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A Theory of Epistemic Trust and Testimony

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1. *Explicatio Terminorum & Preamble*

At least two kinds of justification can be distinguished: argumentative justification and entitlements. Argumentative justification represents the ability for a subject to *articulate* arguments for the truth of a proposition and this argument is supported by *reasons available in the cognitive repertoire of the subject*. Let us call argumentative justification a subject possesses for uptaking testimony their proprietary justification. Entitlements, on the other hand, state *a right to rely on a given cognitive practice*. Entitlements do not need to be understood or accessible to the cognizer and so entitlements are the externalist analogue of justification (Burge 1993).

The process of believing the content of a proposition presented through testimony, and thereby forming a new belief, is the *uptake of testimony*. I use the term epistemic *warrant* generally, as a positive epistemic evaluation, which includes both internalist and externalist analogues e.g. justification and entitlement. These points will come up in the discussion of my theory of trust in § 3.

1.1. *Epistemic Subject Stakes Matter*

What features prominently in my theory, and has the most explanatory power, is the influence of the epistemic subject's stakes. For a hearer, having high stakes in a testimony means perceiving the truth or falsity of the content of a testimony to have an important bearing on one's life. What is at stake is some good that is contingent on having a true belief about the subject matter of the testimony or getting it right.

The way I use the notion of stakes is internalist or subjective e.g. a perceived good that one has mental access to. However, the concept of stakes can conceivably be cast in externalist terms as well. When I refer to a subject's stakes I mean their subjective stakes, what matters to the individual, their perceived or subjective evaluation of what is important to them, regardless of what might be "objectively" reasonable or moral (if there is such a thing).

I will claim that stakes influence the subjects' perceptions of the epistemic environment, which in turn affects the epistemic justification by strengthening or weakening the evidentiary standards for justified uptake. Upon inspection, other theories will appear more dubious than mine for what we need them to do.

1.2. *Two Camps in the Epistemology of Testimony*

Reductionism holds that justification of testimonial uptake depends on whether agents can give (non-testimonial) positive reasons for why they accept a testimony, other than simply that they received testimony. Non-reductionism holds that testimonial justification is epistemically *basic*, typically including some prima facie right or entitlement to accept testimony unless there are stronger reasons not to. That is, receiving testimony is itself a sufficient positive reason for accepting the claim.

1.2.1. *Reductionism*¹

Two defining commitments of reductionism are the Positive Reasons (PR) thesis and Reduction Thesis. We can distinguish the Positive Reasons condition as being necessary and sufficient for warrant/justification (PR-N&S) or simply necessary (PR-N). The real strength of reductionism is that it is better equipped to deal with situations where getting truth is very important. Reductionist uptake principles are likelier to refrain from attributing justification to situations where uptake would not be justified because they are more cautious. But the cost of being too cautious is potentially missing out on some justified uptake elsewhere. Nonetheless, this might be a small price to pay. Therefore, reductionism is here to stay, at least the part that can deal with problematic cases.

¹ Contemporary philosophers defending various versions of reductionism include: Adler (1994), Fricker (1994; 1995; 2006), Lipton (1998), Lyons (1997), Mackie (1970), Shogenji (2006) and Van Cleve (2006).

1.2.1.1. *Over-intellectualizing objection*

Reductionism over-intellectualizes *most* instances of testimony by requiring positive reasons on behalf of the hearer for uptake to be justified. *Most* instances of testimony are mundane, and the uptake of those can be said to be justified without the presence of positive reasons on behalf of the hearer. One does not have to be very imaginative here to find a slew of claims that are routinely justifiably uptaken without additional positive reasons, let alone cognitively accessible ones e.g. when asking someone waiting at the bus stop whether the bus has passed yet or not. One does not need non-testimonial positive reasons beyond the speaker's testimony for this sort of uptake to be justified. In fact, even if the speaker were lying, the hearer is still justified in uptaking the belief (though it would not be an instance of knowledge) and could not be faulted for accepting it even though it happens to be false². Therefore, reductionism is over-intellectualizing most instances of testimony, namely the low-stakes and mundane, which form the majority of the body of our testimonial beliefs.

