

ANONYMITY AND TESTIMONIAL WARRANT

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Abstract

Reductionism as an approach to the epistemology of testimony places certain demands on the recipient of testimony that its competitor, antireductionism, does not. After laying out the two approaches and their respective demands on the recipient of testimony, I argue that reductionism also places certain anonymity-shedding demands on the testifier that antireductionism does not. The difficulty of deciding between the approaches leads to a worry about the extent to which the current state of affairs in epistemology can offer secure advice on the sorts of anonymity constraints that a networked society should place on its testifiers. This worry can be mitigated, I further argue, upon recognition of the fact that the two approaches stand on common ground when it comes to cases of known testimonial conflict.

In a highly networked society, ubiquitous access to communication technologies like the Internet provides individuals with an unprecedented ability to spread information. Membership in such a society thus has its privileges. But it also has its responsibilities. Many of these are of course moral in nature, and evaluative discussions about the networked society frequently involve the moral voice. In this paper I will speak in the epistemological voice. My broad concern is with the individual's place in a networked society from the point of view of the social acquisition and transmission of warranted belief – that is, the sort of belief that, if true, amounts to knowledge. More specifically, I want to discuss a form of epistemic responsibility wrapped up with the phenomenon testimony – something of crucial importance for the proper functioning of any networked society. Following recent epistemological literature, I here use 'testimony' as a catch-all term for public offerings of one's word that something is the case, and not in the more popular sense of offerings in a formal, legal context.

I will begin by laying out two main epistemological approaches to testimony as a source of warranted belief: reductionism and antireductionism. Reductionism about testimony places certain demands on the recipient of testimony that antireductionism does not. Reductionism also, I will argue, places certain demands on the testifier that antireductionism does not: the two approaches have different implications when it comes to a testifier's responsibility to identify herself, and hence shed her anonymity. The worry that will emerge is that, given the difficulty of deciding between these two approaches, the current state of affairs in epistemology has little to offer by way of secure advice on the sorts of anonymity constraints that a networked society can place on its testifiers. This worry can be mitigated to some extent, I will further argue, upon recognition of the fact that the two approaches stand on common ground when it comes to cases of known testimonial conflict: they both imply that when a testifier knows that her testimony conflicts with that of other agents, she is epistemically constrained to shed her anonymity in important respects.

I

The question about reduction in the epistemology of testimony is whether, in some important sense, the warrant of testimonial belief reduces to that of other beliefs typed according to source – perceptual, memorial, introspective, and rational. Starting with the claim that testimonial warrant is dependent in a way that these other sorts of warrant are not, reductionists go on to argue that it reduces to these other sorts. Generally speaking, it seems that an agent could not have testimonial warrant for believing a proposition p unless someone had non-testimonial warrant for believing that p , but yet that an agent could have non-testimonial warrant for believing that p without anyone having testimonial warrant for believing that p . I couldn't, for example, have whatever testimonial warrant I do for believing that Caesar crossed the Rubicon unless someone – Caesar and his troops, in the first instance – had perceptual and memorial warrant for believing the very same thing; nevertheless, Caesar himself could surely have had perceptual and memorial warrant for believing that proposition specifi-

cally, without anyone having testified about it at the time. Dependence considerations of this sort point to the reducibility of testimonial warrant, according to the reductionists. Antireductionists demur. Dependence, in their view, does not suffice for reduction.

The 'some important sense' in the question about whether testimonial warrant *in some important sense* reduces to non-testimonial warrant is important, for it points to significantly different forms of reduction. There is, for example, a debate about the *global* reduction of testimonial warrant. Here the concern is with competing accounts of testimonial warrant in general.¹ If, for example, all testimonial warrant is to be analyzed in terms of conditions involving other sorts of warrant, we would seem to have a global reduction of testimonial warrant to the other sorts: testimonial warrant across the board would turn out to be a species of perceptual and other sorts of non-testimonial warrant, in the same way that knowledge turns out to be a species of belief – and hence reducible to belief of a certain sort – on various traditional analyses of knowledge, e.g. as justified true belief.

