

**A Theory of Epistemic Trust and Testimony:
A Hybrid View in the Epistemology of Testimony**

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Abstract

Reductionism and Non-Reductionism are two camps in the literature on the epistemology of testimony, each with their own unique difficulties. Hybrid views have emerged to alleviate problems and preserve insights of each camp, but still suffer in various ways from the problems that motivated hybrid views in the first place. The hybrids I consider grant an uptake principle requiring epistemic agents to be able to cite positive reasons, other than the receipt of testimony, to be epistemically justified in their uptake. I group stronger and weaker versions under the heading PR-N-Always (positive reasons are always necessary) and argue this requirement for independent confirmation fails to strike a balance between the theoretical desiderata of being neither too gullible nor generally skeptical about everyday testimonial uptake. I propose instead the uptake principle PR-N-Unfriendly, which states that positive reasons are only necessary for justified uptake when the unfriendliness of the testimonial environment is over a threshold, where the friendliness of the environment is a ratio of perceived epistemic safety over subject stakes. Thus, my view contends that stakes of epistemic agents influence the testimonial environment and the epistemic warrant of uptake. Additionally, my hybrid theory of testimony doubles as a theory of epistemic trust. I argue there is an epistemic trust condition on testimony whereby for testimonial uptake to be warranted it must have been instantiated by epistemic trust which was warranted. My hybrid view is unique insofar as it draws on the notions of epistemic trust and subject stakes to generate explanatory and theoretical insights better than alternatives.

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§ 1. Preamble

Giving and receiving testimony is pervasive in everyday life. Testimony is a crucial source of our beliefs, and it is the most prevalent form of knowledge transmission. The literature on testimony is rich and far-reaching, extending well into epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of language and psychology. In this paper, I focus on the debate between Reductionism versus Non-Reductionism regarding the justification of testimonially acquired beliefs. I argue for a hybrid theory that combines the insights of both approaches. On my view, whether we are warranted in believing on the basis of testimony depends on whether trust in our epistemic source is warranted, which in turn depends, *inter alia*, on our stakes.

The paper is structured as follows: §1 clarifies some basic terms to understand the project. §2 covers objections and benefits of both camps, Reductionism and Non-Reductionism. §3 is the statement of my account. §4 explains some other hybrid views and argues for the superiority of my view, and §5 discusses other questions and objections before concluding.

§ 1.1 Belief, Uptake, Testimony

The *uptake of testimony* is the process of forming a belief in the content of a proposition presented through testimony. The metaphysical debate on the nature of testimony is healthy, but not directly relevant to my arguments in the epistemology of testimony. I take testimony to be an intentional assertion, presented-as-true by agents, typically for agents.

§ 1.2 Justification, Entitlement and Warrant

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 for this argument to be supported by reasons

available in the subject's cognitive repertoire. *Entitlements* are rights to rely on a given cognitive practice and, unlike argumentative justifications, need not be understood, accessible or articulable by the cognizer. Entitlements are the externalist analog of justification (Burge, 1993). *Warrant* is used generally as a positive epistemic status, which includes both the internalist and externalist varieties, i.e. justification and entitlement. I follow Gerken (2013) in adopting what he calls 'inclusive epistemic pluralism' about testimonial warrant. Pluralism about testimonial warrant stands opposed to monism, meaning that a testimonially-based belief may enjoy *both* internalist warrant (justification) and externalist warrant (entitlement). *Inclusive* pluralism would allow that an instance of testimonial uptake may enjoy both kinds of warrant *at the same time*, in contrast to the *exclusive* brand. Like Gerken, I take it that pluralism about warrant is domain-specific, e.g. one can be a pluralist about testimonial warrant and a monist about perceptual warrant. Finally, I will call the *extended body of warrant* all the warrant of the speaker and the prior sources in the testimonial chain.

§ 1.3 Non-Epistemic Factors and Stakes

The *testimonial environment* includes all factors outside of the literal content of the testimonial assertion. They can include, but are not limited to, epistemic standards, stakes of epistemic agents, whether the testimony was solicited or not, location, past utterances (e.g. past relationship with testifier) etc. Hearer stakes play an essential explanatory role in my theory. 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. I use an internalist or subjective notion of stakes (i.e. a perceived good that one has mental access to). This is simply

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).

§ 2. Two Camps in the Epistemology of Testimony

Now that some key terms have been explained, I need to discuss two camps in the epistemology of testimony. Reductionism and Non-Reductionism are two broad classes of views, each with various formulations and nuances, but common cores on which I will focus when addressing them. Their differences are about the nature of testimonial justification and the conditions under which a hearer is justified in accepting testimony. Reductionism claims that the justification for accepting testimony can be reduced to other sources of justification, such as evidence that the testimonial source is reliable or the like. Unlike Reductionism, Non-Reductionism usually deems the receipt of a testimony itself to be a sufficient positive reason for justified acceptance of the claim, unless there are stronger epistemic defeaters.

§ 2.1. Reductionism

Reductionism has two defining commitments: The Positive Reasons (PR) thesis and Reduction Thesis (RT).

PR: The possession of *additional positive reasons* by hearers, as well as receiving testimony, is necessary for warrant/justification to be conferred on testimonial beliefs.

We can distinguish two versions of the PR condition, one on which the possession of appropriate positive reasons is necessary and sufficient for warrant/justification (PR-N&S) and one on which it is merely necessary (PR-N).¹

RT: Testimonial justification is non-basic and reducible to non-testimonial justification from other more basic faculties like perception, memory, and inference.

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).

§ 2.1.1 Merits of Reductionism

The real strength of Reductionism is that it places a higher standard on justification (and thereby knowledge) than Non-Reductionism, which is a point to its credit in difficult cases *where truth is particularly important*. Adopting a Reductionist strategy might make an agent less prone to believing something unjustifiably and can be considered a “less gullible” theory than Non-Reductionism. A more reserved character allows the reductionist uptake condition (PR-N) to deal with situations where getting truth is very important, for example, in the case of a life-changing medical diagnosis. It seems that the reductionist uptake principles are likelier to refrain from attributing justification to situations where uptake would not be justified because they require independent confirmation, which makes them more cautious. If one is feeling risk-averse or error-avoidant, they will likely be drawn to Reductionism since, by design, it can cover problematic cases, i.e. cases where getting the truth is very important. One can hardly conceive of an epistemology of testimony where reductionist concerns of gullibility did not matter. Reductionism is here to stay, at least the part that can deal with problematic cases. The cost of being too cautious, however, is potentially missing out on warranted uptake elsewhere.

§ 2.1.2 Over-intellectualizing Objection to Reductionism

A critique of Reductionism is that it over-intellectualizes *most* instances of testimony by requiring positive reasons on behalf of the hearer for uptake to be justified. Since most instances of testimony are mundane, one does not have to be very imaginative here to find a slew of claims that are justifiably uptaken without *additional cognitively accessible positive reasons*. When

asking someone waiting at the bus stop whether the bus has passed yet or not, one does not need to have in their mind any positive reasons beyond the speaker's testimony for this sort of uptake to be warranted.² Therefore, Reductionism over-intellectualizes most instances of testimony, namely the low-stakes and mundane cases. However, this is unacceptable because those form the major core of the body of our beliefs based on testimony, which form an indispensable part of our beliefs generally.