1.2.1.2. *Skepticism objection*

Much of what we come to know (or believe) comes through testimony: what we did as toddlers, facts of history, the fact that we were born, or that any country we haven't visited in fact exists. The skepticism charge is the natural follow up of the previous objection. If we are not generally disposed to provide independent confirmation of testimony, then one will find it to be a difficult or impossible standard even in mundane cases and thereby risk falling into skepticism about most things. In this way, the mundane and everyday testimonial uptake come under threat, but that is an unacceptable and unintuitive result. If one wants a theory of testimony able to account for the general acceptance of everyday testimony (or natural testimony as "tellings more generally") reductionism will seem too restrictive and unintuitive. These concerns are in part why non-reductionists have appealed to a general entitlement for accepting testimony which is more congruent with our lived experience than inordinate skepticism about testimony.

² Notice that how easily we attribute justification to the subject depends on their stakes. If they had an interview for their dream job and being late disqualified them from the opportunity, they could be very much faulted for so readily accepting or relying on testimony. In such a high-stakes case, they may not be justified in uptaking the testimony after all.

1.2.2. *Non-Reductionism*³

Non-reductionists hold that testimonial justification is *prima facie* justified, without appealing to a reduction to more basic sources. Important contentions of N-R views are that justification of testimony is a basic epistemic source, and the hearer has an entitlement or presumptive right to accept it. The presence of positive reasons outside of receiving testimony is not necessary to be justified in accepting the testimony; just the absence of negative reasons (defeaters) for believing testimony.

Promising aspects are that it does not threaten to force us into a generalized skepticism about testimony, or risk downplaying the importance of testimony as a prevalent epistemic source of knowledge. It conforms with epistemic intuitions about the great majority of testimonial cases and it does not unduly over-intellectualize testimony.

1.2.2.1. *Gullibility objection*

The damning objection against N-R is that it too often leads to gullibility. It comes as no surprise that people may purposely lie or deceive us, nor that testifiers may believe they are being truthful when they are mistaken. The criticism is that non-reductionism cannot deal with those cases as well because they are committed to a *prima facie* entitlement to accept the testimony of others. This leads Fricker (1994) to argue that we cannot square non-gullibility with one of non-reductionism's main thesis: that there is some entitlement or presumptive right to accept testimony. Because N-R necessarily leads to gullibility, and gullibility cannot be allowed in good epistemic conscience, it follows N-R cannot be allowed in good epistemic conscience (Fricker 1994).

1.2.3. *Two desiderata: between routine acceptance & reason-based rejection*

At least two desiderata must be preserved for a good epistemological theory of testimony: that it neither leads the epistemic subject towards gullibility on one hand nor general skepticism about testimonial uptake on the other. I believe the camps of reductionism and non-reductionism each capture one essence of these two desirables. Hybrid views are uniquely poised to capture both. But, as I will now show, in an attempt to safeguard against the gullibility-styled charges, the hybrid views I consider overreact and go too far in the other direction, threatening to become skeptical or

³ Contemporary defenders of N-R include: Audi (1997), Burge (1993), Coady (1992), Origgi (2004), Hinchman (2005), and Perrine (2014).

unintuitive and out of touch with everyday experience. My hybrid view promises to be more intuitive and to strike a better balance between reductionism and non-reductionism.

2. *Other hybrid views*

At least three views have explicitly called themselves hybrids, notably Lackey's (2008), Pritchard's (2006) and Faulkner's (2011). All subscribe to versions of the Positive Reasons Thesis (PR-N or PR-N&S) which I group under heading PR-N-Always: they have an underlying commitment that cognitively accessible, non-testimonial positive reasons *are always required* on behalf of the hearer for warranted testimonial uptake. This amounts to an explicitly reductionist principle, regardless of the other alleged non-reductionist elements. Faulkner's hybrid view has earned a special mention because he carves a role for trust in his theory of testimony as a reason giving capacity, which partly insulates him from the criticism.