A common objection raised by antireductionists in the face of any such attempted global reduction rests on the observation that, first, in order for an agent to satisfy the conditions of the reductionist analysis, she would have to be a cognitive agent; second, in order to count as a cognitive agent, she would already have to be in possession of an enormous number of warranted beliefs about matters conceptual and linguistic; and, third, the warrant of many of these conceptual-linguistic beliefs could only be acquired through testimony.² The force of this objection thus leads some in the reductionist camp to look for other, less general but still quite important, forms of reduction. Elizabeth Fricker (1994, 1995), for example, suggests that the crucial issue is that of *local* reduction. Here the concern is with the conditions under which mature epistemic agents – already possessed of the sorts of warranted belief to which the antireductionists' objection adverts – can come to acquire (new) testimonial warrant.

I take it to be clear that when it comes to the issue of global reduction, the antireductionists have won the day. So my concern here is with the issue of local reduction. But how, precisely, is that issue to be

formulated? How, in other words, do *local* reductionists differ from their *local* antireductionist counterparts?

Local reductionists share a commitment to something like the (partial) account given below in (RTW), where ‘*H*’ ranges only over mature epistemic agents, and where ‘non-testimonial sources’ means warranted-belief-sources other than the relevant speaker’s testimony:

RTW A hearer *H* warrantably believes that *p* through a speaker *S*’s testimony that *p* only if (1) *S* testified that *p*, (2) *S* is trustworthy with respect to her testimony that *p*, (3) *H* warrantably believes, through her non-testimonial sources, that *S* testified that *p*, (4) *H* warrantably believes, through her non-testimonial sources, that *S* is trustworthy with respect to her testimony that *p*, and (5) *H* infers that *p* from the beliefs mentioned in the previous two conditions.

The account is reductionist because it views the warrant of a mature hearer’s testimonial beliefs as a species of the warrant delivered by her non-testimonial sources. The account is local because it takes no stand on the nature of testimonial warrant in general.

Local antireductionists, by contrast, favor the sort of account captured below in (ATW), again letting ‘*H*’ range only over mature epistemic agents, and ‘non-testimonial sources’ indicate sources other than the relevant speaker’s testimony:

ATW A hearer *H* warrantably believes that *p* through a speaker *S*’s testimony that *p* only if (1) *S* is trustworthy with respect to her testimony that *p*, (2) because *S* testified that *p*, *H* believes that *p*, and (3) *H* is not warranted in believing that *S* is untrustworthy³ with respect to her testimony that *p*.

This account is antireductionist because it does not seek to reduce a mature hearer’s testimonial warrant to the warrant of her non-testimonial sources.⁴

II

The local reductionist's account of testimonial warrant thus requires that a mature epistemic agent verify, in whatever sense is required for warranted belief, the trustworthiness of a speaker before believing the speaker's testimony. The verification, according to Fricker, will proceed along two dimensions: it will involve confirmation of the speaker's *sincerity* and her *competence* (Fricker 1994, 147ff). The hearer must acquire some non-testimonial warrant to the effect that the speaker is not lying or otherwise purposely misleading on that particular occasion of testimony, as well as similar warrant to the effect that the speaker knows whereof she speaks. In Fricker's terminology, the reductionist demands of the mature agent that she always take the critical attitude of "monitoring" a speaker for signs of insincerity and incompetence (Fricker 1994, 150–4 and 1995, 404–6).⁵ The local anti-reductionist's account requires nothing so demanding of the hearer. Simply believing a speaker who is in fact sincere and competent in the absence of any good reason to think that she is not needn't come close to verifying that she is.

But the verification that local reductionism demands in turn demands something significant by way of identification of the speaker. At the very least, it requires the mature agent whose belief that *p* is warranted through the testimony of the speaker that she, the hearer, identify the speaker as one who is sincere and competent with respect to her testimony that *p*.

What might be involved in the identification of a speaker as one who is so sincere and competent? To make some headway on this question, consider the following types of personal identification distinguished by the prominent sociologist Gary Marx (2001).⁶ *Legal name identification* involves warranted beliefs about an individual's legal name. *Linked pseudonym identification* requires warranted beliefs about the non-legal names of an individual that can be linked to her legal name and other identifying features of her. For example, if I already know that the Internet chatroom handle 'WizardofOz112' is used by John Smith of 112 Dorothy Lane, Wichita, and I acquire evidence that