§ 2.1.3 Skepticism Objection to Reductionism

The skepticism charge is the natural follow-up of the previous objection. If we are not generally disposed to provide adequate independent confirmation of testimony by Reductionist standards, then Reductionism risks leading to general skepticism. Reductionism imposes difficult or impossible standards, especially in mundane cases, and thereby risks leading agents towards undue general skepticism about testimonial uptake. Since *most* testimonial cases are of mundane and everyday uptake, if Reductionism brings those cases under threat, then it threatens generalized skepticism. But it is unacceptable that Reductionism denies knowledge in many cases where we would want to grant knowledge. An epistemic theory of testimony should not predict general skepticism about testimony because that unduly contradicts everyday experiences and is excessively unintuitive. We require a theory that is optimistic about the mundane and everyday testimonial uptake and that is careful about uptake in problematic cases.

In sum, the requirement for independent confirmation generates what I take to be the two main and related problems. The first charge is that it over-intellectualizes testimony, which is a main source of epistemically warranted beliefs. The second is that it thereby makes knowledge scarce. If one wants a theory 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 prescribes epistemically warranted uptake in a way that is more congruent with our experience than skepticism about testimony.

§ 2.2 Non-Reductionism

Non-reductionists hold that testimonial uptake is *prima facie* warranted, without appealing to a reduction to more basic sources. Non-Reductionism (N-R) rejects the two theses in §2.1, and instead holds their negations: No-Positive Reason Thesis and No-Reduction Thesis. Non-Reductionism contends that testimony is a basic source of justification, and the hearer typically has a *prima facie* entitlement to accept it. That is, the presence of positive reasons outside of receiving testimony are not necessary to be justified in accepting the testimony; *just the absence of negative reasons (defeaters)* for believing testimony. Contemporary defenders of N-R include: Audi (1997), Burge (1993), Coady (1994), Origgi (2005), Hinchman (2005), and Perrine (2014).

§ 2.2.1 Merits of Non-Reductionism

Promising aspects of Non-Reductionism are that it does not force us into a generalized skepticism about testimony, nor does it downplay the importance of testimony as one of our most prevalent and commonplace epistemic sources of knowledge. It conforms with epistemic intuitions about the great majority of testimonial cases and it does not unduly over-intellectualize testimony.

§ 2.2.2 Gullibility Objection to Non-Reductionism

The most pressing objection against N-R is that it would necessarily lead to gullibility. It may come as no surprise that people can 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 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 theses: that there is some entitlement 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).

§ 2.3 Two Desiderata: Between Routine Acceptance & Reason-Based Rejection

This section has clarified why at least two desiderata must be preserved for a good epistemological theory of testimony. Namely, first, that it does not lead the epistemic subject towards gullibility and, second, that it does not lead to general skepticism about testimonial uptake. I believe the camps of Reductionism and Non-Reductionism each capture one of these two good results. Hybrid views are uniquely poised to capture both. As I will argue in §4, however, in an attempt to safeguard against the gullibility-styled charges, the extant hybrid views I consider swing too far the other direction, threatening to become skeptical or unintuitive and out of touch with everyday experience. While these views have important features, which I borrow, the view I offer is intended to be more explanatory, intuitive and balanced.

§ 3. My Hybrid View

The move toward a hybrid view is wise in light of the shortcomings of Reductionism and Non-Reductionism alone as foundations for a complete epistemic theory of testimony. In the next section, I will explore three hybrid views (by Pritchard, Lackey and Faulkner). These defend versions of the Positive Reasons Thesis (PR-N or PR-N&S) which I group under the heading PR-N-Always. I ultimately reject these views because of their commitment to PR-N Always and because they do not adequately account for the influence of subject stakes on epistemic matters. Also, besides Faulkner's view, the other hybrids do not draw on the concept of epistemic trust and therefore miss out on its explanatory power. My view resists objections while keeping the

positive aspects of those views. Thus, mine offers explanatory power and theoretical benefits at no significant cost. These views have an underlying commitment that cognitively accessible positive reasons are always required on behalf of the hearer for warranted testimonial uptake whereas I will submit instead an uptake principle that requires these kinds of positive reasons for warranted uptake *only if the epistemic environment is epistemically unfriendly*. The epistemic friendliness of the environment is a ratio calculated as follows:

$$\text{epistemic friendliness} = \frac{\text{perceived epistemic safety of the epistemic environment}}{\text{subject stakes}^3}$$

Epistemic safety measures how easily a belief could have been wrong.⁴ An environment is epistemically safe if it would not easily lead to uptake of unwarranted or false beliefs.⁵

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

H is justified in uptaking testimony that p from source S iff,

- (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)⁶
- (7) H has justified cognitive epistemic trust in S that p

Condition (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. This ensures they are adequately perceptive epistemic agents, in other words, that hearer H is a reliable or properly functioning recipient of testimony. Condition (3) provides the case distinction between friendly and unfriendly environments. It allows epistemic trust to play an explanatory role regarding the use of the epistemic subjects' relevant epistemic abilities. Conditions (5) and (7) are explicated by my account of justified epistemic trust below.⁷ Roughly, justified affective epistemic trust relies on a general entitlement to accept testimony for its epistemic warrant, and represents the N-R component of my hybrid view. On the other hand, justified cognitive epistemic trust represents the reductionist wing of the hybrid view and derives its (argumentative) justification from the additional, cognitively accessible positive reasons of the hearer. Thus, we obtain the following uptake principle.

PR-N-Unfriendly: The need for additional positive reasons is inversely correlated with the friendliness of the environment.

The PR-N-Unfriendly is appropriately sensitive to subject stakes and therefore tracks positive epistemic standing better than PR-N-Always. I will now show in greater detail how subject stakes and epistemic trust can play crucial explanatory roles in the epistemology of testimony.

§ 3.1 Epistemic Trust

§ 3.1.1 *Practical Interests and the Two Pathways of Epistemic Trust*

Some have appealed to a *dual-pathway model* to preserve both aforementioned theoretical desiderata: a theory neither leads the epistemic subject towards gullibility nor general skepticism about testimonial uptake. 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” (p. 297).

Epistemic trust has a dual nature: two pathways, a default, and a reflective pathway. Practical interests act as a trigger that shifts from one to the other. The dual nature of Epistemic Trust (ET) is rooted 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 that includes *consciously* weighing reasons like in rational deliberation, reflection or thinking. Epistemic trust is AET when it is an affective attitude, when it is instantiated near instantaneously, through a minimal weighing of reasons or deliberation of which one is conscious. I will now argue that both CET and AET can be epistemically justified/warranted and specify the conditions under which they are.

§ 3.1.2 Justified Cognitive and Affective Epistemic Trust

Cognitive epistemic trust is justified in a straightforwardly reductive sense. For CET to be justified, it requires additional positive reasons, which are accessible to the hearer. As with Reductionism, the details can be filled in different ways. My theory leaves the question of how to best describe reductive justification relatively open and this fact does not detract from my view. I will not go down that relatively well-beaten path. My theory is no worse off than one’s favorite rendition of Reductionism for defending against the gullibility charge. 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 can be used to build up foundational knowledge about the world even before we 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 their "indispensability to a rationally required project" (p. 556).

This is their account:

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. (p. 556-7)

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 all 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 allows us to successfully engage in that project when employed. Furthermore, as infant epistemic subjects, which do not possess the relevant cognitive abilities to engage in CET or other reductionist methods, it is impossible to successfully engage in the project of building up knowledge of the world without that method. We are often rationally required to engage in the method of AET in the adult world as well. For example, when being trained for a new job outside of our expertise by a superior, or when reading nutritional information on a cereal box.⁸ 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.