2.1. *Faulkner, testimony and trust*

Faulkner's critique of reductionism is that it is too restrictive in what can satisfy the "reasons" requirement because it «fails to recognize how trust in a speaker can warrant uptake (Faulkner 2011: 53).» His critique of non-reductionism is based in the problem of cooperation, which is that there is always the possibility of deception and the potential rationality of lying and deceit. But knowledge through an attitude of trust is nonetheless possible because it puts the subject in contact with the *extended body of warrant* of a claim. This is all warrant of the speaker and the prior sources in the testimonial chain which is become available to the hearer through testimony. «In not recognizing that our warrant for the uptake of testimony can come from trust, the reductive theory over-intellectualizes our relationship to testimony» (*ivi*: 76).

Faulkner's illustrates by example the shortcomings of reductionism: a husband is told by his wife that the plane is boarding in fifteen minutes. No doubt he could produce an inductive argument to the truth of what his wife says, but this would distort and over-intellectualize his reasons for uptake which is rather simply he trusts her in this matter. Thus, Faulkner's non-skeptical response to the problem of cooperation states that cooperation can be rationalized by an attitude of trust, which provides a reason

that warrants uptake and puts the hearer in contact with the extended body of warrant (in the example the chain extends to the wife and perhaps the airport billboard coordinator). I agree with Faulkner about the shortcomings of reductionism and the merits of trust as a reason-providing attitude. At this juncture, I want to unpack Faulkner's use of trust since it plays a significant role in his theory and my own. Trusting is something we do and an attitude we have and take.

The act of trusting is putting oneself in a position of depending on something happening or someone doing something. The attitude of trusting is then characterized as an attitude towards this dependence. [...] With respect to testimony, we trust speakers to tell the truth and we trust testimony to be true, and we show this attitude of trust by accepting what we are told or what is said. And when acceptance is motivated by an attitude of trust – when it is a case of trusting – it issues in belief. The act of trusting testimony is the uptake of testimony (Faulkner 2011: 23).

Faulkner distinguishes, correctly I believe, between Affective and Predictive trust. Although both kinds of trust have expectations, the expectation is something different in the affective case, since it concerns another's reasons for acting.

I expect you to see fact that I will be waiting for you at the restaurant as a reason to try to turn up on time. This is a normative expectation: I think you should see things this way and so should act for this reason; and if you don't do as I expect, or don't act for this reason – for instance if you find something preferable to do – then this failure will be liable to provoke my resentment. This thicker notion of trust, with its concern with the trusted party's motivations, I've called affective trust. Affective because the defeat of its constitutive expectation engenders characteristic reactive attitudes – those provoked by trust being let down-which identify the expectation as normative and not merely predictive (*ivi*: 24-25).

I take no issue with this notion of affective trust and readily tailor it to epistemic trust and employ it in my theory. Call that affective epistemic trust. However, I opt for a more nuanced version of predictive trust than Faulkner provides. He uses predictive trust as simply «depending on some outcome» (Faulkner 2011: 24). This is the sense in which we can trust clocks to be on time or thermometers to measure temperature. For the purposes of a theory of testimony, I propose to narrow our focus to only a relatively small subset of predictive trust which concerns agents. I take Cognitive Epistemic Trust (CET) to be more appropriate to capture the nuances of the epistemology of testimony. The epistemic components narrow it down to cases where one agent trusts an another for the truth and all the complex

cognitive calculations this may engender. This kind of trust is granted only after relevant facts and figures have been considered, or reputations examined, and this is more aptly captures the role of trust as an ability. This conception of predictive trust as CET highlights the cognitive part of reasoning about the subjectivity of other agents and is, therefore, better suited to a theory of testimony. CET can be understood as *interpersonal predictive trust*.

I see my view an expansion of Faulkner's. Notably, by explicitly implicating non-epistemic factors and mental lives of the epistemic subjects, as well as a greater role for the testimonial environment. The uptake principle I submit holds the need for positive reasons as *contingent* on the friendliness of an epistemic environment and is a better middle ground between gullibility and skepticism, while still preserving (and being indebted to) many of Faulkner's insights.

