

Response: Intellectual Humility in Interdisciplinary Projects: Analysis and Measurement

Heather Battaly

University of Connecticut

Jason Baehr

Loyola Marymount University

Dennis Whitcomb

Western Washington University

Daniel Howard-Snyder

Western Washington University

As philosophers, the four of us were delighted to participate in the aforementioned projects on intellectual humility. Those projects have helped us think through some of the issues surrounding the topic. Perhaps more importantly, they enabled us to establish lasting professional relationships with one another, and with several of our collaborators in psychology. It is uncommon for philosophers to work and write together; most philosophical work is single-authored. As a team of four, we were able to generate a view that none of us could have generated alone, and that even the sum of us working independently could not have generated. We are grateful to the visionaries, team leaders, PI's, and the John Templeton Foundation for making these projects possible.

Below, we address what we see as our four main philosophical contributions to the interdisciplinary work of the overall team. First, we argued for a definition of intellectual humility via the method of philosophical analysis. Second, our analysis of the virtue of intellectual humility allows us to distinguish it from the closely related virtue of open-mindedness. Third, our analysis of the virtue of intellectual humility drew a contrast between it and two different vices—the 'go-to' vice of arrogance *and* the over-looked vice of servility. Fourth, in addition to collaborating with the overall team of psychologists, we worked on a specific project with Wade Rowatt, Megan Haggard, and their group of psychologists to develop a measure of intellectual humility.

Offering a Definition of Intellectual Humility

As the philosophy-team on these interdisciplinary projects, our primary contribution consisted in analyzing intellectual humility. A

philosophical analysis is a certain sort of definition. In particular, it is a definition that aims to provide an illuminating account of what the defined-thing is—as opposed to, say, what that thing is *correlated with*. For example, Plato argued that knowledge cannot be defined as true belief¹. For, even though knowledge and true belief are correlated, they are not one and the same thing. We can see as much by noticing that a person might form a belief on a bad basis such as prejudice, and that such a belief would not constitute knowledge even if it turned out to be true. To employ an example that is, unfortunately, all too familiar, suppose that owing to nothing but racial prejudice a person believes that his Latino neighbor is undocumented. Even if it turned out that they *were* undocumented, this belief wouldn't constitute knowledge, though it would be true. Knowledge requires more than true belief—for instance, it might require reliably formed belief (rather than prejudicial belief), or it might require good evidence².

In order to give a successful philosophical definition of knowledge, one must find something that is not only correlated with knowledge (as true belief is) but is *identical* to knowledge (as true belief is not). Additionally, one must provide an *illuminating* account of knowledge; 'knowledge is identical to knowledge' is correct, but not illuminating! Philosophers aim for illuminating accounts of what the things they define *are* (and not just what they are *correlated with*). Because of this, philosophers frequently pay attention to unlikely examples. However unlikely an example might be (while still being possible), it is an example that matters to what a thing *is* (as opposed to what it is correlated with)³.