§ 3.1.3 Between Skepticism and Gullibility

I have 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 is that precision tools like PR-N-Unfriendly will track testimonial warrant better than stronger or weaker uptake principles. 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 (testimony about whether a bus has passed, or the time of day come to mind). My uptake principle holds a weaker version of the PR-N-Always condition. Therefore, one cannot object that my view entails skepticism without also objecting to those other views even more harshly.

As for the desiderata of gullibility avoidance, even if it is granted that Non-Reductionism gets the correct result *in the majority of cases* of natural testimony and tellings generally, it is not without problems. Granting that testimonial situations that 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 support the *'problematic cases'*. This minority, however, is a majority of the *'important cases'* where getting it wrong can have serious consequences and that is where the gullibility objection gets its main impetus. 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 important or problematic cases. Generally speaking, for problematic cases, stronger uptake principles (more demanding ones) are likelier to obtain the correct result because they appeal to something above and beyond a no-defeater condition alone. I grant that a working theory of testimony cannot get the wrong answer

in important cases. Therefore, it seems just as intuitive that a good epistemic theory of testimony should not entail gullibility about important matters either. To cope with these worries about gullibility, PR-N-Always emerges as a catchall candidate for justified epistemic uptake. But, this swings the pendulum too far the other way, because requiring a blanket positive reasons condition for justified uptake stifles one's ability to justifiably uptake mundane knowledge through testimony. This puts 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, since the charge of gullibility *only relevantly applies to important cases*, and those important high-stakes cases require a reductionist uptake principle on my theory anyway. My view is, at the very least, no worse off than Reductionism or Non-Reductionism. In fact, it is better off because it keeps the best aspects of each while lessening the force of objections and providing additional explanatory power.

§ 4. Other Hybrid Views?

I have shown some shortcomings of both Reductionism and Non-Reductionism and why the move towards a hybrid view is preferable. Pritchard (2006), Lackey (2008) and Faulkner (2011) called their views 'hybrid theories'. While there are various similarities with my view and theirs, I will show that these views, in varying degrees, fall short of being completely satisfactory. Notably because of our different uptake principles. I will now explain these other views and note what I take to be their weaknesses, since ultimately, I hope to contrast my view with theirs.

§ 4.1 Pritchard's 'Quasi-Reductionism'

Pritchard's quasi-Reductionism (2006) actually supports a foundational aspect of my view: that the mental life of subjects and the testimonial environment are intrinsically linked regarding knowledge attributions. Pritchard argues, rightly I believe, that there are *ability* and *epistemic*

safety (or anti-luck) conditions on knowledge. Pritchard and I take these two conditions to relate to each other: the safety of the environment and the demandingness of the ability condition are inversely correlated during knowledge attributions.

Early in his paper, Pritchard defends the thesis that knowledge entails safe belief. Let us take one of his examples: Consider when Jennifer gets off a train in a foreign city and asks directions to a local landmark from the first person she sees. Let us assume the person asked knows the location of the landmark and communicates what they know to Jennifer. Pritchard submits that many have the intuition that Jennifer can have knowledge in this case (or else a great deal of what we take ourselves to know comes under threat since it is also similarly gained). In this case, Pritchard takes Jennifer to have knowledge, but it is not *in main part* because of her cognitive abilities. The fact they played some *minimal* role is not contested, since there is an implied counterfactual sensitivity: she did not ask a toddler, tourist, or a clearly insane person. If we change the case to one where Jennifer is in an extremely epistemically unsafe environment, where nearly every one of the potential informants is out to deceive her, she could not gain knowledge, even if she happened on one who was trustworthy since the safety condition would not obtain. Thus, the thesis that knowledge entails safe belief is not threatened.

Now imagine as Pritchard does, that I form beliefs by simple guesswork. But a trickster demon ensures that every time I form a belief the world is adjusted so that the belief is true. I would be hard-pressed to hold a false belief, yet this would not suffice for knowledge since my cognitive success *in no way* relates to my cognitive ability. This suggests the correct account of knowledge has *both* a safety and ability requirement, though where the latter imposes a ‘relatively modest epistemic demand’ consistent with the Jennifer case.

Pritchard takes his account of knowledge to neatly diagnose why different conceptions of knowledge place quite different demands on what knowledge involves. We are more optimistic

about ascribing knowledge in environments that are epistemically safe than those that are not. When they are not, we rely on a greater use of one's cognitive abilities to ascribe knowledge. When the environment is safe, it is very easy to meet the 'anti-luck' constraint, whereas had the environment been very unsafe it would be much more difficult and would require much more input from the successful operation of one's cognitive abilities. My view expands on this relationship by studying the effects of subject stakes and linking epistemic trust to the ability condition on testimonial warrant. Pritchard uses epistemic 'safety' and epistemic 'friendliness' interchangeably, but I have used epistemic friendliness to mean the ratio of 'perceived epistemic safety' over the subject's stakes (implying there is an agent for the environment to be 'friendly' with). To bring these insights to bear on the epistemology of testimony, let me include the distinction as Pritchard states it:

Reductionism: S has testimonial knowledge that p only if the epistemic standing of S's true belief that p is entirely recoverable in non-testimonial terms.

Credulism (Non-Reductionism equivalent): There exist cases in which S has testimonial knowledge that p and yet no part of the epistemic standing of S's true belief that p is due to non-testimonial factors.⁹

Pritchard takes the account of knowledge under discussion (ability and anti-luck requirement) to not fit neatly into these categories. He notes that the first case of Jennifer above, at first glance seems to support credulism. But, this is deceiving since we already saw that her *abilities have been brought to bear, however minimally, in the acquisition of knowledge*. Further, some of the support for the belief provided by the abilities is at least partly non-testimonial (that children and tourists are not reliable testifiers in this case). The point is that knowledge on Pritchard's view entails *reliable operation* of the *relevant cognitive abilities*, but in the case of testimony, entails that one's belief enjoys "at least some non-testimonial epistemic support" (p. 23). In this sense, it is thus straightforwardly incompatible with credulism as defined above.

However, it is also incompatible with the reduction thesis. As he notes: “After all, there is no reason why this account of knowledge should insist that the epistemic support enjoyed by a belief that counts as testimonial knowledge should be *entirely recoverable in non-testimonial terms*” (p. 23). For example, an agent’s cognitive ability to detect bad informants in any environment is in part acquired via testimony like people telling one whom to trust. For Pritchard then, as long as a true belief in question is *appropriately related* to the agent’s relevant cognitive abilities, and is ‘safe’, it qualifies as knowledge, “*even if a full reduction of the epistemic support of that belief to non-testimonial sources is unavailable*” (p. 23). What is core to Pritchard’s proposal is that *some form of reduction* is required for testimonial knowledge. What is essential for my project is to show Pritchard subscribes to PR-N-Always. In the debate between Reductionism and credulism, the respective points made by either side are essentially expressed in terms of non-testimonial grounds that *the agent can cite in favor of her belief* (positive reasons), with Reductionism demanding such non-testimonial grounds and credulism allowing testimonial knowledge in the absence of non-testimonial grounds. As Pritchard says:

Noticing that quasi-Reductionism about testimonial knowledge allows that some form of positive epistemic standing may be traceable to entirely testimonial support, and thus accords with the weak form of credulism. *What it denies is simply the more robust – and therefore less intuitive – formulation of credulism which allows that testimonial knowledge can be possessed even in the absence of any non-testimonial epistemic support [...].* Reflecting on the nature of knowledge reveals that it imposes two distinct demands, one that is to be understood in terms of cognitive ability, and one that is to be understood in terms of safety. Bringing this conclusion to bear on the epistemology of testimonial belief motivates a way of thinking about testimonial knowledge that does not obviously fit into either [R or N-R]. (p. 26, my emphasis)

The takeaway of the section is that there is an important role for cognitive ability and the epistemic environment in a theory of testimony. This is reflected in the thesis that knowledge entails safe belief with a minimal use of one’s cognitive abilities. On this, we agree, but we draw

different conclusions, namely about the possibility of robust credulism (which states testimonial knowledge can be obtained *absent any non-testimonial epistemic support*). This boils down to our different uptake principles, PR-N-Always and PR-N-Unfriendly. I will return to these points when considering objections once all the cards are on the table. I turn to Lackey's hybrid view.