3. *My hybrid view*

The following is a statement of my theory of justified testimonial uptake:

H is justified in uptaking testimony that p from source S if and only if,

- (1) S asserts that p
- (2) H adequately perceives the epistemic safety of the environment
- (3) And either Case I or Case II obtain

Case I:

- (4) The epistemic environment is friendly;
- (5) H has justified affective epistemic trust in S that p

Case II:

- (6) The epistemic environment is unfriendly (or friendly);
- (7) H has justified cognitive epistemic trust in S that p

Where Epistemic Friendliness of the environment is calculated:

$$\frac{\text{Perceived Safety of the Epistemic Environment}}{\text{The Epistemic Subject's stakes}}$$

The Epistemic Subject's stakes

Premise (2) ensures that the hearer is not overly sensitive (e.g. extreme paranoia) or underly sensitive (e.g. oblivious to *any and all* defeaters) to defeaters in the environment, ensuring that they are adequately perceptive epistemic agents. Premise (3) provides the case distinction between

friendly and unfriendly environments and allows epistemic trust to enter and to play its important role as an ability⁴. Premises (5) and (7) are explicated by my account of justified epistemic trust in the next section. Roughly, justified affective epistemic trust relies on a general entitlement to accept testimony for its justification, and represents the N-R component of my hybrid view. Justified cognitive epistemic represents the reductionist wing of the hybrid view and derives its (argumentative) justification from the additional, cognitively accessible, non-testimonial positive reasons of the hearer. Thus, we obtain the following uptake principle.

PR-N-Unfriendly Principle

The need for non-testimonial positive reasons is inversely correlated with the friendliness of the environment.

My hybrid view has been stated, and now I move to further clarify and defend it. First, I must give a more detailed account of justified affective and cognitive epistemic trust. Then, I will defend the inclusion of subject stakes and I will then conclude after considering an important objection.

3.1. *Epistemic Trust*

3.1.1. *The Epistemic Trust Condition on Testimony*

My hybrid theory entails a condition on testimony. Call it the Epistemic Trust Condition on Testimony (ETC): for an instance of testimonial uptake to be *justified*, it must have been instantiated through *epistemic trust that was justified*. Justified epistemic trust is a *necessary condition* for justified/warranted testimonial uptake. The implications are that variables which affect the justification of an instance of epistemic trust also affect the justification of the testimonial uptake thereafter.

Since ETC is implied by my theory, its falsity would undermine my view and its truth at least offer some support. If the relevant alternatives to my claim can be shown to be false, it can be reasonably concluded that justified epistemic trust is a necessary condition on justified testimony and that the ETC is true.

I will assume it must be possible for testimonial uptake to be sometimes justified as to avoid an overly skeptical response to our problem (since

⁴ The necessity of such a condition emerges from reflections on the relationship between the environment and an epistemic subject's abilities. Pritchard (2006) discussed this relation in his paper presenting his hybrid view.

granting otherwise would constitute too much of a departure from common sense). One relevant alternative challenge to the ETC is the claim that there can be instances of justified testimonial uptake, instantiated through *unjustified trust*. But this will consistently fail to produce intuitive results. Consider how incongruent it sounds to assert «H is justified in uptaking the belief that p based on S's testimony that p , but H's epistemic trust in S that p is unjustified». If the epistemic trust leading to testimonial uptake was unjustified, it would be a defeater of the uptake's justification. If a process is unjustified, the result will be as well, regardless of whether the ensuing belief is true or not. That is why asking a crystal ball questions to form beliefs, regardless of whether those beliefs are true (and even if those beliefs would be justified as the result of another method), leads to unjustified uptake. A bad method undermines the justification of the belief, and so unjustified epistemic trust cannot lead to justified uptake.

