheistic religion necessarily involves. But, then, he has no good reason subsequently to assert simply that "there is no legitimate universal executive moral authority" (201). That there neither is nor can be any such "authority" in any of the senses in which this word is commonly used may be true enough—just as there neither is nor can be any "authority of facts," or "authority of reason," in any of the same common senses of the word. But if the latter phrases can be used in another analogical or symbolic sense, why can't the same be true of the phrase, "universal executive moral authority"? Indeed, doesn't De George's claim that there is a legitimate *epistemic* moral authority logically require him to say exactly this—for the very same reasons that lead him to allow that one can and, in a sense, must

speaking of the ontological authority of facts or reality, or the logical authority of rules or reason? What *could* epistemic moral authority possibly be based on except the same "executive authority" of facts and reason? That so and so is the right (or wrong) thing to do is as much a matter of fact, or of reason, as that so and so is the case—the sufficient evidence of this being that the first, no less than the second, is asserted by means of a proposition, albeit what Bochenski calls a "practical," as distinct from a "theoretical" proposition.

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