§ 4.2 Lackey's Dualism

Lackey (2008) argues that positive reasons are not necessary and sufficient for justified testimonial uptake (PR-N&S is false). She holds that positive reasons are nonetheless necessary (PR-N is true), thereby rejecting N-R. She opts for a hybrid view. I examine her rejection of Non-Reductionism, because it will be instructive and illuminating regarding our different theoretical commitments. Lackey characterizes NR as follows before moving to reject it:

NR: For speaker A, and hearer, B, B knows that *p* on the basis of A's testimony iff

(NR1) B believes that *p* on the basis of the content of A's testimony

(NR2) B has no undefeated (psychological or normative) defeaters for A's testimony

(NR3) it is true that *p*

(NR4) A's testimony is reliable or otherwise truth-conducive

(NR5) B is a reliable or properly functioning recipient of testimony

(NR6) The environment in which B receives A's testimony is suitable for the reception of reliable testimony

NR1-3 are straightforward. NR4 is to prevent attributing warrant or knowledge in a case in which an incompetent agent who is unreliable, forms beliefs unreliably, but can still at times provide truthful testimony. She supports the inclusion of NR5 since one might be compulsively good-natured and trusting, and even though there are no defeaters for *them*, it may be there was one that reasonably should have been picked up. If there are *no possible circumstances that would constitute a defeater for an agent*, then the safety condition NR2 is not *substantively* satisfied. One can be *inappropriately sensitive* to defeaters (overly or underly sensitive). These

considerations show that in order to acquire knowledge the hearer has to be a properly functioning or reliable recipient of testimony (my second condition). The necessity of NR6 is evidenced by appealing to a case, which suggests the need for a necessary condition on the environment. Consider **MARVIN**:

Marvin is an epistemically impeccable recipient of testimony, has the capacity to be sensitive to defeaters and appropriately so. On a road trip one evening, he stops in a town to find a hotel for the night and encounters a group of people gathered for an annual parade. Out of this crowd, Marvin finds Alfred, the only member of the epistemic community who reliably shares information with outsiders. When asked, Alfred tells Marvin they are in Smithville. It is true they are in Smithville, and Alfred is a reliable testifier, and there are no defeaters for Marvin. Does Marvin know he is in Smithville?

Despite the satisfaction of NR1-5, Lackey responds in the negative. We can see this by realizing Marvin's true belief is in large part due to good fortune. Hence, Lackey's inclusion of NR6. Let us grant Lackey's characterization of N-R as NR1-6. She contends that it is essential for the non-reductionists to maintain that both versions of the Positive Reasons Thesis are false (PR-N and PR-N&S). She holds PR-N is true, and so N-R is false. She offers an interesting case that is taken as a decisive blow to N-R. It purportedly meets NR1-6 and yet fails to be a case of knowledge. It is meant as an example featuring the complete absence of positive reasons for uptake. Consider **ALIEN**:

Sam is an average human being and as he is walking through the forest, in the distance he sees someone drop a book. Their physical appearance allows Sam to identify them as an Alien from another planet, but he knows nothing else about this kind of alien or the planet they are from. Sam eventually loses sight of the alien, but he is able to recover the book that she dropped. Upon opening the book Sam realizes it is written in English and looks like what earthlings would call a diary. After reading the first sentence of the book, Sam forms the corresponding belief that tigers have eaten some of the aliens from the author's planet while exploring Earth. As it turns out, the book is a diary and it does

communicate in English, it is both true and reliably written that tigers have eaten some of the aliens from the planet in question. Sam is not only a properly functioning recipient of testimony, he is also situated in an environment that is suitable for the reception of reliable reports.¹⁰

Sam is taken to have truly no positive reasons, “*no common-sense alien-psychological theory, no beliefs about the general reliability of aliens as testifiers, no beliefs about the reliability of the author of this book, no beliefs about how diaries function in this alien society and so on*” (p. 169). Lackey contends this is clearly not a case of knowledge, despite purported satisfaction of the N-R1-6 conditions. Therefore, she argues this case suggests N-R is false.

In §5, I discuss whether this case in fact suggests the falsity of N-R and argue it does not. My uptake principle can more aptly explain the intuitions regarding this case. But first, let us complete the exegesis of Lackey’s proposed Dualism. Lackey offers a position where the epistemic work is not shouldered exclusively by either hearer or speaker. The speaker-condition ensures reliability and the hearer-condition ensures rationality. The proposed view of testimonial warrant recognizes *dual sources*, the reliability of the speaker and rationality of the hearer.

Dualism: For speaker A, and hearer B, B knows (believes with justification/warrant) that *p* on the basis of A’s testimony if:

- (D1) B believes that *p* on the basis of the content of A’s testimony
- (D2) A’s testimony is reliable or otherwise truth-conducive
- (D3) B is a reliable or properly functioning recipient of testimony
- (D4) the environment in which B receives A’s testimony is suitable for the reception of reliable testimony
- (D5) B has no undefeated (psychological or normative) defeaters for A’s testimony
- (D6) B has appropriate positive reasons for accepting A’s testimony.

The takeaway is that Lackey’s dualism maintains the reductionist Positive Reasons uptake principle (PR-N) in D6. This is a problematic uptake principle that over-intellectualizes

testimony and threatens generalized skepticism about testimony as a result. In §5, I explain in greater detail why Lackey's employment of the PR-N thesis is an overreaction to the ALIEN case. I posit these as symptoms of neglecting the theoretical role of epistemic trust and subject stakes. I now turn to the hybrid view most similar to my own.

§ 4.3 Faulkner's Hybrid View

Faulkner and I are both unsatisfied with R and N-R. Trust also plays a central role in both our theories. Before diving into his critiques of opposing views and the statement of his hybrid theory, let us take a look at how he uses trust.

§ 4.3.1 Faulkner's Concept of Trust

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. (2011, p. 23)

So far, we are in agreement. Faulkner distinguishes between Affective and Predictive trust. Although both kinds of trust have expectations, for predictive trust the expectation is merely a matter of prediction. The expectation is something different in the affective case, since it concerns another's reasons for acting.

I expect you to see the 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 (ibid, p. 24-5).