One might object that sometimes unjustified methods can lead to justified uptake. Let us entertain a case where S is seemingly generally untrustworthy, yet H is justified in epistemically trusting S that p . For example, say that S has no knowledge or expertise about anything other than automotive matters, but in that, he is widely hailed as an expert by other experts in the field. If S testifies that H's brakes need changing (p), H is justified in epistemically trusting S that p and uptaking the belief that p . But this objection fails, because one can be generally untrustworthy on all matters not relevant to p , but as long as they are trustworthy with respect to p , H is justified in trusting S that p and uptaking the belief that p , and so the method is not unjustified with respect to p .

Another alternative to the ETC is that testimonial uptake can be justified *without* the presence of justified epistemic trust at all. But one will be hard pressed to think of such examples because, intuitively, justified testimonial uptake depends crucially on something gained through epistemic trust: it puts the epistemic subject in a position to be in contact with the extended body of warrant of a claim, and this does a great deal of justificatory work for that claim. Consider the important difference between the case where I surmise (truthfully) that my neighbour D is upset (p) and believe that p based on nothing but my own, perhaps lucky, whims. Contrast this with the case where I form the belief that p based on my neighbour's partner's testimony that p (who derives warrant for believing that p from first-hand experience that p through, either by direct perception or from receiving testimony from their partner). The second case puts me in contact with the extended body of warrant (in this situation, the warrant of D's

partner belief that p). The second case is connected in some way to the truth while the first is not, and this role of tethering is played by justified epistemic trust and this would hold if the chain of warrant was longer as well.

Furthermore, consider how odd it sounds to say «H justifiably uptakes new belief p on the basis of S's testimony that p , but H does not have justified epistemic trust in S that p ». How could it be that there is no justified epistemic trust? After all, as we have seen, epistemic trust puts the subject in contact with the extended body of warrant. If the belief is based in testimony, and uptake is to be justified, the epistemic trust in which the belief is based in must be justified. Although perhaps not logically contradictory, the utterance seems intuitively incoherent. These considerations suggest we can safely conclude justified epistemic trust is a necessary condition on justified testimonial uptake and therefore ETC is true, lending some initial support to my view.

3.1.2. *Epistemic Trust: Between Skepticism and Gullibility*

I suggested that non-negotiable desiderata for a theory of testimony are that it does not entail either general skepticism or gullibility. An integral motivation of my theory of trust is that precision tools like PR-N-Unfriendly will get the correct answers more often than brute force maneuvers of other theories. It seems commonsensical, from the onset, that a theory of testimonial uptake should not entail skepticism about most of beliefs uptaken as a result of wielding the theory. There are, of course, situations where skeptical reservations from the hearer are justified. However, when considering the group of testimonial situations as tellings more generally, it becomes obvious that skeptical reservations would be disproportionate in a majority of cases. We are told a great many things that ground much of what we take ourselves to know, and so general skepticism is an unintuitive result for a theory. My uptake principle holds a weaker version of the PR-N-Always condition; therefore, one cannot object that mine entails skepticism without also implicating the reductionism or other hybrid views even more harshly.

As for the other desiderata, even if it is granted that non-reductionism gets the correct result *in most cases* of natural testimony or tellings generally, it is not without problems. Granting that testimonial situations which require independent justification (on top of receiving testimony) may be less in number, they are often higher-than-average-stakes cases. Call this minority of cases requiring additional non-testimonial support the *problematic cases*.

This minority, however, is a *majority of the important cases* where getting it wrong can have serious consequences. That is where the gullibility objection gets its main thrust. After all, one cannot be said to be gullible for accepting mundane testimony about the weather or the speaker's favorite color. The charge of gullibility only relevantly applies to the important or problematic cases. Generally speaking, for problematic cases, stronger uptake principles (more demanding) are likelier to obtain the correct result because they appeal to something above and beyond a no-defeater condition alone. Therefore, it seems just as intuitive that a good epistemic theory of testimony should not entail gullibility about important matters either.