you have that handle, I may thereby identify you in the linked pseudonym fashion. *Non-linked pseudonym identification* involves warranted beliefs about the non-legal names of an individual that cannot be linked in this way. Finding out that you have the aforementioned handle in a situation where I am clueless about your legal name, where you live and work, etc., would be an example of this sort of identification. *Location identification* involves warranted beliefs about an individual's geographical location or environmental situation, residential address, and/or proximity to relevant events. *Behavior pattern identification* requires warranted beliefs about an individual's distinctive behavior patterns, e.g. what sorts of chatrooms she frequents, where she does her shopping, her charity donations to date, etc. *Social association identification* requires warranted beliefs about an individual's membership in, or affiliation with, social groups. Answers to questions like whether the individual is a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, a student at a given university, married, a member of this or that political party, etc. will be the relevant ones here. Finally, *symbolic eligibility identification* involves warranted beliefs about an individual's tokens of membership in a social group. If you wear the right sort of uniform, I may identify you as a member of the local city police force on that basis. Type in the right password, and someone else may identify you as a member of Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The three types of nominal identification would seem less relevant in connection with the verification of a speaker as sincere and competent with respect to her testimony that *p*. Or, at any rate, the identification of a speaker's names or pseudonyms would seem to have a bearing on the trustworthiness of her testimony only in virtue of her identification along the other lines indicated. So I will not be concerned with the nominal identification types here.

I suggest that the local reductionist's approach to testimonial warrant carries with it the implication that identification of the speaker along the lines of the remaining four types is a necessary condition on a mature agent's having warrant through the speaker's testimony. That is, on the local reductionist account, if a mature epistemic agent warrantably believes that *p* through a speaker's testimony that *p*, then the hearer has identified the speaker along the lines of location, behavior pattern, social affiliation, or symbolic eligibility.⁷

By way of support for this claim, consider what Fricker suggests as the typical ways in which the hearer verifies the speaker's sincerity and competence, and hence trustworthiness. The verification may, according to Fricker, occasionally involve ampliative inference from past cases in which the speaker has testified to similar things, and for which the hearer has had independent confirmation/disconfirmation (Fricker 1994, 148). Pretty clearly, this would at least involve identification along the lines of behavior pattern: the speaker is identified in terms of her past assertoric and other linguistic performance. Such things as social affiliation identification would moreover seem to be involved as well, at least minimally. In thinking, correctly, of the speaker as one who has in the past proved quite reliable in her testimonial deliverances, one would *ipso facto* categorize her as member of one's circle of sincere and competent acquaintances on matters of the relevant sort.

More typically, in Fricker's view, the verification will involve the postulation of "at least a fragment of a psychological theory" of the speaker – an "ascription of beliefs, desires and other mental states and character traits" of the speaker that would tentatively, at least, explain why the speaker has testified that *p* (Fricker 1994, 148–9). And the rudimentary "data" for such theory ascription will contain observed clues such as the mannerisms and gestures of the speaker at the time of speaking, her local circumstances, and so on. Here there would be no escape from momentary behavior pattern and location identification. And the postulation of the rudimentary psychological theory would itself at least seem to require a rudimentary form of social affiliation identification ("she's one of my reliable sources on this topic at this time," etc.). Indeed, data for the theory might involve such simple facts as the dress of the speaker, the best explanation for which might at the time be that the speaker has lots of relevant knowledge – the speaker is, say, dressed in the physician's white coat – that would itself bring in symbolic eligibility identification.

Consonantly with Fricker's observations, it is worth drawing on work by Alvin Goldman (2001, 93ff) to note that the following sorts of warranted belief about a testifier will be typical of the effort to establish her trustworthiness as a testifier about the relevant matters:

- (1) Warranted beliefs about the testifier's verbal and other bodily activity at the time of testifying.
- (2) Warranted beliefs about the number of other testifiers who manifest (dis)agreement with the testifier.
- (3) Warranted beliefs about the credentials and endorsements of the testifier, e.g. institutional backing, training evaluations, publication record, and others' testimony about her competence.
- (4) Warranted beliefs about biasing interests of the testifier.
- (5) Warranted beliefs about the past track-record of the testifier in testifying to matters of a similar sort.

Each sort of warranted belief here would seem to involve one or more of the four relevant types of identification singled out by Marx. Location identification would no doubt be involved in (1), behavior pattern identification in (1) and (5), social affiliation identification in (2), (3) and (4), and symbolic eligibility identification in (3).