I take no issue with this notion of affective trust. I readily tailor it to epistemic trust and employ it toward a theory of testimony. Call that 'affective epistemic trust'. However, I have opted for a more nuanced version of predictive trust than Faulkner provides. He uses predictive trust as simply 'depending on some outcome' (2011, p. 24). This is the sense in which we can trust clocks to be on time. But, for the purposes of a theory of testimony, I propose to refer to only a relatively small subset of predictive trust which concerns agents (since 'trusting' non-agents is a misnomer). I take Cognitive Epistemic Trust (CET) to be more appropriate to capture nuances in the epistemology of testimony. CET can be understood as *interpersonal predictive trust*. The epistemic components narrow it down to cases where one agent trusts another for the truth. This shift from predictive trust to CET highlights the cognitive part of reasoning about the subjectivity of other agents. It is, therefore, better suited to a theory of testimony.¹¹

§ 4.3.2 Faulkner: Reductionism and the Extended Body of Warrant

Faulkner's critique of Reductionism is that it is too restrictive in what can satisfy the 'reasons' requirement, mainly because it 'fails to recognize how trust in a speaker can warrant uptake' (2011, p. 53). His critique is based in part on the 'problem of cooperation', which is that there is always the possibility of deception and the potential rationality of lying and deceit. This motivates the adoption of the reductionist uptake principle (PR-N-Always) which states we must support the acceptance of testimony with positive reasons, or else we would not be rational.

Faulkner is not satisfied with Reductionism, in part because he takes it to give a skeptical response to the problem of cooperation. While in 'one-off' testimonial situations, Reductionism

might predict uptake to be unwarranted, Faulkner contends knowledge through an attitude of trust is nonetheless possible in one-off cases because it puts the subject in contact with the extended body of warrant of a claim. According to Faulkner, even a sophisticated kind of reduction will fail to provide a non-skeptical solution to the problem of cooperation because their account of when an audience is warranted in the uptake of testimony is wrong. There are more ways of being warranted in the uptake of testimony than the reductive theory would allow. Namely, the attitude of trust can warrant the uptake of 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. [...] The reason why the reductive theory has a restrictive conception of what warrants uptake is that it assumes it to be this body of warrant- the audience's own proprietary justification- that also explains the audience's acquisition of knowledge from testimony (2011, p. 76).

To understand Faulkner's worry, consider a case where a newspaper reader reads that the distance from the Earth to the Sun is some 150 million kilometers (*p*). Faulkner rightly contends that since this is a paradigm example of knowledge acquisition, it must be explainable in reductive terms if Reductionism were true. The evidence that grounds the knowledge presented in the newspaper is the extended body of warrant. Let us call it E1. Let us call the evidence that explains the reader's uptake E2, which is the reader's own proprietary body of justification. The worry with Reductionism is that E1 is essentially irrelevant to the possession of knowledge. It is E2 that determines both the reader's warrant for uptake and the reader's warrant for believing *p*. Therefore, pure Reductionism misses out on the scientific or theoretical extended body of warrant (E1) and fails to provide a non-skeptical response.¹²

Faulkner employs another example to illustrate the shortcomings of Reductionism. Consider a case where a husband is told by his wife that the plane is boarding in fifteen minutes. He could easily 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 that he trusts her in this matter. Thus, Faulkner's non-skeptical response states that cooperation can be rationalized by an attitude of trust. Trust provides a reason that warrants uptake and puts the hearer in contact with the extended body of warrant. So far, I agree with Faulkner about the shortcomings of Reductionism and the merits of trust as a reason-providing attitude. My concern is with Faulkner's rejection of Non-Reductionism and the subsequent adoption of a PR-N-Always uptake principle in response to concerns about gullibility. I turn now to these points.

§ 4.3.3 Faulkner Rejecting Non-Reductionism

Let us look at Faulkner's criticisms of Non-Reductionism in more detail. To understand his problem with the view, let us examine a paradigmatic example of a non-reductionist uptake principle in Burge's acceptance principle: "A person is entitled to accept as true something that is presented as true and that is intelligible to her, unless there are stronger reasons not to do so" (1993, p. 467). This principle is defended by appeal to the following reasoning: that apparent intelligibility of an instance of testimony for a hearer allows for the presumption of the rationality of the speaker, and such a presumption of rationality implies a presumption of truth. According to Faulkner, any purported entitlement to accept testimony encounters an 'immediate and difficult problem': that it can *be rational to lie*. The acceptance principle, and entitlements generally, do not "pay attention to the fact that telling is a practical activity" (2011, p. 99), and the role of communication *is not exclusively to inform the hearer and nothing else*. Given this, no-defeaters condition will not suffice. As he notes, it is "[...] doxastically irresponsible to accept testimony without some background belief in the testimony's credibility or truth" (p. 99). For Faulkner, communication is primarily a practical, intentional activity and that misleading or deceitful communications are commonplace. Communication requires protection from these

problems in ways that (something like) Burge's principle does. In the case of perception and memory, rational acceptance requires only the absence of defeating background beliefs to counteract error. In the case of communication, we need to account for *both error and deception*.

Faulkner argues that Non-Reductionism treats testimonial warrant as akin to perception and memory. They cast the challenge of the problem of cooperation in terms of an 'argument from error' (I am not dreaming, hallucinating, etc.), which is mistakenly thought to be covered by a no-defeater condition (central to Non-Reductionism). However, Faulkner argues this is a mistake, since it is not a simple argument from error of the faculties. There are *practical* considerations as well, so supporting positive reasons are needed *in addition* to a no-defeater condition in order to satisfy rational acceptance in these cases. Thus, because Non-Reductionism fails to account for the fact that testimony is primarily a practical activity, the principle of credulity, other things being equal, leads to gullibility. Faulkner concludes that in the case of testimony "*rational acceptance requires the presence of supporting background beliefs*" (2000, p. 587, my emphasis). This is a clear endorsement of the PR-N-Always thesis. Faulkner is correct to suppose testimonial uptake is sensitive to practical considerations. However, he is too hasty to adopt PR-N-Always. My theory can accommodate practical stakes with the more balanced uptake principle. I discuss these points further in §5. First, let us state Faulkner's view.

§ 4.3.4 Faulkner's Theory of Trust

We can now discern the nuances of his theory, which is stated as follows:

- (A) Confronted by testimony to *p*, an audience A is warranted in testimonial uptake if and only if A's other attitudes make it reasonable for A to believe that *p*.
- (B) Where A believes that *p* through uptake of testimony to *p*, A is testimonially warranted in believing that *p* only if a prior speaker was warranted in believing that *p*.

(C) If A's uptake of testimony to *p* is warranted and a prior speaker was warranted in believing that *p*, then the extended body of warrant that supports the proposition that *p*, comes to support A's belief that *p* (2011, p. 201).

Thesis (A) states the principle of reasonable uptake supported by the argument from cooperation. This thesis is individualist because it concerns reasons an audience has 'by reflection alone'. It is also internalist because it makes acquisition of warranted belief depend upon an audience's reasons.

The goodness of these reasons given by whether they rationalize dependence rather than ground knowledge. The attitude of affective trust can give an audience a good reason for uptake. And once it is recognized these reasons need not ground an audience's knowledge, any belief that allows a prediction of truth will do. All that is needed is that the reason for uptake is an explanatory epistemic reason, and reasons that could not suffice for the reductive project may still be this (p. 202).

The audience's reasons play a role in warranting testimonial uptake, but Faulkner contends, this is not the essential role, which is rather to *make the extended body of warrant available to the audience*.

Thesis (B) states that there must be an extended body of warrant, so the extent that an audience's reasons are good ones is the sense in which they epistemically rationalize dependence and they 'suffice to put the audience in a position to inherit what extended body of warrant is available.' (p. 203).