I readily grant that no amount of intuitiveness or expeditiousness of a theory is worth the cost getting the wrong answer in important cases. To cope with these worries about gullibility, PR-N-Always emerges as a catch-all candidate for justified epistemic uptake. But, this swings the pendulum too far the other way, because requiring blanket positive reasons for justified uptake stifle one's ability to justifiably uptake mundane knowledge through testimony, putting in danger a majority of our testimonial beliefs about people, the time, the weather and many more of life's wonderful trivialities. My view can cope with the gullibility charge no worse than reductionism or other hybrid views, since the charge of gullibility *only relevantly applies to important cases*, and those high-stakes, important cases require a reductionist uptake principle on my theory anyway. Thus, I conclude my view is no worse off than reductionism or non-reductionism in facing respective objections, and it is likely better off. It lessens the force of objectives, as we have seen, and now I will show how it preserves the best aspects of each view.

3.1.3. *Epistemic Trust and the Two Pathways*

Some authors have appealed to a dual-pathway model to preserve both aforementioned theoretical desiderata. Thagard (2005) notes that a general theory of testimony must be able to explain how «testimony is usually accepted automatically but also how it sometimes provokes extensive reflection about the claim being made and the claimant who is making it» (Thagard 2005: 297).

My theory takes epistemic trust to be uniquely poised to fulfill that role. It posits epistemic trust has a dual-nature: two pathways, a default and a reflective pathway, where practical interests act as a trigger that shifts from one to the other. The dual nature of ET is reflected in two types of

processes, Affective (AET) and Cognitive (CET). These roughly reflect Kahneman's (2011) System 1 and System 2 pathways. The latter is more deliberate, slower and thoughtful, while the former is more intuitive, faster and emotional. Epistemic trust is CET when it involves decision-making, over a length of time, by a process which includes *consciously* weighing reasons like in rational deliberation, reflection or thinking. Epistemic trust is AET when best understood as an attitude, when it is instantiated near instantaneously, through the minimal weighing of reasons or deliberation one is conscious of (there can be reasons, but it is not required that the agent consciously employs those reasons).

3.1.4. *Justified Cognitive and Affective Epistemic Trust*

Cognitive epistemic trust is justified in a straightforwardly reductive sense. For CET to be justified, it requires additional non-testimonial positive reasons, which are accessible to the hearer. As with reductionism, the details can be filled in different ways, perhaps by appeal to reliabilism. My theory leaves the question of how to best describe reductive justification relatively open. I will not go down that relatively well-beaten path because, as noted, my theory is no worse off than one's favorite rendition of reductionism for defending against the gullibility charge, because the same details as one's favorite reductionist theory can be filled in on my view.

Justified affective trust, on the other hand, is a basic-belief forming method. It is used by infants and toddlers use to build up foundational knowledge about the world before they have the deliberative reasoning skills required by cognitive epistemic trust. Enoch & Schechter (2008) provide a solid account of how basic-belief forming methods are justified.

On their account, what explains a subject's justification in employing basic-belief forming methods such as "Inference to the Best Explanation" (IBE), Modus Ponens or relying on perception and memory is the <indispensability to a rationally required project> (Enoch & Schechter 2008: 556).

Their account is stated as such:

A thinker is *prima facie* justified in employing a belief-forming method as basic if there is a project that is rationally required for the thinker such that:

- (i) it is possible for the thinker to successfully engage in the project by employing the method;
- (ii) it is impossible for the thinker to successfully engage in the project if the method is ineffective. Moreover, where clauses (i) and (ii) apply, it is in virtue of these facts that the thinker is so justified (Enoch & Schechter 2008: 556-557).

For them, a “rationally required project” is one that a rational epistemic agent must engage in. Examining the environment around us, obtaining knowledge about it and constructing a framework from which to understand it are candidates for such a project.

