Sam S. Rakover

**A Commentary Proposal for BBS**

**Target Article Title:**Knowledge before Belief

**Target Article Authors:** Jonathan Phillips, Wesley Buckwalter, Fiery Cushman, Ori Friedman, Alia Martin, John Turri, Laurie Santos, and Joshua Knobe

The commentary is related to sections 2, 3, and 4.

I am well versed in philosophy of science and philosophy of mind, and I have published books and papers on these topics. Among them are:

1) A commentary on the theory of mind:

Rakover, Sam S. (1993). Theories of mind: some methodological and conceptual problems and an alternative approach. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 16, 73-74.

2) A new book on explanation and understanding:

Rakover, Sam S. (2018). *How to explain behavior: A critical review*

*and a new approach*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

**Commentary Proposal:**

**The importance of knowledge (positive or negative) lies in its use.**

There are two kinds of knowledge in a person’s long-term memory (LTM): positive knowledge, which is information that has been revealed to be true; and negative knowledge, which is information discovered to be incorrect. A huge amount of information is stored in one’s LTM without having any effect until the moment one retrieves it for a particular purpose or use. For example, David, who lives in town A, is *willing* to meet his friend, who moved to town B, whose location David does not know. David *believes* that traveling to town B will realize his will. He knows that his car is in good condition (existing knowledge) and he learns from the map how to reach town B (new knowledge). Given these, the commentary concludes that the importance of knowledge depends on the circumstance: sometimes negative knowledge is very important (e.g., David’s car is broken); sometimes one uses existing knowledge; and occasionally one searches for new knowledge.