Corresponding to the various types of identification just canvassed are various types of anonymity. These will include *location anonymity* – the lack of warranted beliefs about an individual's geographical location or address, *behavior pattern anonymity* – the lack of warranted beliefs about an individual's distinctive behavior patterns, *social affiliation anonymity* – the lack of warranted beliefs about an individual's membership in social groups, and *symbolic eligibility anonymity* – the lack of warranted beliefs about an individual's tokens of membership in a social group. With these types of anonymity in mind, we are in a position to note a direct implication of local reductionist's commitment to the necessity of the hearer's identification of a speaker: on the local reductionist account, if a mature epistemic agent is warranted in believing that p through a speaker's testimony that p , then the speaker is not entirely anonymous to the agent along the relevant lines. That is, the agent has identified the speaker either in terms of location, behavior pattern, social affiliation, or symbolic eligibility.

III

One of the primary purposes of argumentation – the public offering of reasons to believe – is that of convincing an audience to believe. The same holds true of testimony: a (though not necessarily the) primary purpose of offering one's word that p is to convince another that p . Moreover, epistemic responsibility, far from being restricted to the belief-forming processes of the epistemically responsible agent, would seem to extend to others with whom the agent has doxastic contact – those with whom the agent interacts with the intention of modifying their doxastic commitments. There are self-regarding and other-regarding aspects to moral responsibility in general: compare the moral responsibility to foster in oneself the disposition to be appalled at gratuitous suffering, on the one hand, with the moral responsibility not to inflict such suffering on others, or with the moral responsibility to train one's children to be appalled at and not inflict such suffering, on the other. Similarly, there are other-regarding aspects to epistemic responsibility as well as self-regarding ones. Taking measures to ensure that one's own beliefs are warranted is a self-regarding aspect of epistemic responsibility; taking measures to ensure that the beliefs that others acquire through one's doxastic contact with them are warranted is an other-regarding aspect of epistemic responsibility. Thus we can say that the *epistemically responsible* speaker who testifies that p with the aim of convincing her hearer(s) that p through her testimony that p also has the goal of causing her hearer(s) *warrantedly* to believe that p through her testimony that p .

This last point relies on a claim that some will find difficult to accept, viz. that there are other-regarding aspects to epistemic responsibility. It is tempting to think – and, indeed, as their silence on the issue suggests, virtually all of those who write on the topic of epistemic responsibility (duty, obligation, etc.) do think – that epistemic responsibility is a purely self-regarding matter. The temptation, I think, stems from an overly narrow vision of what constitutes the general epistemic goal that an agent has *qua* epistemic agent – from, we might say, an unduly restricted understanding of the epistemic point of view. If, for any epistemic agent S , the general epistemic goal is something along the lines of *maximizing for S warranted belief (or knowledge, or true*

the lines of *maximizing for S warranted belief (or knowledge, or true belief, etc.) and minimizing for S unwarranted belief on matters concerning which S is going to have beliefs at all*, then it will be no surprise that whatever instrumental responsibilities (duties, obligations, etc.) that fall out of this goal will be purely self-regarding ones – ones that pertain (directly or indirectly) to S's beliefs alone.⁸ But the trouble with this conception of the general epistemic goal is that it cannot account for cases in which individuals are intuitively failing to live up to their epistemic responsibilities by virtue of failing to foster warranted beliefs in others. Consider the disgust we may have upon discovering that those in positions of epistemic authority – academic instructors, for example – are encouraging those under their authority – students, say – to adopt unreliable belief-forming processes. Our disgust need not be moral, but it is certainly epistemic: we naturally describe such individuals as failing to live up to their intellectual responsibilities – talk that indicates the evaluation is epistemic – even if we don't hold them as particularly immoral, or faulty with respect to their moral responsibilities. But such disgust would seem quite out of place if the general epistemic goal were of the narrow sort just mentioned, since (again) it is hard to see how to derive anything but self-regarding epistemic responsibilities from this goal, and those in positions of authority who encourage others under their authority to adopt unreliable belief-forming processes needn't be violating any self-regarding epistemic responsibilities. They are causing others to have unwarranted beliefs, but not necessarily thereby causing themselves to have unwarranted beliefs.