Indeed, building up knowledge of the world as children is arguably an exemplary candidate for a rationally required project, and affective epistemic trust is the method that, when employed, allows us to successfully engage in that project when employed. Furthermore, as infant epistemic subjects, without the relevant cognitive abilities to engage in CET or other reductionist methods, it is impossible for them to successfully engage in the project of building up knowledge of the world without that method. Even in the adult world we are often rationally required to engage in the method of AET. For example, when being trained for a new job outside of our expertise by a superior, or when reading nutritional information on a cereal box⁵. I piggyback on their account of the justification of basic-belief forming methods rather than offer additional argumentation for what I already consider an extremely plausible and intuitive account.

3.2. *Confusing Pragmatic and Epistemic Justification?*

It can be objected that my uptake principle (and perhaps my theory more generally) conflates or confuses epistemic justification with prudential or pragmatic justification. The term “pragmatic encroachment” has been used to refer to the notion that pragmatic considerations encroach on epistemic ones and one way to understand this is that there are practical conditions on knowing.

Of course, being offered a large sum of money to believe something might make you *pragmatically justified* to believe it, but obviously will not make it likelier that the claim is true. I readily grant this. But this does not refute my theory, nor pragmatic encroachment more generally. All that shows is that subjects’ stakes have no bearing *on the truth of a claim*. However, it does not follow that subject stakes have no bearing *on the justification or knowledge of a claim*. Truth is but one condition on knowledge, albeit the most obvious one, and whose absence would be the most noticeable. But there is plainly more to knowledge than truth. I submit,

⁵ Barring extraordinary circumstances, say we are allergic to nuts and investigating whether it contains nuts, but this case merely confirms that CET is required in that case due to higher stakes in the claims, supporting my claim.

therefore, there is no principled reason as to why knowledge cannot or should not have a fourth (or N-th) practical condition e.g. sensitivity to subject's stakes. Perhaps justification is sensitive to practical factors, which play a part in determining when it is invocable and to what degree.

At least two broad strategies have been used to support the pragmatic encroachment hypothesis. The first is an appeal to intuitions and subsequent empirical data about epistemic attributions regarding philosophical cases. This includes experimental philosophy and the results from empirical studies probing layperson and philosophers' intuitions alike (Croce & Poenicke 2017; Sripada & Stanley 2012). The second strategy is to make a theoretical case for a pragmatic condition on knowledge. That is, whatever theory of knowledge one holds (of the form JTB + x) should be supplemented by an additional condition p which requires sensitivity to subject interests. Many authors have argued for a practical condition on knowledge, notably Fantl & Mcgrath (1996; 2002); Hawthorne (1994); Stanley (2005).

The PR-N-Unfriendly states that stakes affect testimonial environment in a relevant way such as to influence warrant and knowledge. My view is, of course, compatible with the notion of pragmatic encroachment regarding justified testimony and justified trust.

3.2.1. *Retroactive Sensitivity: Justification and Stakes*

To support my view, and continue answering the previous objection, I want to offer a case that establishes the plausibility of the claim that there is an intuitive link between attributions of epistemic warrant and the stakes of epistemic subjects. I submit that the link is *so* strong that the attributions of warrant to a belief can change *retroactively* if stakes shift too drastically, which is something we would expect to find if my theory were true. Consider this case meant to support the idea that stakes are connected to and influence epistemic warrant and even knowledge.

Hearer H is told by reliable speaker S that carrots are safe for dogs (p). H is not a dog owner and is not acquainted with any dogs, and so has relatively low stakes pertaining to this claim. H trusts S that p and goes on a good while with this inconsequential belief. I take it that H was justified (entitled, warranted) in uptaking based on S's testimony on this matter in a way that can lead to knowledge. However, eventually, a new friend of H, call them F, entrusts H to care for a cherished dog. Friend F is in a hurry for a family emergency and leaves town without any specific canine dietary information for H.

H's stakes regarding the initial belief have now presumably gone up

and with them the justificatory evidential demands on H's trust in S that *p*. These heightened epistemic demands would require *additional reasons for sustaining the belief*. It can be said that H *no longer knows* (believes, trusts with justification), in any relevant sense, that carrots are safe for dogs. Additional positive reasons would be required to support this claim e.g. a quick search engine consultation revealing carrots are generally safe for dogs. When stakes shift drastically, there is a retroactive change in the epistemic status of the belief – H is no longer justified (entitled, warranted) to cling to the initial testimonially-based belief under the new heightened evidential pressure from having higher stakes. In the low-stakes situation, the testimonial uptake is justified because of the general friendliness of the testimonial environment (because the perceived safety of the initial testimony remains fixed, but stakes change, skewing the friendliness score).