In central cases, one needs to possess reasons to be warranted in testimonial uptake, but *it is reasons one does not possess that warrant one's testimonial beliefs*. Since the reasons one needs are reasons for thinking that a bit of testimony is true, and these reasons could be delivered by an attitude of affective or predictive trust, one could equally say that testimony transmits knowledge and warrant by means of trust. Or simply that *testimonial knowledge is knowledge on trust* (p. 203).

What he refers to here as ‘central cases’ may refer to a small subset of cases where the stakes are high, and they thereby make the epistemic unfriendliness of the environment high. Indeed, my view would hold that one needs to possess positive reasons in those cases and affective trust is not sufficient due to the unfriendliness of the environment.

Thesis (C) states the evidential explanation of transmission. It is anti-individualist since “whether or not a testimonially presented proposition comes with the support of an extended body of warrant is a social fact. It is social externalist, the holding of this social fact is not something discernible to an audience by searching reflection alone” (p. 201-2).

Faulkner’s picture presented above responds to the gullibility objection, grounded in the problem of cooperation, by holding the reductionist uptake principle PR-N-Always. Faulkner’s use of PR-N-Always is less objectionable than others. He improves the principle by allowing for trust to count as a reason for uptake, by virtue of trust putting the epistemic subject in contact with the extended body of warrant. This significantly and directly lessens the force of the objections to typical reductionist projects. However, Faulkner’s view takes the fact that there are non-epistemic factors present in testimonial exchanges to motivate an undue adoption of the rigid PR-N-Always uptake principle. Nevertheless, on my view, the fact that non-epistemic factors play a role in determining testimonial warrant does not foist one down this path.

§ 5. Questions and Objections

§ 5.1. Alternative Hybrid Views

One question is whether my theory is really better than alternatives. To answer this, I will further contrast elements of my view with parts of the views discussed in the previous section. Note that these are views I already hold in high regard as they have recognized the need to go beyond the

traditional divide between Reductionism and Non-Reductionism. However, while on the right path, my view still stands as an improvement in various ways.

§ 5.1.1 Pritchard

My view accepts, as Pritchard does, the premise that there are ability and safety conditions on testimonial knowledge. Nevertheless, my theory arguably arrives at a more nuanced result than his does. Mine does not reject robust credulism, that one *can gain knowledge absent any non-testimonial positive reasons*. My view even draws a principled distinction when it is possible and when it is not. Though we begin with similar premises in that regard, my theory has different outcomes than his. Rather than a blanket rejection of robust credulism, the PR-N-Unfriendly grants it is possible to gain knowledge in this way if the environment is friendly. At the very least then, it can be said that my theory does better against the over-intellectualization and skepticism objections in §2. It also possesses greater explanatory power concerning the fact that we are more optimistic about epistemic attributions in safe or friendly epistemic environments than those that are not. When epistemic environments are unsafe or unfriendly, a greater use of (and reliance on) relevant cognitive abilities is required to correctly ascribe knowledge. This is reflected in my dual-process theory of epistemic trust. While discussing Pritchard's view, it became clearer how the ability and safety conditions on knowledge are related. I suggested that epistemic trust could satisfy the ability requirement while the safety requirement is sensitive to stakes. It does not seem like a stretch to say ET constitutes a cognitive ability. As we have seen, for Pritchard, the harsher the epistemic environment, the higher the reliance on the prowess of cognitive ability.

How much any amount of unsafeness *matters* is magnified by an increase in the hearer's stakes. The higher stakes are, the more the lack of safety of an environment matters and this is

captured by PR-N-Unfriendly. It should be highly intuitive then, that when unfriendliness of an environment is magnified, justified uptake requires more skillful wielding of one's cognitive abilities. This relationship between stakes and cognitive abilities has explanatory power because it can capture both desiderata of a theory of testimony (that it leads neither to gullibility nor to a general skepticism). A regular, low-stakes testimonial instance can be warrantably uptaken by the 'default' pathway, which is generally credulous, barring any obvious defeaters. This is reflected in AET and in non-reductionist theorizing. However, a shift towards higher stakes can influence the epistemic friendliness of the environment. In turn, this affects the epistemic demands of warranted uptake, which would then require a shift to the reflective CET pathway. My uptake principle provides a clear explanation of *exactly when additional* positive reasons are required for warranted uptake, and thereby supports a version of credulism somewhere between the weak and strong versions we saw in Pritchard. This version suggests warrant/knowledge can, *sometimes*, be traceable to *entirely* testimonial support. The difficulty was to say *when*, and my theory has specified an answer: it depends on the non-epistemic factors of the hearer.

§ 5.1.2 Faulkner

As discussed, Faulkner holds the PR-N-Always uptake principle¹³, which is fundamentally incompatible with my proposed uptake principle, the PR-N-Unfriendly. While epistemic trust plays a central role in both our views, mine is a better middle-ground between gullibility and skepticism, while still preserving (and being indebted to) many of Faulkner's insights. The main improvement is employing the epistemic subjects' stakes toward epistemic explanations. This can greatly illuminate the relationship between the testimonial environment and the mental lives of subjects and has crucial explanatory and theoretical power. Faulkner's view does not detail these aspects and therefore mine can provide a net improvement at no additional theoretical cost.

§ 5.1.3 Lackey

Lackey explicitly subscribes to the PR-N-Always uptake principle. This leaves her hybrid position vulnerable to the over-intellectualization and skepticism objections to a greater extent than my view. Another worry I want to discuss is the failure of ALIEN to do the work Lackey wants it to do: prove the truth of PR-N-Always, reject a general entitlement to accept testimony, or both. First, let us entertain the suggestion that Non-Reductionism is a thesis about *human testimony* (and entitlements extend only to human subjects). Surely, one can hold that view without losing much ground? Lackey anticipates this and offers a reply: a case where it is a human not an alien. Consider **SALLY**:

Sally has been in a coma for two months, and when she wakes up, discovers she has *lost all her previous knowledge except for her competence with the English language*. Upon leaving the hospital, she stumbles on a diary and begins reading it. Ex hypothesi, Sally no longer has common-sense beliefs about human psychology, no longer any beliefs about the general reliability of humans as testifiers and no beliefs about how diaries function in our society, etc. Is Sally justified in accepting the contents?¹⁴

Lackey believes these cases are similar in ‘*all epistemically relevant respects*’ (p. 174) and takes the SALLY case to show that restricting the scope of Non-Reductionism to humans does not work. For her, these two cases together suggest the falsity of Non-Reductionism and support PR-N-Always. But are ALIEN and SALLY cases epistemically similar in all relevant respects? Lackey shrewdly anticipates this question and counters with a question: *why aren’t we entitled to assume that aliens are like us in all relevant respects?* She says the natural answer seems to be *we do not have any reason* to believe that is the case. Thus, “the very criterion for saying who is or is not a member of our institution of testimony is simply whether we have positive reasons for uptaking their testimony - which begs the question” (p. 174).

One way of resisting Lackey here is to note a way the cases are disanalogous. When Sam sees the Alien, it is a defeater, precisely *because* it is an Alien and not a human. It is not simply an issue of the lack of information about the testifier, there is *additional positive pressure* that acts as a defeater because tacitly one can recognize aliens are not like human testifiers. In Sally's case, it does not matter who is testifying - a cunning fox, human or alien. But in Sam's case, who is testifying does matter and so there is at least one important way those cases differ.