In order to account for the aptness of such disgust, then, we need to broaden our understanding of the general epistemic goal. Instead of maintaining that, for any epistemic agent S, the general epistemic goal is something along the lines of *maximizing for S warranted belief and minimizing for S unwarranted belief on matters concerning which S is going to have beliefs at all*, accordingly, it would be better to maintain that for any epistemic agent S, the general epistemic goal is simply something along the lines of *maximizing warranted belief and minimizing unwarranted belief on matters concerning which there are going to be beliefs at all*. This understanding of the general epistemic goal will comprehend at least two broad sub-goals: (a) for any epistemic agent S, the general self-regarding epistemic goal is roughly *maximizing for S warranted belief*

and minimizing for *S* unwarranted belief on matters concerning which *S* is going to have any beliefs at all; and (b) for any epistemic agent *S*, the general other-regarding epistemic goal is (again, roughly) maximizing for others *O* (with whom *S* has doxastic contact) warranted belief and minimizing for *O* unwarranted belief on matters concerning which *O* are going to have any beliefs at all. And (b) will thus help serve to explain the aptness of the sort of disgust mentioned above: the reason why it is apt to be disgusted by those in positions of epistemic authority who encourage those under their authority to adopt unreliable belief-forming processes is that these authority figures are doing what they ought not from the epistemic point of view – what they ought not relative to the general epistemic goal; and they are doing what they ought not relative to the general epistemic goal because they are failing to live up to the instrumental responsibilities generated by one central component of that goal, viz. (b).

If this is right, however, then there are other-regarding aspects to epistemic responsibility.⁹ And it seems pretty clear that if there are other-regarding aspects to epistemic responsibility – instrumental responsibilities arising from something like (b) above – then the responsibility to give others warranted beliefs in situations where, through one's testimony one aims to give them beliefs, will count among them. We thus get the result mentioned above: the *epistemically responsible* speaker who testifies that *p* with the aim of convincing her hearer(s) that *p* through her testimony that *p* also has the goal of causing her hearer(s) *warrantedly* to believe that *p* through her testimony that *p*.

Consider now a general point about instrumental responsibility. There is clearly some normative failure involved in the case of an agent who, having a certain end, nonetheless refuses to take the means within her power to meet whatever requirements there are for achieving that end. If my goal is successfully to complete an upcoming marathon, and yet I slough off all training for the event, I am doing what I ought not, relative to my goal. If I aim to set an example of academic integrity for my students, while allowing myself the indulgences of sloppy grading and lecturing, questionable romantic relationships with some of my students, nasty and unkind remarks to others, etc., I am acting wrongly, from (at least!) the point of view of achieving my aim.

Thus, if an agent has the goal of bringing about a given end, she ought (instrumentally) to ensure that whatever conditions are necessary for bringing about that end are satisfied.

Sections I and II traced the connection between local reductionism about testimonial warrant and the need to shed anonymity: on the local reductionist's account, a necessary condition on the mature epistemic agent's being warranted in believing that p through a speaker's testimony that p is that the speaker not be anonymous to the agent along the lines of location, behavior pattern, social affiliation, and symbolic eligibility. Taken together with the two points just made – viz. first, that the epistemically responsible speaker who testifies that p with the goal of convincing her hearer(s) that p through her testimony that p has the (further) goal of causing her hearer(s) warrantably to believe that p through her testimony, and, second, that in general if an agent adopts an end then she ought (instrumentally) to ensure that whatever is required for bringing about that end is achieved – this leads us to the following claim:

Thesis 1 On the local reductionist's account, if an epistemically responsible speaker S testifies that p with the aim of convincing her hearer(s) that p through her testimony that p , then S ought (epistemically) to shed her anonymity along location, behavior pattern, social affiliation, or symbolic eligibility lines.

There is no analogue of Thesis 1 that holds for the local antireductionist's account of testimonial warrant. This is because of the weakened demands that local antireductionism places on the believer who is warranted through a speaker's testimony: on the local antireductionist's account it is *not* necessary for the mature agent to have identified a speaker in terms of location, behavior pattern, social affiliation, or symbolic eligibility in order for her warrantably to believe that p through the speaker's testimony that p . Consequently, on the local antireductionist's account it is not necessary for the speaker to have shed her anonymity to the agent. The speaker can, according to the antireductionist's account, remain quite anonymous to her audience along the lines of location, behavior pattern, social affiliation, and symbolic eligibility. To Thesis 1, then, we can add Thesis 2:

- Thesis 2 On the local antireductionist's account, it's not true that if an epistemically responsible speaker *S* testifies that *p* with the aim of convincing her hearer(s) that *p* through her testimony that *p*, then *S* ought (epistemically) to shed her anonymity along location, behavior pattern, social affiliation, or symbolic eligibility lines.