When the requirement to justifiably uptake belief is very low like in the first case, almost any minutiae of evidence is sufficient to know, provided the belief is true. Assuming the belief is true, in the first case, simply receiving testimony is good enough evidence to qualify the belief as knowledge. But when the stakes suddenly shift, the evidential requirement to know becomes much higher because the evidential threshold on justification becomes much higher.

Imagine if the first time H were to receive the same testimony from his original friend, speaker S, after already being entrusted with the dog. In that case, justified uptake of that claim might be harder to come by. And it would seem to require something like *additional non-testimonial positive reasons*. But the fact that even the justification of *previously-held testimonial beliefs* come under threat when stakes change suggests a deep connection between epistemic justification and stakes; one preserved even after the initial moment of uptake. As we have seen from the case of the dog and the carrots, a change of stakes can change the evidential threshold for a piece of data to count as good evidence (perhaps to count as evidence at all). Though a full treatment of the practical conditions on justification and knowledge is beyond the scope of this paper, however, I hope to have sufficiently called into question the objection's appeal to the assumption that positive epistemic standings are free from non-epistemic factors. Even when those factors do not relate to the truth of the matter at all, they can still influence epistemic standings.

3.3. Conclusion

I have suggested there are two desiderata of a theory of testimony and argued that mine can more easily preserve both. I do not reject the view that one *can have* justified testimonial uptake or testimonial knowledge *absent any non-testimonial positive reasons*. My view even draws a principled distinction when it is possible and when it is not. At the very least then, it can be said that my theory does better against the over-intellectualization and skepticism objections.

Accounting for the full extent of epistemic subjects' mental lives in the shaping and interpretation of the epistemic environment helps perform better against the gullibility objection than non-reductionism and the other hybrids because the charge of gullibility only really applies to high-stakes cases, and my theory calls for reductionism in those cases, protecting itself in a calculated manner.

I conclude with the notion that the dual-process theory of epistemic trust I have presented can help resolve some kerfuffle in the literature on trust more generally. There are affective accounts (e.g. goodwill attitude, Baier 1986; Jones 1996), which contend that trust is primarily affective, and any sort of deliberation or cognitive component falls into the trap of being "contractual" and does not capture the "leap of faith" required to trust another. These accounts would be opposed to cognitive accounts (e.g. the expectation account of trust in Hollis, 1998) and consider them not to be instances of trust at all. Closely related is the debate whether trust is volitional. Contra Baier (1986) and Jones (1996), my theory suggests we can, at least sometimes, willfully trust another (at least in CET). These seemingly opposed views can co-exist peacefully on my dual-nature view of trust because they simply correspond to different dimensions of trust, AET and CET respectively. My theory can house both families of views and does not force us to choose between either, rather allowing us to keep the explanatory and intuitive power of both.

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Abstract

This essay connects the justification of trust and the justification of testimony. I provide a theory which entails that justified epistemic trust is a necessary condition on justified testimonial uptake. Two important desiderata of a theory of the epistemology of testimony are that it does not lead to generalized skepticism, nor is it susceptible to gullibility about important cases. The proposed theory of testimony doubles as a theory of epistemic trust that is better than alternatives. My theory posits two kinds of Epistemic Trust (ET): Affective and Cognitive Epistemic Trust (AET and CET). I argue both processes can be justified (JAET and JCET) and both can lead to justified uptake of testimonially-based beliefs. My theory of epistemic trust distinctly carves a role for subject stakes: when they are high, the evidential justification conditions on epistemic trust become more exacting on the testimonially-based beliefs they support.

Keywords: trust; testimony; justified epistemic trust.

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