Setting the note about the cases being disanalogous aside, the cases do very little to suggest the truth of PR-N-Always or disprove the existence of a human entitlement to accept testimony. A Non-Reductionist could say that, properly understood, neither the NR2 (no defeaters) or NR6 (good environment) conditions are satisfied in ALIEN. Lackey anticipates the objection about undefeated defeaters, responding that *the only negative reason (defeater)* that would block warranted uptake, in this case, is the *absence of positive reasons*. But non-reductionists cannot help themselves to that without simply 'collapsing into Reductionism'. Therefore, she concludes, ALIEN really is evidence of the truth of PR-N-Always.

Other ways to resist Lackey's conclusion include appealing to the nature of testimonial warrant to explain why a strong entitlement to accept testimony may exist for humans but not for non-humans. '*Belonging to the same testimonial institution*' need not be the kind of 'positive reasons' required by PR-N-Always. It can be tacit, subconscious and inarticulable, and still convey positive epistemic standing. Since it is an entitlement, it is not required to be cognitively accessible or articulable to have epistemic force (§1)¹⁵. The existence of practical and moral aspects of a testimonial institution can also arguably explain intuitions in the ALIEN or SALLY rather than confirm the truth of Lackey's uptake principle. The cases reveal subtleties of the mental life of agents and the testimonial institutions they are embedded in and these factors may influence more than previously supposed.¹⁶ To contrast my view with Non-Reductionism one

last time, imagine an instance of testimony where an agent would have *truly no epistemic defeaters*. Classical Non-Reductionism would ascribe warranted uptake in this case. How mine would rule depends on non-epistemic factors *other than the presence of epistemic defeaters*, i.e. the subject stakes. Although Lackey provides a crafty explanation, my theory has an easier one available: The ALIEN case presumably contains very high subject stakes for Sam pertaining to the truth of the testimony (e.g., uptaking the testimony would undermine the very coherence of one's worldview, one's sanity, etc.). The perceived safety would also be remarkably low.

Therefore, the environment would be incredibly epistemically unfriendly. Neither Lackey nor the Non-Reductionist have access to this explanation without a sufficiently detailed account of how non-epistemic factors and the wider testimonial institutionality can influence warrant of uptake.

In sum, problems facing other hybrids do not extend as forcefully to mine. In addition, my view arguably preserves important theoretical desiderata better than theirs. I attribute these advantages in main part to the inclusion of subject stakes and epistemic trust in explanatory roles. This adoption has no steep philosophical cost for the explanatory benefits it affords.

§ 5.2 The Epistemic Trust Condition on Testimony?

My theory entails the Epistemic Trust Condition on Testimony (ETC): for an instance of testimonial uptake to be warranted, it must have been instantiated through epistemic trust that was warranted. That is, warranted epistemic trust is a *necessary condition* for warranted testimonial uptake. One implication is that variables which affect the justification of an instance of epistemic trust also affect the justification of the testimonial uptake thereafter. What if this were to be challenged? Since the ETC is implied by my theory, its falsity would undermine my view and its truth at least offers some support. However, 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.

I assume it must be possible for testimonial uptake to be sometimes justified, as to avoid a skeptical response to our problem (since granting otherwise would constitute too much of a departure from common sense). An alternative challenge to the ETC is the claim that there can be instances of justified testimonial uptake, instantiated through *unjustified trust*. In fact, this idea 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 were 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 leads to unjustified uptake, regardless of whether those beliefs are true (and even if uptake of those beliefs would have been justified through another method). 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 generally untrustworthy, yet H is justified in epistemically trusting S that p . 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 . However, one can be generally untrustworthy on all matters not relevant to p . As long as they are trustworthy with respect to p , H is justified in trusting S that p and uptaking the belief that p . In similar cases, the trust method would not *really be* unjustified with respect to p .

Another alternative to my claim 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. Intuitively, justified testimonial uptake depends crucially on something gained through epistemic trust: contact with the extended body of warrant of a claim (as defined in §1 and as discussed in §4.3.2). Consider the important difference between the case where I surmise (correctly) that my neighbour Dina is upset (p) despite any evidence and believe that p based on nothing but my own whims in this case. Contrast this with the case where I form the belief that p based on my trust in her partner's testimony that p (who is warranted in believing that p from first-hand experience that p). The second case puts me in contact with the extended body of warrant (in this situation, the warrant of Dina's partner's belief that p). The second case is connected in some way to the truth while the first is not. Justified ET does this tethering.

Furthermore, consider the oddity of the following proposition "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 H's uptake be justified absent justified epistemic trust? The ability to epistemically trust connects the agent with the extended body of warrant. If the belief based in testimony is to be justified, then the epistemic trust that supports the belief must be justified. Although perhaps not logically contradictory, the utterance seems intuitively incoherent. These considerations suggest we can safely conclude the ETC is true, which lends support to my view.

§ 5.3 Pragmatic Justification versus Epistemic Justification

A unique and crucial feature of my view is that it draws on non-epistemic factors for explanatory power in epistemological matters. The term 'Pragmatic encroachment' has been used to refer to the notion that pragmatic considerations encroach on epistemic ones. One way to understand this is that there are practical conditions on justification or knowing. At least two broad strategies

have been used to support this 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 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, arguing that whatever theory of knowledge one holds (of the form JTB + x) should be supplemented by an additional condition *c*, which requires some kind of sensitivity to subjective interests. Many authors have argued for a practical condition on knowledge, notably Fantl & McGrath (2002; 2009); Hawthorne (2003); Stanley (2005). I do not in any way wish to make the claim that stakes affect truth, but that their influence is on the epistemic environment and mental lives of subjects, which in turn affects the warrant of testimonial uptake. The PR-N-Unfriendly states that stakes affect the testimonial environment in a way that will influence warranted uptake *and* knowledge ascriptions.¹⁷ My view is, of course, compatible with the notion of pragmatic encroachment. I will offer a case to support 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*. This is something we would expect if my theory were true. The following case supports the claim that stakes influence epistemic warrant.

Reliable speaker S tells hearer H 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/warrant), 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 because of heightened evidential pressure on epistemic friendliness by having higher stakes. In the low-stakes situation, testimonial uptake is justified because of the general friendliness of the testimonial environment.

Imagine if the first time H were to receive the same testimony from his original friend, speaker S, came *after* already being entrusted with F's dog. In that case, justified uptake of that claim would seem to require something like *additional positive reasons* e.g., inference from experience, or additional research. The fact that even the justification of *previously held testimonial beliefs* comes under threat when stakes change suggests a deep connection between epistemic justification and stakes; one preserved even after the initial moment of uptake.¹⁸

The traditional orthodoxy in academic epistemology is that the concept of knowledge is free from any practical considerations. Of course, being offered a large sum of money to believe something might make you *pragmatically justified* to believe it but does not make it *likelier to be true*. I readily grant this. But this does not refute my claim, nor pragmatic encroachment more generally. All that this 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, warrant or*

knowledge of a claim. Truth is one condition on knowledge but there is plainly more to knowledge than truth. I submit there is no principled reason as to why knowledge cannot have a fourth (or N-th) practical condition e.g. sensitivity to subject's stakes. 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). A full treatment of the practical conditions on positive epistemic standings is beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, I hope to have adequately cast doubt on the assumption that positive epistemic standing is completely free from non-epistemic factors.