IV

The debate between the local reductionists and antireductionists shows no signs of abating in the near future. And perhaps this is fitting, in light of the complexity and recalcitrance of the issues involved.¹⁰ Must we wait until a consensus is reached, however, before being in a position to draw any secure, helpful advice from the epistemological well when it comes to the anonymity constraints that a networked society can place on an epistemically responsible speaker?

I think not; we may have to wait to plumb the depths, but we can, I believe draw enough for some satiation of thirst.

To see how, notice first that there will be many cases in which even the local antireductionist about testimonial warrant will concede that in the absence of some independent verification of a speaker's trustworthiness with respect to her testimony that *p*, the mature epistemic agent cannot be warranted in believing that *p* through hearing that testimony. These will include cases in which the speaker fails the third condition of (ATW); that is, cases in which she *does* have warrant for believing that the speaker is untrustworthy with respect to her testimony that *p*.

One prevalent sort of case involves known testimonial conflict: the speaker testifies to the hearer that *p*, but, as it turns out, another speaker testifies to the hearer that not-*p*. Both the local reductionist and the local antireductionist stand on common ground when it comes to such cases, for neither believes that if the hearer goes ahead and believes that *p* on the basis of the first speaker's testimony, she is inevitably warranted in that belief. The acquisition of warrant for her belief that *p*, it can be agreed all around, would in such a case require the

hearer to do more epistemic work (Cf. Goldman 2001, 89; 1999, 268ff).

The work involved will presumably be just the sort that the reductionist insists applies in all cases of testimonial warrant for a mature agent: gaining some independent verification of the speaker's trustworthiness. That's needed in the cases of known testimonial conflict to defeat the warrant the hearer has for believing that the speaker is untrustworthy with respect to her testimony – such warrant having been generated by her awareness of the conflicting testimony.¹¹

But if that's right, it seems that in cases of known testimonial conflict, both the reductionist and the antireductionist can also agree that the hearer must do additional epistemic work in the form of identification. No doubt the identification will apply to more than just the speaker whose testimony the hearer ultimately accepts (if she does at all); it will also apply to the conflicting speaker(s). Only upon identification of both (or all) conflicting speakers, presumably, can the hearer be in a position to afford greater trust to the one, and hence defeat the warrant she initially had for believing that the first speaker is untrustworthy. But the essential point is straightforward. Simply put, in cases of known testimonial conflict, the difference in anonymity-shedding responsibility between the local reductionists and antireductionists comes to nought. On the assumption that local reductionism and antireductionism exhaust the plausible philosophical space surrounding the warrant of a mature agent's testimonial beliefs, we may thus infer that in cases of known testimonial conflict, if a mature epistemic agent is warranted in believing a speaker's testimony that *p*, the speaker is not entirely anonymous to the agent along the lines of location, behavior pattern, social affiliation, and symbolic eligibility.

But recall: an epistemically responsible speaker who testifies that *p* with the aim of convincing her hearer(s) that *p* through her testimony that *p* has the (further) aim of causing her hearer(s) warrantably to believe that *p* through her testimony that *p*. And recall as well the general point about instrumental responsibility mentioned above: if an agent has the goal of bringing about a given end, she ought (instrumentally) to ensure that whatever conditions are necessary for bringing about that end are satisfied. Given that in cases of known testimonial conflict, a speaker's not being anonymous in all of the relevant respects

(location, behavior pattern, social affiliation, and symbolic eligibility) – i.e. her being identified in at least some of these respects – is a necessary constraint on the mature epistemic agent's being warranted in believing a speaker's testimony that *p*, we get the following conclusion:

Thesis 3 In cases of known testimonial conflict, if an epistemically responsible speaker *S* testifies that *p* with the aim of convincing her hearer(s) that *p* through her testimony that *p*, then *S* ought (epistemically) to shed her anonymity along location, behavior pattern, social affiliation, or symbolic eligibility lines.

