

21. Irrelevant Influences review

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Siegel 2019:

Irrelevant influences come in the form of *culturally normal beliefs*. These beliefs resemble those generated by *hijacked experiences*, meaning that even if they are supported by the (narrowly construed) evidence, they are still *ill-founded*.

Jill perceives Jack as angry

Potentially: awareness of this should lead us to question the beliefs we picked up from our culture.

Mills 2007:

- Race is a pervasive irrelevant influence on beliefs. Due to *standpoint theory*, it makes it so that (at a given time) White people have fewer reliable/true/justified beliefs about race than people of color. Because of White domination of cultural institutions, this ignorance perpetuates and exacerbates itself in the culture.

Potentially: awareness of this should lead us to revisit our views about race.

Fricker 2007:

- *Epistemic Injustice* is a way of capturing a particular kind of problematic irrelevant influence. In particular, when we give less credibility to someone than they're owed in a way that is systematic, prejudicial, and identity-based, we've committed a core kind of *testimonial injustice*.

Potentially: awareness of this fact should lead us to revisit -guess our standard credibility assessments.

Street 2015:

- Genealogical information about our beliefs is undermining when it reveals explanatory but no justificatory ("normative") reasons for belief. If we think morality is *mind-independent*, then learning of evolutionary effects on our moral beliefs should lead us to question them.

White 2010:

- Genealogical/debunking stories can definitely sometimes undermine beliefs, but it's not clear that they post a *distinctive* threat—one that differs from both the threat of disagreement and that of general skepticism.
- There is no general "inevitability" principle (Insensitivity; Truth Sensitivity; Explanatory Relevance) that characterizes a unique debunking threat here. And the forces of *selection* and *random variation* from evolution do not pose special threats to our beliefs.

White probably would say that (1) the debunking stories of Siegel, Mills, and Fricker fall into the worrisome disagreement camp, while (2) the story of Street falls into the general skepticism camp.

Vavova 2018:

- The threat of debunking *is* distinctive; the threat of disagreement is just one special case of it. The threat arises when you have good, independent reason to think that you are MISTAKEN¹ (GIRP). This doesn't reduce to skepticism because the "Good Independent Reasons Principle" is not the same as the "No Independent Reasons Principle".

¹ Remember that this is a term of art!