§ 6. Conclusion

This work emphasized the relationship between epistemic trust, testimony, the epistemic subject's stakes and the testimonial environment. I have argued that pure Reductionism and Non-Reductionism alone are untenable because they are very vulnerable to skepticism and gullibility-style objections. Furthermore, hybrid views overreact to gullibility-style objections and adopt an overly restrictive uptake principle. They are also unsatisfactory because they do not adequately consider subject stakes and thereby miss out on their explanatory power. Furthermore, except for Faulkner, the role of epistemic trust is similarly neglected and leaves the theories worse off for it. I have argued for a condition on warranted testimonial uptake: it must come through warranted epistemic trust. I have specified how and when epistemic trust is warranted for both the affective and cognitive kinds. My view strikes a better balance between the desiderata of non-gullibility and non-generalized skepticism of testimony better than others do, at no significant cost.

¹ 'Global' reductionists hold that one must have good positive reasons for believing that testimony is generally reliable e.g., past experience from testimony etc. 'Local' reductionists hold that a hearer's positive reasons need only apply to beliefs about a particular speaker in a particular case e.g. previous history with testifier, their trustworthiness etc.

² Notice that the force with which we ascribe warrant or justification to the hearer at the bus stop seems to depend 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 be faulted for so readily accepting or relying on testimony. In such a high-stakes case, uptake may not be warranted after all and my theory reflects this.

³ I maintain that stakes can be very low but are always *non-zero* so that in limit cases we do not end up ‘dividing by zero’. This move is justified by appeal to the fact that it is an epistemic virtue to obtain true beliefs over false ones, no matter how insignificant they seem. So, stakes are always non-zero *even if they are infinitesimally small*.

⁴ The epistemic safety of belief measures whether the uptake of belief would still be true/warranted if things had been slightly different. One way of putting it would be that a belief is epistemically safe if *it could not have easily been wrong*. In the literature on safety, what counts as ‘easily being wrong’ typically gets explained in terms of what would be the case in ‘relevant’ alternate worlds, or ‘close/nearby’ possible worlds. That discussion would take me too far astray for the present purposes, so I leave it open exactly how ‘not being easily wrong’ can get hashed out.

⁵ Whether (and to what degree) an environment is epistemically friendly is mainly influenced by two variables: the *perceived epistemic safety of the environment* and the *epistemic subject’s stakes*. Let us illustrate with a pair of examples: A good friend is hosting a potluck and tells me that, although her cookies usually contain nuts, this batch does not. I do not have nut allergies, so my stakes are low, and I perceive the environment as being safe (and I’m an adequately perceptive agent and indeed the environment is safe). In this case, the epistemic environment is *friendly* to me. Take the same situation but with an agent that has severe life-threatening nut allergies. Even if they are generally trusting with regards to their friend and perceive the environment as safe (and they are adequately perceptive agents and indeed it is safe) it would not be *friendly* (or as friendly) due to the presence of very high stakes. As mentioned, stakes are not the only variable at play. Stakes can be low, but if the perceived epistemic safety is low (and the agent is an adequate perceptive agent) then the environment would not be (as) epistemically friendly. Let us take another pair of examples: I visit Liarsville, which has a reputation that all the inhabitants lie to outsiders. I ask the first person I see about the town’s reputation and they assure me the rumors are hogwash and that there are no liars in Liarsville. Even if my stakes are low, the perceived epistemic safety would be low, which in turn would drive down the total epistemic friendliness score of the environment. On the other hand, had I asked the same question in my visit to Truthville (with equally low stakes), where inhabitants are known to be extremely truthful in their testimony, then perceived epistemic safety would be high and therefore epistemic friendliness would be high.

⁶ This condition is trivially true, but it helps set up the case distinction, an important part of my argument.

⁷ One worry can be stated regarding my explication of normative terms (e.g., justification/warrant) by appealing to other normative terms (e.g., ‘adequate perceptive agent’ in Condition 2 and the ‘justification of cognitive and affective epistemic trust’ in Condition 5 and 7). My explication of ‘justified’ epistemic trust of both kinds eventually bottoms out in non-normative terms: justification of cognitive epistemic trust is explicated by appeal to a requirement of additional positive reasons. The justification of affective epistemic trust is explicated in virtue of being a ‘basic belief forming method’, like modus ponens or inference to the best explanation, methods we are often fundamentally required to engage in to build both our knowledge foundations and subsequent new knowledge.

⁸ 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 theory.

⁹ “In no part” vs. “entirely recoverable” - these are not logical negations.

¹⁰ Note that the written case is not the paradigmatic case. Let alone Sam's potential concerns about whether it is, in fact, the alien's own diary (and therefore, *whether it is testimony at all*).

¹¹ In a discussion with Faulkner, he did not understand CET to be a distinct attitude from AET, but rather it seemed to be AET and an additional justification criterion. Although I am still undecided, in the present debate, surprisingly little of philosophical import hangs on whether they are fully distinct attitudes or not.

¹² I take it that any view that does not draw on the explanatory power of epistemic trust is vulnerable to this worry. On my view, it is through epistemic trust that one can come into contact with the extended body of scientific warrant. For example, epistemic trust in my teacher's testimony regarding the truth of evolution puts me in contact with the scientific body of warrant in a way that I would not be had I arrived at the belief by simple guesswork.

¹³ Confirmed in conversation with Faulkner.

¹⁴ Although I consider a theory of testimony should be able to account for written testimony, this is once again a non-paradigmatic case of testimony. There is also the worry that Sally is not an adequate recipient of testimony (and therefore NR1-6 would not be satisfied).

¹⁵ Reasons like 'belonging to same institutions' which ground entitlements *can be* perceived and articulated, but they *need* not be.

¹⁶ One interesting point is the idea that entitlements, like the warrant they convey, are matters of degree. My view is compatible with the possibility that entitlements are *entirely infeasible* insofar as the warrant they convey never disappears. It may be that in very high stakes cases or epistemically unfriendly environments, something additional *on top of* this entitlement is required for justified uptake (positive reasons become necessary). The warrant conveyed from the entitlement would not be gone, just insufficient to *entirely* warrant uptake. As mentioned early in §1, my view is compatible with both internalist and externalist kinds of warrant acting at once on a specific instance of testimony. For the belief to be epistemically warranted, we must count the conjunction of both internalist and externalist warrant and calculate it against the epistemic friendliness of the environment.

¹⁷ Some philosophers draw a distinction between '*saying one knows*' and '*knowledge*' and hold these have different requirements. One worry is that my theory conflates knowledge and warranted assertibility. But my theory should not be confused with one about warranted assertibility. It is meant to track testimonial knowledge. I hold warranted assertibility and correct knowledge ascriptions must be linked to knowledge in some way. While the exact details of that relationship cannot be fleshed out here, it is still an important notion to disambiguate.

¹⁸ I would like to contrast contextualism about knowledge with the subject-sensitive invariantism (SSI) of my view. In the initial stages of this work, I was charmed by contextualist arguments from Keith de Rose and others which held that whether an instance counts as knowledge *varies with the context*. I thought my view would ultimately be a contextualist one. However, I eventually realized I did not believe it was that knowledge varies with the context, but that knowledge is in fact invariant: *it is invariably sensitive to stakes*. So, I still maintain a form of invariantism about knowledge – it is an invariable fact of knowledge it is sensitive to subjective interests. Therefore, as it stands, subject-sensitive invariantism more aptly captures my view than contextualism does.

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