The hope for epistemological advice of wider applicability should not blind us to the fact that the implications of Thesis 3 are far from trivial. Given common knowledge about how few claims of interest go uncontradicted on the World Wide Web, for example, the thesis will place important epistemic demands on those who publish material of interest in that domain – demands that, sadly, are all too frequently not met.¹²

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Resumo

O reducionismo como uma abordagem à epistemologia do testemunho faz certas exigências àquele que recebe o testemunho, que a posição contrária, o anti-reducionismo, não faz. Depois de estabelecer as duas abordagens e suas respectivas exigências sobre aquele que recebe o testemunho, argumentamos que o reducionismo também faz determinadas exigências àquele que testifica, que o anti-reducionismo não faz. A dificuldade de decidir entre as duas abordagens conduz a uma preocupação com a extensão na qual o estado atual de coisas na epistemologia pode oferecer indicação segura sobre o tipo de exigências de anonimato que uma sociedade posta em rede faria àqueles que prestam testemunho. Argumentamos também que essa preocupação pode ser mitigada com o reconhecimento do fato de que as duas abordagens possuem uma base comum quando é preciso considerar casos de conflito de testemunhos.

Palavras-chave

Anonimato, Vestimônia, Conflito de Testemunhos, Crença Garantida, Conhecimento, Responsabilidade Epistêmica, Epistemologia Social.

Notes

¹ Sometimes the global debate is taken to concern attempted proofs to the effect that (in general) reliance on testimony is warranted, where the steps of the proofs are themselves supposed to be warranted by reliance solely on non-testimonial sources. The following Humean inductive argument might be thought of as an example: Cases in which testimonial beliefs have turned out to be true vastly outnumber cases in which they have turned out to be false; a comparable ratio holds in general; therefore, in general, reliance on testimony is warranted. (Cf. Hume ([1777] 1995), Coady (1992, Ch. 4) and Kusch (2002, pp. 30–2).) The demonstration is supposed to make for *global* reduction because it is supposed to land us with the general conclusion. It's supposed to make for a global *reduction* because its premises are supposed to be knowable, or at any rate warranted, simply through perception, inference, memory, etc.

² See, e.g., Reid ([1785] 1996), Coady (1992), Strawson (1994), McDowell (1994), and Audi (1997).

³ 'S is untrustworthy with respect to her testimony that *p*' should here be read fairly minimally, along the lines of 'S's word on *p* is not presently to be accepted'.

⁴ Notice a further difference in the two accounts: (RTW) is an inferentialist account, because the link it posits between an agent's warranted belief in the content of a speaker's testimony and that testimony itself is one of inference. (ATW) is not: the 'because' in its condition (2) need not be understood along inferential lines.

⁵ That terminology is unfortunate, however, since talk of monitoring might apply equally well to the antireductionist's insistence on a condition like (ATW) (3). Cf. Kusch's discussion (2002, pp. 26–7) of "active" vs. "passive" monitoring.

⁶ Marx formulates these types in terms of knowledge, but I will take the liberty of reformulating them in terms of warranted belief, which is more to my immediate purpose. Also, I have slightly changed the names Marx proffers for some of these types, so as more adequately to express their central thrust.

⁷ Importantly, and as will emerge below, the robustness of these sorts of identity need not be great: often, perhaps typically, all that may be required is a fairly minimal sort of identification of the speaker along these lines.

⁸ Cf., e.g., Chisholm (1977, p. 14), Foley (1987, p. 8), Feldman (2000, pp. 682–6, and 2002, pp. 377–80), and David (2001, pp. 152–66).

⁹ One should also be wary of the argument that other-regarding responsibilities cannot be epistemic responsibilities because (a) other-regarding responsibilities apply to voluntary action on the part of the responsibility-bearer, and (b) responsibilities that apply to voluntary action on the part of the responsibility-bearer cannot be epistemic. There seem to be, after all, clear cases of *self-regarding* epistemic responsibility that apply to voluntary action on the part of the responsibility-bearer, e.g. doing one's best to gather more evidence for oneself on a matter. Cf. Hall & Johnson (1998).

¹⁰ For some sense of the complexity and recalcitrance, see Lackey (2003).

¹¹ But see footnote 3.

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